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 equal and free indeed. There is no ground for apprehending civil commotion. Let capital be assured that the peace of the country will be undisturbed.

The year now closing has been fully crowned with harvests. The crops have been propitious. A plentiful supply of bread has been produced for our whole population so that want in this respect will not [illegible] during the coming year. [illegible] for a living. [illegible] have been gathered in abundance. The [illegible] tion and [illegible] those who have [illegible] the [illegible] will be [illegible] timber and naval stores [illegible] peanuts of our people are [illegible] good returns as in former years. Our commerce is increasing our mineral resources are now in process of development, the railroads are recovering from the depression under which they formerly labored, and probably better returns than heretofore to the State and to the stockholders, while new lines of communication are being laid out, about 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 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 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 [illegible] 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 1863. The amount of these bonds is one million one hundred and twenty-eight thousand dollars, ($1,128,000.) and the accrued 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 was [illegible] 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 ninety-four dollars eighty-four cents, ($150,094.84.) 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 pay the expenses of the State government during the present fiscal year will be three hundred and seventy-five thousand two hundred and forty dollars, ($375,240.) Add interest falling due during fiscal year, of one million thirty-two thousand five hundred and ninety-six dollars, ($1,032,596,) and leave the amount to be provided for one million four hundred and seven thousand eight hundred and twenty-six dollars, ($1,407,826.) To meet this the Treasurer will have fifty-four thousand dollars and eighty-four cents, ($54,084.84,) 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, ($13,241,000.)

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 thousand 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 this State will cheerfully pay, whatever may be necessary to meet the interest on the debt. I believe it to be proper to say such provision for taxation ought not to be delayed. The great question is, what is right to do? Let the answer be given promptly, and let it be followed by immediate action. It is now in the power of the General Assembly to do a great public judgment for blessing and not before the doors.

INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.

The people of the State are so fully committed to internal improvements that I deem it unnecessary to say but little on the subject. Before the close of the Rebellion, work had been begun on the Western North Carolina and Atlantic and Western Road to the Tennessee and Mississippi Road, and to the Western North Carolina Road. The work on the latter Road is being vigorously prosecuted towards Morganton and Asheville. A company has been organized under an act of the General Assembly at its last session for the Western Division of Mill Road, and it is expected that during the coming year the road will be ready for [illegible] work. I would properly estimate the importance of the other improvements of a local character, such as the Blue Ridge. These roads are to take back and the other hand, are expected to contribute and will greatly benefit and benefit a region of the State which has heretofore been neglected, and which is capable of adding to the wealth of the State and the comfort of its people. The roads are more fully committed both by interest and by honor, and I have every confidence that it is a work that will prove to be greatly benefited.

EDUCATION.

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 for the year ending, which refers to this subject. No [illegible] to the Union presents greater inducements than ours does to immigrants. I feel sure the General Assembly [illegible] with me as to the importance of [illegible] gration; and I trust that [illegible] will [illegible] adopt such measures [illegible] degree possible. [illegible] Our [illegible] and fertile soil, an abundance of the most valuable minerals, [illegible] water-power, free grazing lands, and [illegible] market of all kinds, a long [illegible] country, and, in fact, everything, [illegible] physical, which go to make a country [illegible] almost [illegible] the [illegible] of their expenditure. [illegible] government is now settled on a solid basis. The laws are over all alike, and we [illegible] and honestly administered. Society is [illegible] ble and tranquil. Immigrants, therefore, will not only be welcomed by our people, but will be protected and respected, and a full field will be opened to them, in common with those who are here, to improve their condition.

FINANCE.

The attention of the General Assembly is respectfully invited to the report of the Treasurer of Public Instruction, herewith transmitted. That officer is deservedly engaged in his duties. I entertain from my knowledge of his ability and qualifications, that he will be able to put in operation at an early period, under the direction 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 happily equipped with the free public schools. Both should be fostered. Education in agricultural, mechanics, mining, commerce, 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 soon to be established public schools.

Nearly all the State school fund, the proceeds for the next part of the fund, deposited with railroad by the general government in 1838, has been lost. It is unfortunately to show how it was lost, or to fix upon the [illegible] which resulted in [illegible] the [illegible] the future. We must have free public schools for the children of the State at which [illegible] be postponed not avoided. [illegible] I impressed with the duty, and so earnestly am I committed to every feasible measure to render his 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 conquests the only security among men which is worthy of the name. It touches the earth, and it blossoms with luxuriance; its seed yields its choicest fruits, its mines open at our feet 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 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 immeasurable benefits and blessings on this and future generations.

I recommend, in the most earnest terms, that the General Assembly during its present session provide for a general and thorough system of public schools. The schools for the white and colored children should be separate. [illegible] the [illegible] the government must be equal to all.

The Board of Education and Trustees of the University will doubtless make reports to the General Assembly at an early day as to the condition of the University interests and [illegible] Both these institutions are fully organized and [illegible] under [illegible]

CONVICTS AND LABOR.

The Constitution provides that the General Assembly shall provide by proper legislation for the employment and labor of convicts and [illegible] on the subject of labor is [illegible]

In the [illegible] labor [illegible] repealed and labor [illegible] be [illegible] as in the former, [illegible] money or capital in power, and necessarily [illegible] capital is generally [illegible] a crushing degree of intelligence than that which [illegible] to be labor. I [illegible] capital [illegible] labor [illegible] capital [illegible] labor should be protected and [illegible] labor should be [illegible] protected to every [illegible] labor.

But while labor should be protected and honored there should never be counterpoise of labor. Every man should be required to pursue some honest calling for a living, or if the presumption should be as it fairly and justly is that an honest labor will be the most tenable means of support, it is a common right to be compelled to the consideration of [illegible] It is idleness and business which for the [illegible] of all our jails and workhouses, as [illegible] of all the penitentiary. There is work [illegible] employed.

[illegible]

The law of contracts and [illegible] should be plainly and [illegible] fixed. The State government should be compelled to contract in [illegible] expenditure of [illegible] with the [illegible] of payment. The [illegible] expected to [illegible] and [illegible] labor [illegible] employed. Less perfection [illegible] difference in a piece of metal passed now, between a contract made by a mechanic or laborer and an obligation [illegible] by a capitalist or employer. The mechanic and the laborer should be protected, but not to the detriment of the employer when the latter has fully complied with his obligation. The latter should be assured, while laboring, that the reward of his labor will be realized, and, to effect this, the remedy should be a lien in every case and be just. The remedy should be plain, speedy and cheap. As a general rule the mechanic and laborer should be [illegible] as the employer of labor and capital.

[illegible]

[illegible] Assembly will [illegible] I feel a deep interest in whatever concerns the [illegible] prosperity must be based on labor. Labor cannot and ought to be honored, but it should be protected and promoted in every [illegible]

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