

tion. Our own constitution very wisely and honestly prescribes "that no debt shall hereafter be contracted by the Legislature, unless such debt shall be authorised by a law providing for the collection of an annual tax or taxes sufficient to pay the interest on such debt as it falls due, and also to discharge the principal thereof within fifteen years from the time of contracting the same, and the taxes laid for this purpose shall not be repealed or applied to any other object until said debt and the interest thereon shall be fully discharged." It would be well for us and wise in us, to apply this principle to our present debt; for, perhaps, there is no feature of our reformed Constitution which has given more satisfaction than this very one. Without such a principle, posterity would have no protection against the wildest schemes and the most reckless involvment, in which their ancestors might entangle them. To guard against such results, our own Constitution—as has just been remarked—has thrown around the borrowing power, restrictions in the highest degree stringent.

But it is in a practical point of view, as it affects our own interests and those of the State, that this subject is worthy of the most serious attention of the people of Maryland. As preliminary to the examination of the matter, in this point of view, the Committee think it proper to present a statement of what is the actual debt, the payment of the interest on which, and for the extinguishment of the principal of which, resources are to be raised by taxation. The Committee have endeavored to prepare the statement with great care.

The total nominal amount of the State debt, composed of bonds and stocks bearing various rates of interest, the greater part being 5 per cent, according to the Treasurer's Report, made up to the 1st of December 1851, amount to \$15,290,668.

From the above, should be deducted the amount of the following loans, properly included in the capital of the State debt, but not actually a burden on the people of the State, because the interest on the said loans is paid or supplied by the internal improvement companies for whose benefit they were contracted.

Amount of nominal debt, \$15,290,668

The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad pays  
directly the interest on \$3,200,000,

issued under the act of 1838, ch. 386. By a decision of the Court of Appeals, to be found on page 258 of the Journal of the House of Delegates, of December session, 1847, the proceeds of the Railroad must be applied, first to the payment of the interest, even in preference to the charge for repairs and reconstruction of the road.