

Message of the Governor.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT.

RALEIGH, November 17, 1868.
To the Honorable, the General Assembly of
North Carolina:

GENTLEMEN.—It is proper that at your first regular session under the new Constitution, I should lay before you "information of the affairs of the State," and recommend to your consideration such measures as may be deemed expedient.

The people of the State have reconstructed their government on the basis of the equal rights of all. The State is quiet and tranquil. There is no ground for apprehension that secession will again be attempted, or that the peace of the country will be disturbed.

The year now closing has been richly crowned with harvests. The seasons have been propitious. A plentiful supply of food has been produced for our whole population, so that want in this respect will not be felt during the coming year by any who will labor for a living. Fruits of all kinds have been gathered in abundance. The staples of cotton and tobacco are affording fair profits to those who have produced them, while from timber and naval stores a considerable portion of our people are realizing good returns, as in former years. Our commerce is increasing. Our mineral resources are even more in process of development. Our railroads are recovering from the oppression under which they formerly labored, and promising better returns than heretofore to the State and to the Stockholders, while new lines of communication are being laid out, destined to penetrate and develop the great natural resources of portions of the State heretofore untouched by the hand of improvement. The State debt has been established on a solid basis, thus giving promise that at no distant day the bonds of the State will command as much in the market as those of the most favored and prosperous States.

We have great cause to be thankful to Almighty God for the manifold blessings which He bestows upon us, and we can confidently look forward, under His protection and guidance, for a condition of prosperity and happiness which we have not heretofore enjoyed.

STATE DEBT AND FINANCES.

The State debt and finances will doubtless receive the thoughtful and careful consideration of the General Assembly.

The amount of the State debt on the 1st of October, 1868, was nineteen million two hundred and nine thousand nine hundred and forty five dollars. (\$19,209,945.) This includes estimated amount of post due interest to be funded under act of August 20, 1868, of two millions 11 dollars (\$2,000,000.) The above amount (\$19,209,945.) is inclusive of bonds issued for internal improvement purposes since May 20, 1861, and prior to the year 1866. The amount of these bonds is one million one hundred and twenty eight thousand dollars. (\$1,128,000.) and the estimated interest thereon due and unpaid is one hundred and eighty thousand five hundred and ten dollars (\$180,510.)

The amount of interest which has matured October 1st, 1868, and been paid in cash, is one hundred and twelve thousand one hundred and one dollars. (\$112,101.) The interest maturing at subsequent dates during the present fiscal year is as follows: January 1st, 1869, three hundred and eight thousand one hundred and ninety seven dollars. (\$308,197.) April 1st, 1869, three hundred and four thousand one hundred and one dollars. (\$304,101.) July 1st, 1869, three hundred and eight thousand one hundred and ninety seven dollars. (\$308,197.) Total for fiscal year ending September 30, 1869, one million thirty-two thousand five hundred and ninety-six dollars. (\$1,032,595.) The amount of interest above stated as falling due April 1st, 1869, includes interest on bonds four millions five hundred thousand dollars. (\$4,500,000.) yet to be issued, bearing date October 1st, 1868.

The balance remaining in the hands of the Public Treasurer October 1st, 1868, was one hundred and fifty thousand thirty-four dollars forty-eight cents. (\$150,034.84.) The amount from taxes, including payments in October, is tw-hundred and twenty-six thousand seven hundred and six dollars forty-two cents. (\$226,706.42.) The taxes from several counties remain unpaid, but we cannot expect more than seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) from this source.

The estimated probable expenses of the State government during the present fiscal year will be, three hundred and seventy-five thousand two hundred and forty dollars (\$375,230.) Add interest falling due during fiscal year, of one million thirty-two thousand five hundred and ninety-six dollars. (\$1,032,595.) will leave the amount to be provided for one million four hundred and seven thousand eight hundred and twenty-six dollars. (\$1,403,826.) To meet this the Treasurer will have fifty thousand thirty-four dollars and eighty-four cents. (\$50,034.84.) after paying one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.) temporary loan, taxes received since October 1st, 1868, ninety-five thousand one hundred and ninety-six dollars and thirty-seven cents. (\$95,186.87.) estimated taxes due, seventy-five thousand dollars. (\$75,000.) proceeds of sale of North Carolina railroad bonds, one hundred and seventeen thousand six hundred dollars. (\$117,600.) making a total of three hundred and thirty-seven thousand eight hundred and thirty-one dollars and twenty-one cents; (\$337,831.21.) Leaving the amount of one million and sixty-nine thousand three hundred and ninety-four dollars and seventy-nine cents. (\$1,069,934.70.) to be provided for taxation during the present fiscal year.

The stocks and bonds held by the State in corporations, and interest due from said corporations, is as follows: Stocks, eight million five hundred and thirty-four thousand hundred dollars. (\$8,534,500.) Bonds, four million two hundred and thirty-four thousand dollars. (\$4,234,000.) Interest, four hundred and seventy-two thousand five hundred dollars. (\$472,500.) Making a total of thirteen million two hundred and forty-one thousand dollars. (\$23,241,000.)

I recommend that some mode be provided to ensure the payment of this interest, and of such interest as may be due the State in future from corporations.

The report of the Public Treasurer will contain full details of the public debt, with recommendations as to the best means for providing for interest. I have full confidence in that officer, and respectfully commend his statements and views to the consideration of the General Assembly.

The estimated value of all the property in the State, lands, and their improvements included, is two hundred and fifty millions of dollars. (\$250,000,000.) I do not regard this as an extravagant estimate but assuming that it is, and putting it at two hundred millions. (\$200,000,000.) it is clear that the people of the State are fully able to carry on their government and at the same time provide for the payment of the interest on their debt. An ad valorem tax of one per cent on two hundred millions would raise two millions. At a half per cent, it would be one million. A citizen worth five thousands dollars clear of debt, would pay twenty-five dollars to the State, in order to raise the million that will be necessary—and so on in proportion. The interest on the State debt should be met promptly and in good faith, and the taxes necessary to meet it should be levied.

The Constitution which we have all sworn to support, provides that the public debt shall never be questioned. If we hesitate to meet the interest of the debt, or if we fail from any cause to make due provision to meet it, we thereby "question" the debt, and do violence

to our solemn obligation. I believe that the General Assembly will impose, and that the people of the State will cheerfully pay, what ever amount may be necessary to meet the interest on the debt. I believe it will be popular to make such provision, but whether popular or not, it should be done. The general question for a statesman is, what is right?—what does duty require under the circumstances? If the answer is, do a certain thing, do it, and leave it to time, events, and a just public judgment to vindicate and sustain the laws.

INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.

The people of the State are so fully committed to internal improvements that I do not believe it necessary to say but little on the subject—Since the close of the rebellion State and has been extended to the Wilmington, Charlotte and Rutherford Road—to the Fayetteville and Western Road—to the Tarborough and Winston Roads, and to the Western North Carolina Road. The work on the latter Road is being vigorously prosecuted between Morganton and Asheville. A company has been organized, under an act of the General Assembly at its last session, for the Western Division of this Road, and it is expected that during the coming year the route will be surveyed, and much of the work put under contract. While I would properly estimate the importance of the other improvements referred to, I could not overstate the value of the extension west of the Blue Ridge. These Roads, one to Paine's Rock, and the other to Durwood, will open to immigration, and will greatly improve and benefit a region of the State which has heretofore been neglected, and which is equal to any in the world in natural resources. There is no work to which the people of the State are more fully committed, both by interest and inclination; and I have every confidence that it is in hands that will press it to speedy completion.

IMMIGRATION.

The Constitution provides that "there shall be established, in the office of the Secretary of State, a Bureau of Statistics, Agriculture, and Immigration, under such regulations as the General Assembly may prescribe."

The attention of the General Assembly is especially invited to that portion of the report of the Secretary of State heretofore transmitted, which refers to this subject. No state in the Union presents greater inducements than ours does to immigrants. I feel sure the General Assembly concurs with me as to the importance of encouraging immigration; and I trust that body will at once adopt such measures on the subject as it may deem practicable and effective in their operation. We have a salubrious climate, a varied and fertile soil, an abundance of the most valuable minerals, inimitable water power, fine grazing lands, vast forests of timber of all kinds, a long sweep of sea-coast, and, in fine, everything material and physical, which in a country in some respects almost new, can attract immigrants and fill the measure of their expectations. Our government is now settled on a solid basis—the laws are over all alike, and are faithfully and honestly administered. Society is peaceful and tranquil. Immigrants, therefore, will not only be welcomed by our people, but will be protected and respected, and a fair field will be opened to them in common with those who are here, to improve their condition.

EDUCATION.

The attention of the General Assembly is respectfully invited to the report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, herewith transmitted. That officer is diligently engaged in his duties. I am satisfied, from my knowledge of his character and qualifications, that he will be able to put in operation, at an early period, under the sanction of the General Assembly, a system of schools and means of education in all respects better and more extensive than any heretofore in existence in the State.

The University of the State is inseparably connected with the free public schools.—Both should be fostered. Education in agriculture, mechanics, mining, engineering, and in all the useful arts and sciences, should be encouraged. Normal instruction should be provided for at once, that we may have well educated teachers of our own for our public schools.

Nearly all the State school fund, the proceeds for the most part of the funds deposited with this State by the general government in 1860, has been lost.

It is unnecessary to show how it was lost, or to dilate upon the advantages thus snatched from us. Regrets are vain for what is past. Let us improve the present, and address ourselves to the future. We must have free public schools for the all the children of the State at what ever cost. This is a duty which can neither be postponed nor evaded. So thoroughly am I impressed with this duty, and so earnestly am I committed to every feasible measure to render its full performance certain, that for the assurance that it will be thus performed I would despair of free popular government in North Carolina. "Education is the cheap defence of nations," not only from without but within. It is that light which distinguishes refined and civilized from barbarian races. It forms and compacts the only society among men which is worthy of the name. It touches the earth, and it blossoms with luxuriance; its soil yields its choicest fruits, its mines open and pour out their varied treasures, and its rivers and seas are whitened with commerce, which carries with it not only exchangeable wealth but ideas in government, literature, science and art. It is the only sure basis of good morals, for without it the Divine Word, the fountain of all truth, would be a sealed book. It is the strongest bulwark that can be erected to protect the rights of property. Property holders, are therefore, especially interested in promoting education.—Taxes for such a purpose should be cheerful and promptly paid. The affluent and the enlightened can afford to care for this respect for the poor and the ignorant, since it is not merely their duty, but their highest interests are thus best subserved. But little, if any, of the money expended for education is sent out of the State. It remains with us, and while our people are thus enriched with knowledge, they are not rendered poorer even in money, as the latter is collected from the citizens by one hand of the State and immediately disbursed to them by the other.

The people of the State are anxious that industrious and worthy immigrants should come hither and settle among us. It is a primary question with all such immigrants whether in the communities or States in which they are invited to settle, there are facilities for educating their children. If we do not put in operation as good public schools as there are in other portions of the country, we cannot hope to attract to the State any considerable number of immigrants. They will continue to turn their steps towards other regions, not mere inviting than ours, it is true, to climate, soil and material resources, but in which they can secure for their children, at the public charges, a system of schools to fit them to become intelligent and useful citizens.

The people of North Carolina have long been a unit in favor of education. From the days of Yancey, Murphy, Stanly, Cameron, Gaston, Caldwell, and others, to the present, their enlightened statesmen of all parties have joined this as the first duty of the State.—I am persuaded that the purpose to educate the rising generation is as firmly fixed now as at any former period. This is a subject on which all can agree. A rivalry can exist in this respect which will be generous in its nature, which will violate no sacred rule of charity, and which, honoring those who may engage in it, will confer immensurable benefits and blessings on this and future generations.

The expedition incurred thus far in the payment of the mill-dam is quite small. I believe

that the General Assembly during its present session provide for a general and uniform system of public schools. The means for this, while modest, are ample, and will easily be repaid, but in other respects there will be no difficulty in the use of the funds of the treasury, or in the appropriation itself, to suggest this.

The Board of Education and Trustees of the University will doubtless make reports to the General Assembly of whatever they see fit to the condition of the educational interests con-

fided to them. Such time limits are fully organized, and have transmitted some impor-

tant business.

REVENUE TAXES.

The Constitution provides that "the General Assembly shall provide by proper legislation for giving to municipalities and districts an adequate sum on the subject matter of their taxes."

In the conflict always going on between capital and labor, the latter is more likely to suffer than the former, first, because money or capital is power, and secondly, because capital is generally controlled by a greater degree of intelligence than that which characterizes labor. Labor cannot afford to come into conflict with capital in its rights, for the reason that it can not, like capital, return within itself and sustain results. Both should be protected in such manner as to prevent either from encroaching on the rights of the other. Contracts in writing should be encouraged, and should be strictly enforced. The methods of labor should be required to perform his contracts with a scrupulous fidelity, and on the other hand no opportunity should be afforded to the contractor or employer to evade payment when the service has thus been performed.

The life of labor is steady enterprise and investment, unshaken by idleness, indolence, non-performance, or slack performance of contracts by those employed. I can perceive no difference, in a legal or moral point of view, between a contract broken by a mercenary or laborer, and an obligation disregarded by a capitalist or employer. The mercenary and the laborer should be protected, but not to the detriment of the employer, where the latter has fully complied with his obligation. The former should be assured, while laboring, that the reward of his labor will be realized, and to effect this, there should be a law in every case until he is paid. The remedy should be plain, speedy and cheap. As a general rule the mechanic and laborer cannot afford to engage in suits at law and pay fees.

This is a subject which creates no small interest among the people. Those especially who live by their labor will continue to press the subject upon the attention of the General Assembly until suitable laws for their protection are enacted. A workingman myself, I feel a deep interest in whatever concerns the welfare of the State. Our present and future prosperity must be based on labor. Labor should not only be honored, but it should be protected and promoted by every practical means.

But while labor should be protected and honored, idleness should receive no countenance or favor. Every one should be required to pursue such honest calling for a living; and the presumption should be as it fairly and justly is, that an habitual idler with no known or visible means of support, is in a condition to be tempted to the commission of crime. It is idlers and loungers who, for the most part, fill our jails and workhouses, as they will fill the penitentiary. There is work of some kind for all to do, and all should be employed.

STATUE LAWS.

The law of creditor and debtor is of the first importance. The relations of these two classes should be plainly and carefully defined, and contracts should be promptly enforced. Our State government will not be in complete operation until every impediment to the collection of debts is removed. Stay laws which give indulgence beyond the ordinary statutory plan, or beyond the ordinary stay of execution on sufficient security, are, under any circumstances, of doubtful validity. The "dead day" of payment, as it is termed, is postponed in most cases to be felt with added force by the debtor.

A sound and judicious credit system should not be disregarded, but should rather be fostered and maintained, but such a system is impaired, if not destroyed, by general laws which may be said to place the creditor for years in the hands of the debtor, with the certainty in many cases of loss of the debt. The debtor may plead for indulgence and lenity as long as it is reasonable to do so, or as long as there is a well grounded assurance that he will be able to pay, but complaint may justly proceed from the creditor, who, having been wronged in one by first extending credit for his property or goods, and by subsequent indulgence and for

bearance. Stay laws of various kinds have been in operation in this State for years. I say nothing as to their constitutionality, but even when the unfortunate condition in which we have been placed during this period is considered, it cannot be assumed that the debtor will be harshly treated if now required to meet his obligations. The losses incurred by the rebellion are not confined to particular cases. They were general, affecting the whole people of the State in every walk of society. If a debtor cannot pay in the last resort, after reasonable indulgence has been extended to him, he is a bankrupt. What renders him bankrupt—is the rebellion, or his own improvidence, or want of economy or foresight—is not material to the argument. We may lament his misfortunes and sympathize with him, but still the fact remains that he is still in possession of property which justly belongs to his creditors, some of whom may have been reduced to his condition. The law is over all states as it is over persons. There can be no appeal from it. Its action is final, and its result is certain. The principles of the national debt, and the completion of every work of improvement which has been undertaken will be speedily sprung into new life. The debt of the State is to be paid off with a bold front from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It is stretching itself out along the coast, and spreading over it the broad ocean, and in the end it will cover the entire globe.

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