ment of the condition and governance, under Providence, of a people, whose every eye is directed toward you in search of the course you would pursue with reference to their social and moral elevation. The permanency of this State, and the growth, both intellectual and numerical, of its people, depends in no small degree upon your acts, influenced and regulated by a careful examination into their capacity to meet such exactions and assessments as you may deem expedient to the support and maintenance of the State.

The present era of our political existence commences under the most auspicious and favorable circumstances. It seems to have pleased an all wise Providence, at the present juncture, to throw over us an ample shield as a savor from those external evils with which countries more favored in other respects than ours, have had to contend. And except certain factions and bickerings, which now prevail between several tribes in our jurisdiction, and which by a patient examination into their cause and true bearings, we hope, in a short time to settle, nothing threatens to disturb or check the onward march of our new State. Our former relations, are changed; and this change involves expenses, which formerly were incidental to the exercise of the functions of an authority, from which in our independence, we have wrought a separation—and this being the case, your attentive consideration is invited for a moment to the subject of the revenue.

I would recommend, gentlemen, that you take into your special consideration the laws regulating the imposts on foreign commodities, of which large amounts are consumed annually in our State. Heretofore the revenue growing out of this source, owing to a large proportion of the expenditures being supplied by means arising from appropriations made by the State Society, met but a small amount of the common expenses. And I suggest, that the duties be raised to nine per cent. ad valorem, and if collected on goods at prices offered by merchantmen or importers, at the rate of five per cent. This would enable the Government to realize a considerable improvement upon the former rates of imposts, and would give a lift to the finances of much importance. I need not dwell on this subject, much depends on the view which you may take of its importance, being yourselves, gentlemen, able to regulate and determine it. In connection, however, with this subject, I think it highly important that the light and anchorage dues should remain as they are; from the fact, that it is to the interest of the State, that every inducement should be offered to foreigners wishing to make our port for the produce we may have to offer, and if heavy customs be exacted, the probability is great, that they would rather pass it than enter.

The "Constitution" provides for the levying of taxes on persons holding property in the State, agreeably to their worth. To make the tax burdensome, would be in the face of things. In a community like this, it would render three-fourths unable to pay any at all, and the plan laid out for large calculations would end, like the present license system, in deriving barely one-fifth of the means growing out of its custom. Nor would it end here. Men who trade, or merchants who are the most able of the community, would increase their prices to meet so heavy demands, and this would affect the poor. I offer these hints, as I view them with some degree of importance; and in connection with them, is a poll tax, of which please use your own pleasure.

The law regulating the license custom, is too high. I once thought differently; but many years experience, watching the various turns it has taken, assures me of this fact. Our community is a commercial one. For this reason, I advise a moderation of commercial license sixty-six and two-thirds per cent. Agriculture, by no means, is to be despised. But the very absence of utilities necessary to its operation, increases the doubt of its becoming very great until men of substance take it in hand, and develope those rich plants

whose fruits, &c. will offer commodities differing from the natural ones now in market to freight ships of foreign nations.

I shall furnish in a day or two as true a statement of the finances, as I have been able to gather from the Treasurer's account, and from other accounts furnished me since commencing my duties. By them you will be able to ascertain the real worth of your Treasury, and make such calculations therefrom, as will suit your Appropriation Bills. Under this head, I would remark, that upon examination, I find the government buildings in a sad state. They want much repairs. I find, also, that the munitions of defence, except small arms, are far from being in an effective condition. Besides the government is in want of ammunition.

I have, since commencing my official business, assembled the leading headmen of the different towns, within the precincts of Garraway and River Cavally, and informed them of the change in our Government, without leading them to infer that the protection we have heretofore had from vessels of war on this coast will at all be diminished. There is one tribe from which no deputation has been received. The true cause of which, I am not, at present, prepared to report. The tribes between the Rivers Cavally and San Pedro, being too far distant, I deputed Mr. Bowen to wait upon and remind them of the leading and principal points of the treaties effected between themselves and the former Government, years ago. They send assurances of friendship, with promises to meet, in every respect, the wishes and mandates of the Government. I have not had it in my power, as yet, to secure deputations, from the different, what is here called, "Bush tribes," in our jurisdiction. But I must say to you, gentlemen, that our State was never less threatened with invasion, than at the present crisis. The most friendly feelings, as far as I can learn, prevails among the surrounding tribes toward us; and except for the difference which we maintain against the Poh River tribe, which despoiled the Padee people of the lands they held of us, as by right of tenure; and the petty factions existing between the Grahways and Half Cavallys, I might say with truth, that we are at peace. Under this head, there is one subject to which I would call your attention. I refer to negotiations with tribes, not beyond four or five days travel, whence a large amount of valuable productions might be brought to our market, by sending out commissioners to treat with their chiefs, and open a way for their free passage to this place. Some little expense would attend such an expedition, and I beg to call your consideration to it.

Your attention is further invited to the erection of a Seminary by the Methodist Mission in the settlement of Harper. I have not been informed of all the particulars connected with it, but should an application be made for a site for it, I have thought of no place more suitable than a portion of that division of the Public farm which falls to the Government.

Some time during last year, Commissioners were sent by the people to Baltimore, in Maryland, to treat with the Md. St. Colonization Society in regard to the terms of separation. After concluding the treaty, they returned home, and made their report last May to the people, having no other organ at the time. I now submit it to your consideration, and final ratification; if it be your pleasure to do so. Being a party in arranging and settling its particulars, I can say but little in regard to it, except that I consider it ought to be confirmed and respected. While speaking of Commissioners, gentlemen, you are aware, that it is to the interest of the Government to petition its acknowledgment, at as early a period as conveniently may be. In fact, until this be done, there are fears of a want of that kind of power which is influenced by right to enforce the Revenue laws over our entire jurisdiction. For this reason I advise, at the present Session, that a delegation be appointed to visit Liberia proper, and make arrangements to this effect.

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XII. Newspapers
A. Maryland Colonization Journal

2. June 1841 (n.s. I, 1)--May 1861 (n.s. X, 24)

1854