

To whom all letters on business must be addressed

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GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.

To the Honorable, the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina:

By the constitution of our State, the Governor is required from time to time to give to the General Assembly a report of the affairs of the State, and to recommend to their consideration such measures as he may deem expedient.

Before proceeding to the discharge of this duty, imposed by the constitution, it is proper that in the manner and in the face of the people of the State, I should make due acknowledgments to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, for the many blessings and privileges He has bestowed upon us, and invoke His continued guardianship over our State and nation.

For that the great and glorious God, who has been struggling to repair and rebuild the fortunes of the State, which were so sad and squandered in a most calamitous struggle with the Federal Government, it will be no good or useful purpose to enter on the execution of the duty of my office. Every one has his own opinion on the subject, and instead of endeavoring to open fresh the bleeding wounds, or to revive the memories of the sad past, it behooves us all to turn our minds to the execution of our duty.

STATE DEBT AND FINANCES.

The most important subject which will demand your attention at this session, is the debt and finances of the State.

The report of the public treasurer exhibits the condition of the debt. An analysis of it will show that this debt consists of the following:

Table with 2 columns: Description of debt items and Amount. Includes items like 'Bonds issued since the war', 'Bonds issued during the war', 'Special tax bonds', etc.

SUMMARY OF DEBT.

The principal of the entire debt is \$20,000,000. The total amount of accrued interest is \$4,874,945.

The only securities held by the State from which she derives any income are the \$3,000,000 stock in the North Carolina Railroad Company, on which six per cent. dividends have lately been realized.

Commenting on the foregoing list, I remark that the first class, consisting of the ante-war bonds, is regularly sold some every year, all averaging nearly par, the proceeds of which mainly build our railroads, seem to be of the highest dignity.

The bonds of the third class are also of undoubted validity. In fact many were exchanged for old or ante-war bonds, which had become due, or for those which had become mutilated or scratched—the residue for coupons and interest.

WILMINGTON, N. C., FRIDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 1, 1871.

four per cent. the third year; five per cent in 1875, and so on in regular progression, so as to make an average of six per cent in the whole.

The fifth class stand on the same footing as the second, but they were sold, probably, at a lower average price.

The bonds of the sixth class were sold, nearly all of them, at ruinous rates—many bringing only from ten to thirty cents in currency. Very many were sold under circumstances which ought to have put prudent men in their guard—sold to a reckless and gambling speculator, so that it was plain to the most unwarlike that the agent of the company to which they were issued was not acting with fidelity to the interests of his principal—besides many were disposed of after the general notice to the world of January, 1870 gave notice to the world that they had ordered the return of said bonds, and that future sales of them would be invalid—and lastly, a large number, according to a report made by a committee of the Hon. Representatives, were issued without the certificate required by law.

The seventh class, I am of opinion, the State cannot recognize, but it shows a property purchased with the proceeds of these bonds, such property might be surrendered to bondholders in exchange of bonds before their constitutionality was questioned—further than this the General Assembly, in my opinion, cannot go.

In considering the important and most difficult problem of the public debt, the first question that presents itself is, "What is the actual amount for which the State is in debt, and what percentage is liable?"

2d. This amount being ascertained, are the people of the State able to pay the same, or do they, on the whole, regularly and promptly?

3d. If theoretically able, are they in their present condition of poverty and depression willing to submit to the sacrifice required?

Supposing that the people are either not able or not willing to pay the interest on the public debt for which they are justly liable, what shall be done? Shall we do nothing, or endeavor to effect an honorable settlement with the public creditor?

With regard to the first question, as to the actual amount for which the State is justly liable; in my judgment this cannot be ascertained without investigation by able financiers and business men—men of sound judgment, and of discernment sufficient to detect and detect.

As to the second question: I remark that the report of the auditor shows that the people of the State are in such a state of depression that the total valuation of all personal property will not exceed \$121,000,000. If the State is to be redeemed, the State is admitted; and if properly developed the taxation necessary to pay the interest on a much larger debt would be a light burden.

The low valuation also stated shows that the annual surplus of the State is small, and that to pay this interest and support the State and county governments, as well as to provide for the education of our children, to say nothing of the payment of old debts owing by counties and towns, which in many instances are entailed on the people, will be such a large percentage of the income of our people, that I am forced, reluctantly, to conclude that they cannot bear the necessary taxation without being deprived of their property, and in some cases of even the necessities of life.

If I am correct in supposing that the people cannot now shoulder this taxation, it is unnecessary to inquire into the third question, as to their willingness to do so. Our people are generally honest. Repudiation is a crime in their thoughts.

Any such action will be in the last degree painful and revolting to them. Their evident unwillingness at this time, arises from their belief that they are unable to pay. Whether right or wrong in this opinion, they are honestly determined, I think, on this subject. If it were otherwise, the public mind, then the public creditor has no means of enforcing the satisfaction of his debt by law. The State cannot be sued by him; but even if it were otherwise, all legal process against large communities, unless supported by the law, would be vain.

The experience of creditors of foreign countries in the northwest and elsewhere, shows that it is difficult and costly to recover satisfaction out of a single county in a State. If all the counties are in the same mind and threatened with the same exactions, such recovery will be nearly impossible.

The only remedy which the public creditor can make available, as to the legality of which I express no opinion, is the enforcement, through the courts, of the provisions of such charters of the various railroad companies in which the State owns stock, as subject the stock held by the State, and all the dividends thereon, to the payment of the principal and interest of the bonds issued for the benefit of such companies. In the case of the North Carolina Railroad Company, the Circuit Court of the United States for the district of North Carolina, has already decreed that the dividends declared by the company on the stock belonging to the State, to the payment of interest on the bonds of the State issued for the benefit of that corporation. It is said to be in contemplation to ask the Court to order a sale of the stock held by the State sufficient to reimburse to the bondholders the dividends heretofore paid into the public treasury.

I respectfully suggest to the General Assembly whether it is not proper to order a sale of all the stocks owned by the State, to be paid for in the securities for which such stocks were originally pledged. Such a course would reduce the debt of the State to a large extent, and seems to be demanded by the terms of the contract with the public creditor.

The last question, what shall be done with the public debt, supports two different plans, and will not give any assurance of paying the same within a reasonable time. Several schemes are suggested in this regard. Some say, "let matters remain as they are—make no provision for repudiation—pass no act of partial repudiation—let the future take care of itself." If this plan is adopted, certainly interest will accumulate so rapidly that the very magnitude of the debt will lead to total repudiation eventually. I think this plan neither honest, nor manly, nor wise.

al interests of our State. No people can be prosperous or happy who are bound to the chains of ignorance, and who have no facilities for bursting asunder the fetters which dwarf their minds and cripple all the nobler faculties of their nature. It may be said that North Carolina is too poor to do more than she is now doing for the cause of education. It may be imprudent at this time to place additional burdens on the people in behalf of our Universities or any of the colleges, high schools or normal schools; but we are far behind the people in the cause of common schools. It is much better that all shall receive the rudiments of a good English education, be taught to read fluently, write clearly, and understand the use of figures, than that a few shall be educated in the higher branches of polite literature, and imbued with the knowledge of the dead language, and made proficient in the higher branches of art and science. The thing at present, possibly the only one, which is a larger proportion heretofore.

Whether they can or not is one of the uncertainties of the future. Hence, according to this plan, we may offer the following proposition: Let the State create a one per cent. interest bond, bearing three per cent. interest per year, sufficient to raise funds to pay such interest, then make it optional with the bond holders to exchange their old bonds for the new issue or await the date of issue of new bonds, bearing three per cent. interest, which will secure to them the payment of their claims in full. I suggest, without making any recommendation either pro or con, that it might be provided, that in lieu of \$1,000,000 bonds bearing three per cent. interest might be given in exchange to the creditor for each \$1,000 bond held by him.

In my opinion the people can bear the burden of such a settlement, and the bondholders who do not think they have a specific lien on valuable stocks owned by the State (e. g. those of the North Carolina R. Co.,) would be willing to accept one per cent. or the other. Of course it will be entirely optional with the creditor whether he will accept either proposition, or await future developments. By pursuing this course the General Assembly would merely acknowledge frankly a palpable truth; they would offer the best, which, in the judgment of many, the people will accept, and they would refrain from a repudiation of their contracts.

But whichever course the General Assembly may see fit to adopt, I think it is absolutely essential that a commission shall be appointed, in which the people have confidence, to ascertain and report all facts connected with the public debt, so that some definite conclusion may be reached by the Legislature as to the true, legal, equitable liabilities of the State. This commission should be composed of men from the creditors, their views as to what final and honorable settlement can be made of their claims. Considering the enormous losses of the State, in able bodied men slain or disabled—in the sudden destruction of a system of labor, and the dereliction of property, in the insolvency of all its banks and the loss of their circulating medium—in the ruin of crops by various causes—in the want of good faith of some of her agents, and in the loss of the State's honor and credit, and the long and desperate war—the creditors ought to be reasonable and willing to compromise; and certainly it is not unmanly in our people frankly to confess the facts of their condition—the result of their fruitless struggle.

The above observations, if made, because I feel painfully anxious on account of the condition of our public debt. Repudiation of our contracts in any shape, would leave such a stain on our conscience and honor, would bring such disgrace and dishonor on the State, and would be a injury on our people collectively and individually, that I have felt it my duty to state all the difficulties of the financial situation with the utmost frankness in order to show the necessity of prompt action. Let us ascertain the facts, and let our obligations and then manfully address ourselves to the task of fulfilling them in the most practicable manner which will command itself to the wisdom and good sense, and integrity of the people of this State. If it were possible, the people should be authorized the appointment of a commission as above suggested, it may be advisable to defer making any financial plan until their reports shall be presented, and perhaps by that time such renewed prosperity may be the price of peace and order, that we may be able to meet all our obligations and to pay back to our people the disposition to bring back to North Carolina her ancient proud financial reputation.

It is a matter of unforgotten regret to me to feel obliged to call the attention of the General Assembly to the deplorable condition of our State. I shall not come year by year, by entering into a detailed statement of the deplorable condition of our State, but I have been compelled by various healthful within our borders. They are from the realization of all. Their commission has brought reproach upon our people, and the material interests of the State have been in a great measure sacrificed to the interests of the State.

It behooves you, gentlemen, to take this matter into your serious consideration, and to devise measures and enact such salutary laws as will restore peace and good feeling among our people, and deter evil disposed persons from taking the law into their own hands and becoming the executors of unauthorized judgments. Until this is done, and the civil law is made to reign supreme in the State, and its ministers are respected, and their hands upheld and strengthened, there will be no peace, prosperity or real happiness among our people. What greater good, then, can you accomplish than to strive by wise and prudent legislation, to put down and utterly exterminate all unlawful combinations, by visiting upon offenders such a measure and such a certainty of punishment as will deter them from further prosecuting their nefarious purposes, extending to the protection of our people as a whole, and to the enjoyment of their liberties and rights, both of property and person? Do this, and in a very short time immigration will begin to flow to our State; our waste places will be built up; our soil will grow with the rich products of the earth; our cereals will be converted into gardens, and our whole people will dwell together in such unity as becomes a civilized and christian community.

I desire, gentlemen, in an especial manner to call your attention to the education of the people of our State. No people can be prosperous or happy who are bound to the chains of ignorance, and who have no facilities for bursting asunder the fetters which dwarf their minds and cripple all the nobler faculties of their nature. It may be said that North Carolina is too poor to do more than she is now doing for the cause of education. It may be imprudent at this time to place additional burdens on the people in behalf of our Universities or any of the colleges, high schools or normal schools; but we are far behind the people in the cause of common schools. It is much better that all shall receive the rudiments of a good English education, be taught to read fluently, write clearly, and understand the use of figures, than that a few shall be educated in the higher branches of polite literature, and imbued with the knowledge of the dead language, and made proficient in the higher branches of art and science.

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When the sons of our soil are called upon to defend our rights on the battle field, so in time of peace he is welcome to all the immunities, privileges and franchises which his valor secured. I therefore warn you not to place the ballot box beyond the reach of any of our people who are rightfully entitled to it. Throw no troublesome obstacles in their way. Give them not just cause to complain of opposition, injustice or a withholding of any of their rights, but sit and encourage them in all their efforts to discharge their duties as becomes freemen. In order to accomplish this end I think it necessary to amend the law now in force, so that the elector may have the right to deposit his ballot at any election precinct in his county. There is no good reason why he should be restricted to the township in which he resides. It often happens, under our present system, that a voter is forced to travel a much longer distance to reach a polling place in his own township than he would be in an adjoining township. I am also of opinion that registration ought not to be allowed on the day of election, and that the law should be amended so that the time of registration should be extended to the second day of every registrar to challenge every one who applies to be enrolled as a voter, unless he knows of his own knowledge that he is legally entitled to be enrolled. Many persons have been perjured by reason of evinced prejudice, challenging their right on frivolous grounds, so as to consume the time within which the polls are to be kept open. This should be remedied, and I know of no other way in which it can be done, but by extending the time of voting throughout two days instead of one. The law should also provide that a voter may deposit all his ballots in the same box in order to require a multiplicity of boxes to receive a ballot for granted, that every elector should be required to deposit his ballot, and to have a separate ballot for every person voted for, many of the tickets necessarily find their way into the wrong box and are discarded as blanks, and thus a voter is by law cheated out of his vote, whereas he is not willing, but is desired, that every man entitled to vote shall exercise the privilege, and shall have every facility for exercising it, and that it will be the aim of this General Assembly to amend the law in respect to the casting of ballots, and difficulties above enumerated may be remedied and avoided. It may be said that frauds will be perpetrated more readily if persons are permitted to vote in townships other than the ones in which they reside. In reply to this objection, it is only necessary to refer to the former method of voting in North Carolina, under which there were few frauds perpetrated, and seldom a complaint made. And now, with the additional safeguard of registration, which is almost impossible for one not qualified to avoid detection in an attempt to vote illegally. If, however, any one shall succeed in eluding the vigilance of the poll-holders and vote when he has no legal right to do so, then let the severest penalties of the law be visited upon the offender; and in order to deter every one from the commission of this offence, I recommend the General Assembly to subject any one convicted of wilfully and knowingly casting a illegal vote at any election, to imprisonment for at least two years, or to the State's prison, and to a deprivation of the right of suffrage for a term of years thereafter. The purity and inviolability of the ballot box must be preserved; and he who is so corrupt as wilfully to invade and pollute it, should be made to know that he will be held to a strict and fearful accountability.

The subject of amending the constitution has been agitated for some time before the people, and many well informed persons differ among themselves as to what amendments shall or ought to be made. I am free to confess, gentlemen, that I feel very great reluctance to make any recommendations in the course of this address, although my individual opinion is that the instrument may be very materially improved in some of its provisions. The question of calling a Convention for the purpose of revising and amending it, has been agitated in the course of our deliberations, and by a large vote and in an emphatic manner they declared against amending it, at least in that way. It may be that they believed the clamor raised for a change in the organic law was due more to the indignation of the people against its many defects in the constitution itself, and that the greater portion of the grievance complained of might and should be removed, or remedied by prudent legislation. In this opinion I heartily concur.

The constitution is not to blame for high salaries and fees paid to various State and county officers; neither is it responsible for the great length of time consumed by the present and preceding General Assemblies in enacting laws; nor can it be held responsible for the extravagant appropriations made for railroads and other works of improvement. There is nothing in said instrument which fixes salaries and fees, or which directs the lavish appropriations of money. All is done by particular laws, and upon these laws the law-makers, and upon these law-makers, who have been failures to the trusts confided to them, and not upon the Constitution, should be visited the condemnation of their constituents. They are the parties to be held responsible for a betrayal of the people's confidence. Unfaithful stewards, who have not improved the talents committed to their keeping; they should be reckoned as unprofitable servants and no longer worthy of public confidence when I entreat you to retrench any false step which may have been taken. Be diligent in the discharge of your legislative duties. Waste no time in useless legislation; go to work without unnecessary delay; enter at once upon the public business, and bring your measures to a close at the earliest possible moment consistent with the public good.

I recommend the following amendments to the constitution: First: Let section 2 of article II, be amended so that the General Assembly shall meet on the first Monday of the month of November, instead of annually, and that it shall not remain in session for a longer time than seventy days, unless the severest day occurs on Saturday or Sunday, and in that case it may be prolonged to the second day of the following Monday; and further, that if it remains in session a longer time, the members shall receive no pay after the seventy-second day.

Second: Let the 5th section of the same article be so amended as to abolish the same, and to take a census of the State in 1875, and every ten years thereafter.

Third: Let the 12th section of article IV

be so amended as that a court shall be held in each county three times during the year, to continue one week, unless the business shall be sooner disposed of.

Fourth: Let the 4th section of article V be amended so that the Constitution, as it is amended, shall be provided for at the expense of a vote of a majority of the electors of the State.

Fifth: Let the 10th section of article XI be so amended as that those who are so elected shall be unable to provide for themselves shall be provided for at the expense of the State.

In my opinion the people will be content with the present Constitution if amended in the particulars above referred to, and I desire all the amendments which I have enumerated. Each amendment proposed should be separately submitted to the people for their ratification or rejection.

SWAMP LANDS. The Board of Education still has control of a large body of swamp lands which are now being sold in small parcels, and the proceeds are being used for the purchase of land for the support of the common schools. It is a matter of great importance that these lands should be sold in large parcels, and the proceeds used for the purchase of land for the support of the common schools.

THE UNIVERSITY. With regard to the University of the State, a principal objection to its success is its pecuniary embarrassments, for which, as far as I can judge, the present board of trustees are in no wise responsible. I take it for granted that every one who is interested in the success of the University, and who is desirous of seeing it flourish, will be desirous of seeing it flourish, and who is desirous of seeing it flourish, will be desirous of seeing it flourish.

THE FOREGOING are some of the difficulties with which the University has had to contend. Just prior to the late war, a spirited controversy began in some of the religious newspapers, in which it was proposed to abolish the University. This, I imagine, was a view of the calling of a Convention. Those who have since pursued the course of the religious papers, without advertising to the change in the situation.

The Constitution of the State not only contemplates the continuance of the University, but actually prescribes rates for its management, and indicates the manner in which it should be managed. It is a matter of great importance that the University should be managed in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS. The subject of amending the constitution has been agitated for some time before the people, and many well informed persons differ among themselves as to what amendments shall or ought to be made. I am free to confess, gentlemen, that I feel very great reluctance to make any recommendations in the course of this address, although my individual opinion is that the instrument may be very materially improved in some of its provisions.

THE PROGRESS of the geological survey with its practical objects, and the results which will be presented to you in the report of the State Geologist, shortly to be submitted. The wisdom of the Legislature in establishing and sustaining this important work is abundantly justified by the results which have been obtained. It is a matter of great importance that the survey should be continued, and that the results should be made known to the people.

THE STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY. I desire to call your attention to the development of the agricultural, mechanical and other industrial interests of the State, especially to the agricultural, and the foundation of all the wealth and prosperity of our State. It is a matter of great importance that the State Agricultural Society should be supported, and that the results of its operations should be made known to the people.

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ing thousands might have been enticed to our State in the years that are past, but no vigorous or well-directed effort was made by our ancestors to induce them to come, and now they are lost to us forever. Let not these things be said of us, but let us resolve to develop the boundless resources of our State, and make North Carolina a brilliant gem in the galaxy of the great States which composed our glorious Union.

What we most need is capital. Our condition for a long time has remained as it is, unless we seek words of encouragement abroad, and invite them to come, assuring them that we wish them to make their homes in our midst; that our laws shall protect them from all noxious invasions; that no distinction shall be made to their social or political prejudice.

The Northern and Northwestern States are straining every nerve and making every effort to induce to their borders every immigrant who can be obtained. The most tempting offers are made to induce them to make their homes in the far West. Free gifts of land and free transportation are constantly tempting the masses of the poor who are driven from their homes by the want of food, and the thousands of good men are flocking to those States, while very few, comparatively speaking, are taking up their abode in North Carolina.

The Commission of the General Assembly the office of Commissioner of Immigration was established, and a gentleman well qualified for the position was selected to fill it. His duties were not defined, nor is he required to make a report to the General Assembly. It is the duty of his office to induce immigration to our State, considering the small means at his command, have met with considerable success. Under the Act of Assembly, assistant commissioners have been appointed in England, Scotland, France, and other countries, from whom a foundation has been laid upon which to build up good results for our State. The commissioner, with the aid which he has received from his assistants in England, has succeeded in establishing a line of steamers, which are directed to Norfolk, where an office has been established to receive and forward immigrants coming to our State.

I would respectfully suggest that the duties of the commissioner be more particularly defined, and that he be provided with a reasonable compensation for his services. Whatever legislation upon this important subject you may, in your wisdom, deem necessary to increase the prosperity and the industrial resources of the State, it will be my pleasure to faithfully execute.

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What we most need is capital. Our condition for a long time has remained as it is, unless we seek words of encouragement abroad, and invite them to come, assuring them that we wish them to make their homes in our midst; that our laws shall protect them from all noxious invasions; that no distinction shall be made to their social or political prejudice.

The Northern and Northwestern States are straining every nerve and making every effort to induce to their borders every immigrant who can be obtained. The most tempting offers are made to induce them to make their homes in the far West. Free gifts of land and free transportation are constantly tempting the masses of the poor who are driven from their homes by the want of food, and the thousands of good men are flocking to those States, while very few, comparatively speaking, are taking up their abode in North Carolina.

The Commission of the General Assembly the office of Commissioner of Immigration was established, and a gentleman well qualified for the position was selected to fill it. His duties were not defined, nor is he required to make a report to the General Assembly. It is the duty of his office to induce immigration to our State, considering the small means at his command, have met with considerable success. Under the Act of Assembly, assistant commissioners have been appointed in England, Scotland, France, and other countries, from whom a foundation has been laid upon which to build up good results for our State. The commissioner, with the aid which he has received from his assistants in England, has succeeded in establishing a line of steamers, which are directed to Norfolk, where an office has been established to receive and forward immigrants coming to our State.

I would respectfully suggest that the duties of the commissioner be more particularly defined, and that he be provided with a reasonable compensation for his services. Whatever legislation upon this important subject you may, in your wisdom, deem necessary to increase the prosperity and the industrial resources of the State, it will be my pleasure to faithfully execute.

THE STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY. I desire to call your attention to the development of the agricultural, mechanical and other industrial interests of the State, especially to the agricultural, and the foundation of all the wealth and prosperity of our State. It is a matter of great importance that the State Agricultural Society should be supported, and that the results of its operations should be made known to the people.

THE STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY. The progress of the geological survey with its practical objects, and the results which will be presented to you in the report of the State Geologist, shortly to be submitted. The wisdom of the Legislature in establishing and sustaining this important work is abundantly justified by the results which have been obtained. It is a matter of great importance that the survey should be continued, and that the results should be made known to the people.

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