

by possibility meet the sanction of the General Assembly, or if sanctioned, would not encounter an opposition, which would render its efficiency more than doubtful. That differences, and honest differences of opinion may exist, with reference to the proper objects of taxation, or the best mode of distributing with impartiality the public burdens, is not to be wondered at. In every government that ever existed, conflicting views upon this subject, have been entertained by the various interests of which society is composed, and it is probable controversies growing out of the same cause will continue to exist so long as human nature remains as it is, and has been, since the world began. That perfect equality of taxation has been attained in Maryland, by the laws which have been passed, or which are now under consideration in the Legislature is not pretended, on the one hand, nor is it admitted on the other, that the inequality imputed to them, would be less apparent, or less oppressive, if a different system of imposition were resorted to.

One thing may be asserted with entire confidence, and that is, if we forbear to levy taxes to pay our just debts, until all classes shall become satisfied that its share of the public burdens is no more than its due proportion, and the day of payment will be postponed to an indefinite future.

The system of direct taxation hitherto chiefly, if not exclusively relied upon, to pay the public creditor, has so far proved inadequate for that purpose. If every dollar proposed by existing laws to be raised in that way, could be collected punctually as it accrues, it would fall far short of the sum required, and there are reasons of irresistible force, forbidding any attempt to increase the rate of this tax at the present moment. It may also be not amiss to remark, that of all the forms of raising revenue that have ever been resorted to, that of direct taxation, is the most unwieldy, precarious, and expensive. With us in Maryland, the expense of realizing revenue in this mode, cannot be estimated, at much, if any, below ten per centum, making the usual allowance for commissions to the collectors, the necessity for a periodical assessment, which is indispensable, and other incidental, but unavoidable expenses. Supposing we require the sum of seven hundred thousand dollars, to pay the interest on our public debt, which will be the case, if the arrearages of interest are funded, as will be hereafter shown, and that this sum is raised by direct taxation, the expense or dead loss to the people, will be seventy thousand dollars, being ten per centum upon the amount.

On the contrary, if indirect taxation could be resorted to, to supply the sum required, the expense, according to the provisions of the bills which have been reported, would not much, if any, exceed one per centum, or seven thousand dollars, and there would consequently be a saving to the people, of sixty-three thousand dollars in the collection of the revenue. If however this rejection of the direct, and adoption of the indirect form of taxation, would clearly throw upon any particular class of our