

paid at a future day, with such reasonable rate of interest, until paid, as may be deemed just and equitable. Unless this plan is adopted, many years must yet elapse, before the people of Maryland can enjoy the consoling reflection that their exertions and sacrifices have brought with them, their appropriate reward.

The committee think they will not much err if they estimate that the arrearages of interest on the first day of July next, will amount to twelve hundred thousand dollars. Assuming this to be so, and that the annual revenue exceeds the accruing interest, one hundred thousand dollars, it would require twelve years to absorb the arrears, and during that long interval the painful reflection that we live in a State whose engagements are not faithfully kept, must continue to be borne.

If however, the recommendation of the committee is adopted, and these arrears are funded, the State may it is believed, at an early day, recommence the regular payment of interest, and instead of suffering twelve years of mortification and shame, the expiration of that period, as will be shown hereafter, will exhibit a material reduction of the debt by the operation of the sinking fund.

Under all the circumstances of the case, therefore, the committee have brought themselves to the conclusion, that the interest which will be in arrear on the first day of July next, should be funded in the expectation that regular payments may thenceforth be made. They have already submitted estimates which they think may be relied on, showing the ability of the State to do this.

In recommending this decisive step, the committee do not believe they have gone in advance of public opinion. They believe they will be sustained by it, and they will be deeply pained, if their expectations in this respect are disappointed. Seeing however, the path of duty plainly before them, and believing that the honor of the commonwealth is involved in the issue, they could not be induced to hesitate in their course, by any considerations personal to themselves. If their recommendation is adopted by this General Assembly, and the measure brings with it those decided advantages which the committee anticipate, a retrospect of the part they have taken in it, will hereafter afford them high satisfaction. If on the contrary, their course shall be condemned by the Legislature and their constituents, the committee will still have left to them the rich consolation of having acted in obedience to their own clear convictions of duty.

Before closing this report, already extended perhaps to too great a length, the committee think it right to show that under any circumstances the burdens which must be borne for some years by the people will not be of very long duration.

The sinking fund, on the first day of December 1845, amounted to \$1,411,911 '59, having been increased in the course of the preceding fiscal year \$135,604 '80.

The entire public debt of the State at this time, including the