

the *mercantile interest* only paid the greater portion of this tax, because of their ownership of a greater portion of the description of *property taxed*, precisely as the *landed interest* paid a greater portion of the tax upon real estate than the *mercantile interest*, because of their ownership of a larger proportion of that particular description of property. And the owner of *real estate* might as justly claim an exemption from taxation for that description of property, because he paid more than the merchant, as could the merchant from *this tax*, because he received and owned more promissory notes, and consequently paid more than the land holder. The supposed unequal bearing of this law upon a particular class of the community, has constituted the only plausible objection which has been urged against the continuance of the measure. If, therefore, I can demonstrate to the unanswerable satisfaction of every one who will consider the argument, that the inequality which does exist is a *practical inequality in favor of those who pay this tax*; I shall expect for this measure the support of all those who now oppose it upon this ground.

The direct tax law of eighteen hundred and forty one imposes a tax of one-fourth of one per cent. upon all the property in the State, and requires the collectors annually to assess all the property which should thereafter come into existence, or be found in the State and not assessed by the assessors appointed by that law. The increase of visible personal property, (such as slaves,) and the increase of real estate, (by the erection of houses,) are under the provisions of the direct tax law brought at once into the assessment, and the owners pay the tax of one-fourth of one per cent. upon it. By the direct tax law, all obligations for the payment of money are taxed at the amount expressed in the obligation, and although every new obligation taken since the act of 1841 should, under its provisions, be assessed, and pay the tax of one-quarter of one per cent.—yet from the nature of the property, and the impossibility of its ascertainment by the collectors, all this description of property which has come into existence since 1841, has escaped the tax imposed by that act, and now only pays under the Stamp Act the *one twentieth* of one per cent., *instead of the one-fourth of one per cent.*, the tax which is paid by the owners of every other description of property which has come into existence since 1841. Sincerely trusting that this view of the subject may change the opinion of some of those who have hitherto opposed the continuance of this law upon the ground of its supposed inequality. I will now ask your consideration of such amendments as experience and the construction placed upon its provisions by the Court of Appeals, have shown to be necessary.

This law went into effect on the tenth of May of the present year, and under its provisions quarterly returns were to be made of the receipts under it, commencing with the first of June. The returns which were made on the 1st of June consequently embraced only twenty days, the entire period for which the law had been in force, and the receipts for this period will, in my opinion.