

During this time a convention was held in the city of Baltimore at which delegates were present from the states interested. The subject of internal improvement was thoroughly discussed, and, in the language of Governor Lowe, "promises were made which created a wild delusion scarcely equalled by the dream of oriental imagination. The people were told that instantaneous wealth and power were within their grasp; that millions upon millions of public debts might safely be incurred as the returns of the investment would be certain and immediate; and that, for all time thereafter Maryland would be free from even the light burden which she had borne from the beginning; while from her exhaustless treasury, perennial streams of gold should flow bearing upon their bosom into the remotest section of the State the blessing of knowledge and refinement."⁸

The result was that when the legislature met in extra session in May, after a violent opposition, an appropriation of eight millions of dollars was made, which together with the appropriation already made, and those made two years later, involved the State in a debt of over sixteen millions of dollars.⁹ To meet the interest on this debt and gradually absorb the principal, excessive taxes were imposed upon the people. Violent opposition to the taxes was manifested in several places. In some of the counties anti-tax associations were formed declaring their inability to pay the tax. In Harford county open resistance to the law was made. When the collector of the tax attempted to sell some property on which an execution was levied for the payment of the state tax a mob chased him from the place of the sale, threatening to kill any one who should venture to bid.¹⁰ This condition of affairs, and the popular excitement caused by the financial embarrassment of the State brought

⁸ Gov. Lowe's Inaugural Address, June 6, 1851.

⁹ McSherry's History of Maryland, p. 368.

¹⁰ Niles Register, 5th ser., vol. 65, p. 354.