

I am also aware, that upon the hearing of a writ of mandamus, the Courts of Justice would order the delivery of the Assessment-books; but in the new position which Maryland is now about to assume, the delay which would be consequent upon such a proceeding would be destructive of its utility. It will, Gentlemen, be your paramount duty to remedy the defects in the existing legislation which have been pointed out for your consideration. As the law now stands, the Executive Arm is powerless to vindicate the supremacy of the law; and the enactments of the Legislature may be treated with contempt, and disregarded with impunity.

Formerly the Levy or Tax Courts throughout the State were appointed by the Executive. They were then responsible to the State Authorities, and consequently respected and observed the laws of the State. Now in most of the Counties these officers are elected by the people of the particular County, and having been thus converted from State into County Officers, they have ceased to be responsible to the State Authorities, and in fact are practically responsible solely to the people of the County by whom they are elected. To this error, in the past legislation of the State, is to be attributed the non-enforcement of the revenue laws; and the correction of this error by restoring to the State authorities the appointment of these officers will, in my judgment, render certain the future enforcement of these laws.

The manifest tendency of this improvident legislation to destroy the efficiency of the Government, which was forcibly adverted to by my immediate predecessor in his second Annual Message to the Legislature, furnishes another cogent reason for the restoration of these appointments to the State authorities, to whom they were originally and legitimately entrusted. To the great body of our constituents, it is altogether immaterial whether this or that individual is appointed to discharge the duties of this or any other office. They are solely interested in having honest, attentive and efficient officers. The people see and know, that under the new system the appointment of these officers is practically thrown into the hands of irresponsible County politicians, attached to the two great parties of the Country, who often nominate the candidates for these offices, more in view of the party services of the individuals or their supposed local popularity, than in consideration of their fitness for the office, and I think experience has demonstrated that since this innovation, the persons selected have not been more honest or capable, than those who were formerly appointed by the Executive. This unadvised legislation originated in the desire of those who advocated it, to promote the political ascendancy of themselves or their party, but in