

taxes would unsettle public credit, and, at the same time, as the Committee have already observed, would create great dissatisfaction in the tax payer. It is, therefore, better to wait awhile, in order that a proper estimate of the future revenue from the internal improvement companies may be made, so that when reduction does take place, it may be made on some sensible plan, which will really give relief to the tax payer; and, at the same time, give assurance to the public creditor that his rights will be fully respected.

But a greater question than all this is to be solved, and one which affects the permanent interest of the people of this State. Considerations in a moral point of view, and in a pecuniary one, as it affects the pockets of the people and the future development of the great interests of the State, are involved in the question. That question is: how far it would be a wise policy, by a reduction of taxes, to lessen the ability of the State to pay not only the interest of the public debt—which of course must be paid—but also to put it out of her power to discharge the principal at an *early day*?

As a principle of morals and justice, he who contracts a debt should pay it. In relation to the obligation of individuals in contracting debts, the common sense of mankind, and the well understood social obligations of man, have settled this beyond controversy. With States, it is the same. It is argued, with great show of reason and justice, that one generation has no right, moral, legal or constitutional, to impose a debt on a succeeding one. If this is true in the abstract, how much more so is it when the generation which contracts the debt, derives advantage from the money obtained by loan, and which has been employed in works of internal improvement, as the means of adding to the revenues and wealth of the State. If the debt has been contracted wrecklessly or uselessly, those ought by still stronger obligations of moral justice, to bear the burden, who contracted it. This is so universally admitted in modern days, that in nearly all the States of the Union, and in the General Government, no loan is now proposed to be made, which does not appropriate a portion of the public resources belonging to the generation which creates the debt, not only to the punctual payment of the interest, but also to the final extinguishment of the principal. The last loan made by the United States pledged the public loans for this purpose, and our own State, carrying out this maxim of enlightened morality, has directed the establishment of a sinking fund, which is sacredly intended for the redemption of the principal of the public debt. Indeed—to the high honor of our country be it spoken—it may be considered as an established principle of American Finance, that no public loan should be created, unless contemporaneous provision is made for discharging principal, as well as interest, within a single genera-