

M E S S A G E .

Gentlemen of the Senate

and of the House of Delegates,

The nature and extent of our pecuniary embarrassments are so well understood, that it is only necessary, at the present time, to notice the new aspect which they have assumed since the last session of the Legislature. The law, then passed, for assessing and taxing the whole property of the State, was intended to provide a permanent revenue, of sufficient amount to pay the interest of the public debt punctually as it became due. But as it was known that some time must elapse, before the proceeds of the tax could be collected and paid into the treasury, the Commissioner of Loans was authorized to borrow five hundred thousand dollars, for the purpose of supplying the deficiency in the revenue for the present year. Loans were obtained, principally from the banks, to the amount of about four hundred thousand dollars, which enabled him to discharge the interest of the public debt on the first of July and the first of October; but it was found impossible to borrow a sufficient sum for the next quarterly payment; and I regret to say that the State is without the means of paying the interest which will become due on the first of January. It will be understood however, both at home and abroad, that the Legislature, in laying a permanent tax for paying the interest of the public debt, and in authorizing a loan for supplying the temporary deficiency of the revenue, did all that was then in their power to comply with the obligations of the State. The assessment returns have not been received from all the counties, and the amount of taxable property in the State is not yet ascertained. It will probably fall short of the general estimate, and in that case a higher rate of taxation, than is provided for by the bill of last session, will be required to meet the increasing demands on the treasury. The public debt is now fifteen millions two hundred and thirteen thousand dollars; of which, about ten millions may be considered as bearing on the State. The subscription of three millions to the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road Company, was paid in State bonds, which have not been sold, and are not yet chargeable with interest. The previous subscriptions to that work, amounting to one million of dollars, have yielded a revenue more than sufficient to pay the inte-