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 apprehending 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 bread 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 once 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 credit has been re-established on a sound 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 is bestowing 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 past due interest to be funded under act of August 20, 1868, of two millions of 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. ($1,032,596.) 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 eighty-four cents. ($150,034 84.) The amount from taxes, including payments in October, is two 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 thirty dollars ($375,230.) Add interest falling due during fiscal year, of one million thirty two thousand five hundred and ninety-six dollars, ($1,032,596,) will leave the amount to be provided for one million four hundred and seven thousand eight hundred and twenty-six dollars. ($1,408,826.) 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, ($95,196 37;) 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 nine hundred and ninety four dollars and seventy-nine cents, $1,069,994 79,) to be provided for by 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 five 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 whole Judiciary. I believe that the General Assembly will concur, 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 proper to make such provision, but whether proper or not it should be done. The great question for a statesman is, what is right? what does duty require under the circumstances? If the answer be, do a certain thing, do it, and leave it to time, events and a just public judgment to vindicate and sustain the doer.

INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.

The people of the State are fully committed to internal improvements that I deem it unnecessary to say but little on the subject. Since the close of the rebellion State aid has been extended to the Wilmington Charlotte and Rutherford Road—to the Fayetteville and Western Road—to the Chatham and Coalfields Road—to the Tarborough and Williamston Road, 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 the last session, for the Western Division of this Road, and it is expected that during the coming year the cross ties will be surveyed, and much of the work put under contract. Where I would properly estimate the importance of the other improvements referred to, I could not overrate the value of the extension west of the Blue Ridge. These Roads connect Salisbury and the other to Dobstown, will open to transportation 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 herewith transmitted which refers to this subject. No State in the Union presents greater inducements than ours to immigrants. Their wise the General Assembly can do more as to the importance of encouraging immigration; and I trust that body will [illegible] a liberal sum to carry the subject [illegible] in a practicable and effective manner. We have a salubrious climate, a varied and fertile soil, an abundance of the most valuable minerals, inexhaustible water power, fine grazing lands, vast forests of timber of all kinds, a long sweep of sea coast; and, in fine, everything, moral and physical, which in a country in the 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 impartially and honestly administered. Society is peaceable 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 1836, 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 all the children of the State at what ever cost. This is a duty which can neither be postponed nor evaded. So the naughty are impressed with this duty, and so earnestly am I committed to every feasible measure to render its full performance certain, that but 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 conducts 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, specially interested in promoting education.—Taxes for such a purpose should be cheerfully and promptly paid. The affluent and the enlightened can afford to care in 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 imigrants 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 more inviting than ours, it is true, in 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, Murphrey, Stanly, Cameron, Gaston, Caldwell, and others, to the present, their enlightened statesmen of all parties have enjoined this as the firs 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 immeasurable benefits and blessings on this and future generations.

I recommend, in the most earnest terms, that the General Assembly during the present session provide for a general and efficient system of public schools. [illegible] for the white and colored children shall be separate, but in other respects there should be no difference in the character of the schools, or in the provisions for their support.

The Board of Education, as constituted by the Universal will [illegible] the General Assembly at its last session [illegible] the conditions of the situation [illegible] Board [illegible] fully organized, and have the matter [illegible] hand.

PENITENTIARY.

The [illegible] the Penitentiary [illegible] Assembly shall provide by proper legislation for giving to [illegible] and repeals herewith the subject matter of this [illegible]

In the conflict always going on between capital and labor, the latter is more likely to suffer at the former's hand, because [illegible] of capital or power, and especially because capital [illegible] of things on which labor will [illegible] labor. Labor cannot afford to [illegible] against capital [illegible] the [illegible] to wait for [illegible] capital [illegible] and [illegible] capital. In the [illegible] the [illegible] capital [illegible] the other. Contracts in writing should be [illegible] enforced, and should be strictly enforced.

The [illegible] of labor [illegible] to perform his contract [illegible] and [illegible] should be afforded to the contractor [illegible] power to compel payment when the [illegible] has fully performed. The [illegible] with the [illegible] capital [illegible] fully employed [illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible] the [illegible] rewarded [illegible] the [illegible] until he is paid. [illegible] the [illegible] and labor [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible]