

HIS MESSAGE.

The New Governor of Kansas Gives His Views on State Matters.

PERMANENT SCHOOL FUND.

Foreign Markets—Constitutional Convention—Judicial Districts—Taxation—Insurance—Irrigation—Text-Books—State Institutions—Etc., Etc.

TOPEKA, Kan., Jan. 15.—Gov. Morrill sent his message to the Kansas legislature to-day, which is as follows: To the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Kansas:

I think it may not be deemed inappropriate to say to you that while I appreciate the high honor conferred upon me by the people of Kansas in selecting me as the chief executive of the state for the coming year, I am not ungrateful of the grave responsibilities that will devolve upon me, and I should hardly have courage to undertake them did I not feel that in every honest effort I may make to give to the state the benefit of my administration, I shall have your hearty and undivided support. A third of a century has passed since Kansas was admitted into the union, and you meet in this session under conditions strikingly in contrast with those that presented themselves to the first legislature of Kansas. There has been a wonderful increase in its wealth and population, a wholly changed condition of things, demanding an entirely different consideration of affairs. You will pardon me if I remind you that the responsibilities rest on you, and upon your action will largely depend the success of the present administration.

Foreign Markets.—And in this connection I desire to call your attention to one branch of the trade of this country that especially interests our people, and that is the increased demand for our farm products from a foreign market. For several years a steady and determined effort has been made to open up the markets of the old world to some of the products in which Kansas excels, especially Indian corn, beef and pork. Under a better light, secured by wise legislation, prejudice and cupidity were gradually yielding, and our exports of these products were becoming an important factor of great value to our people, and gave a promise of an increased demand for the articles in producing which Kansas can lead the world. But the present congress has, in my judgment, by ill-considered and crude legislation, assumed to dictate to foreign nations their internal policy of policy of protection, and has, by discriminating duties on sugar imported from countries having export duties on that article. This has led to active retaliation on the part of those countries, and all the nations of central Europe have become commercially estranged from our country, and are taking active and what prevent the importation of our meats, justifying themselves by a revival of the exploded and senseless claim that our meat animals are diseased. The repeal of the reciprocity provisions of our tariff laws has caused Spain and other countries to make a most unjust discrimination against the importation of our farm products. To relieve us of this embarrassment by the removal of this embargo, and to reverse us to a condition where we can increase to its utmost limit the exportation of those articles which are our main support, is a matter of universal concern to the people of Kansas. I would therefore urge the passage of a concurrent resolution by your honorable bodies, instructing our senators and requesting our representatives in congress, to introduce and work for the passage of the most effective remedial legislation in this regard.

The governor then gives several reasons for a constitutional convention, saying that the judicial system should be reorganized, the letting of convict labor prohibited, the powers of corporations defined and the care of the school fund changed. He then says that there is a demand for an appellate court, the supreme court being so far behind that if a case was filed now it would be six years before it could be heard. He then goes on to say: There ought to be a complete redistricting of the state for judicial purposes, and a reduction of at least twelve districts in number. This would save to the state in salaries of judges about \$200,000 per year. I am not unmindful of the difficulties in the way of a redistricting of the state, but I have confidence to believe that this legislature has the good judgment, courage and ability to carry out a reform which commends itself to the intelligence of every voter in the state.

Permanent School Fund.—The investment of the permanent school fund of the state is a matter of grave public concern, and it should be guarded very carefully. There are about \$9,000,000 in this fund. Several hundred thousand dollars of this money are redrafted every year to the care of the state, and the interest on the investments is the highest importance, and should be protected more sacredly than even the funds in the state treasury.

During the boom period, in Kansas, the value were inflated, large amounts of bonds were purchased. I would recommend that a legislative committee be appointed to thoroughly investigate the securities on hand, with instructions to report the actual cash value of each, and to recommend such steps as may be deemed advisable to the responsibility of these investments, to the collection of securities, and to suggest any necessary legislation to guard investments in the future. And I would suggest that this committee be appointed early in the session, so that it may report and recommend any amendments to the law that may be necessary for the protection of the fund.

Intemperance.—The blighting influence of intemperance is still seen in our state. There is scarcely a community that does not suffer from this cause, and happy is the family that is not directly affected by it. Its approach is so insidious that its danger is scarcely realized until it is too late to stay its evil effects. How to cure, or to prevent the evil, has commanded the earnest thought of every lover of his race, be he statesman or moralist. Its demoralizing effects are universally conceded, and can hardly be exaggerated. Much of the poverty and crime, the suffering and the sorrowing existing to-day can be clearly traced to its evil influence. Whatever tends to refine and elevate a people—to give them purer and nobler aspirations—will surely tend to lessen this evil. The great work of removing intemperance from our land must be done through the churches, schools and other elevating helps. Law is only a help—an assistant—and never should be placed before moral influences. It is in fact can only be enacted when moral forces have created a healthy public sentiment against intemperance. It is valuable as an aid to help create and maintain a healthy public sentiment, but ought never to be substituted for it. The great work of advancing the cause of temperance can only be done by thorough organization and active effort along the lines of education and moral suasion, aided by laws fully abreast of the public sentiment.

In 1890 an amendment to the constitution was adopted, prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors, except for medicinal, scientific and mechanical purposes. In 1891, 1892 and 1897, laws were passed providing for the enforcement of this provision of the constitution. Three legislatures have since been elected, and no attempt has been made to repeal or essentially modify these laws. It is, therefore, fair to assume that the people desire this to be the settled policy of the state upon this subject. The only fair interpretation to be placed upon their action is, that the open saloon shall not return to our state, and that they believe that the effect of the prohibitory law has been to lessen the evils of intemperance.

Assessment and Taxation.—There is an almost universal expression of dissatisfaction with our present mode of assessing property for taxation. That it is unequal and consequently unjust, no one familiar with it would for a moment deny. It is probably one of the most difficult matters to provide for in our laws. Our theory of taxation is that property shall pay the tax, and the only safe rule to follow is to assess all property at its actual cash value without regard to its character or the use to which it is applied. To a certain extent, however, the revenue derived from property ought to be taken as a basis upon which to compute its value. If every piece of property in the state were assessed at its actual cash value there would be absolute equality in the payment of taxes. But the same would be true if all the property in the state were assessed on the basis of 10, 20 or 30 per cent of its real value. The inequality arises, not from the fact that the property of the state is assessed too low, but because it is assessed unequally. When one piece of property is assessed at 10 per cent of what it is worth, and another piece is assessed at its full value, and other property is not assessed at all, great injustice is done to some of the taxpayers; and yet that condition of things actually exists in our state to-day. Millions of dollars' worth of property escapes taxation entirely as a result of ignorance, indifference or dishonesty on the part of assessors. Other property is assessed at from 10 per cent to 100 per cent of its actual value, according to the judgment or whim of the assessor.

There would be less danger of this inequality if an honest attempt were made by all assessors to place the true value on all property; but before that could be safely done the laws in regard to limitations on levies should be changed. To make the assessment four or five times what it is at present, allowing the limitation on the levy to remain where it is, might prove a practical confiscation of property in some school districts or counties even. After a patient and careful examination of the law, I am unable to see where it falls to provide for an honest, impartial assessment. The fault seems to be rather in the administration of the law than in the law itself. If the proper returns were compiled strictly to every provision of the laws relating to assessment and taxation there would be little cause for complaint. More severe penalties might be attached for violations of the law, but that remedy would hardly accomplish the desired results, for when an assessor makes his return with property assessed at from 10 to 50 per cent of its real value, and swears that he has to the best of his judgment given the true value, he knows, and everybody else knows, that he commits willful perjury. But how can you prove that he has not used his best judgment in doing what he does?

Uniformity of Text-Books.—The question of state uniformity of text-books is an important one, and should receive your serious attention. As it now is, there is not even county uniformity. In the same county the text-books change with the school-district lines. In some counties there are from five to ten different kinds of text-books used in the public schools. A family moving from one district to another is thereby needlessly put to great expense. The result is, that in the aggregate the people of the state expend many thousands of dollars for which they never receive any adequate return, which would be saved the people if we had a uniformity of text-books. This is all the more important because this burden falls usually upon those who are least able to pay it. The farm tenant, who changes his residence from year to year, or the laborer, who, seeking employment, must move from one city to another, is almost invariably compelled to buy a new set of books for his children. This is imposing upon him an unjust burden, and compelling him to spend quite a large amount of money uselessly, because the books which he is compelled to purchase are just as valuable, and as useful for the instruction of children, as the new ones which he is compelled to buy. There is no valid argument against a system of state uniformity of text-books, and many arguments for it, and where it has been tried it has proven very advantageous.

Chickamauga.—Under the act of congress of August 10, 1890, a park has been established at the battlefield of Chickamauga, and the government has purchased, or proceeded to purchase for the purchase, of over 6,000 acres of the battlefield, embracing most of the heavy fighting ground. A commission was appointed by the president to take charge of this work, and nearly all of the states whose troops were engaged in that battle have already appointed commissions to assist the national commission in the work of locating positions. The Eighth Kansas regiment should have one monument near the Vinland place, where it fought on Saturday, the 19th, one at Orchard Knob, and one on Missionary Ridge.

I would most earnestly recommend that the sum of \$3,000 be appropriated for the erection of these three monuments, and that the further sum of \$400 be appropriated to pay the expenses of three commissioners, to be appointed by the governor, from the survivors of that battle, to select the proper monuments and to decide where they shall be placed.

In the matter of public printing the governor recommends that a thorough revision of the whole subject be made by the legislature, as the state pays too much for its printing, and a lot of matter is printed which is of no importance. The abuses that have grown up in the system of fees and salaries is called attention to, also that of employing enrolling clerks.

State Boards.—Several propositions have been discussed looking to a change of the powers and duties of the state boards, but I do not think it is wise to make any radical changes in this respect. Some amendments might be made which would increase the efficiency of these boards, and it would be well for you to consider the propriety of abolishing entirely some of them. It would seem that either the board of education or the office of state architect might be dispensed with. The office of silk commissioner can be abolished without any detriment to the state. The state board of health might be made less expensive without materially diminishing its usefulness. The office of state veterinarian might be abolished, and the office placed under the control of the professor of veterinary at the agricultural college. In these times of depression it is your duty to cut off all expenditures not absolutely necessary. There has never seemed to me any reason why members of the state board should be paid mileage. It would be far more reasonable and sensible to pay them their necessary traveling expenses actually paid, and their per diem for all time necessarily employed, and I know no good reason why the per diem should be increased. The amount of money, and gives only a small bond as member of the board. The business-like way to do would be to abolish all these minor treasurers and require all moneys to be paid into the treasury. But this could be done only by the requirement of a bond sufficiently large to cover any moneys belonging to the state that may come into his hands.

There seems to be no system of checks or counterchecks on any of these boards. The board of charities expend about \$30,000 per year. They make their own contracts, and their own will. There is no provision even for the investigation of their accounts, except when the legislature is seized with a spasm of virtue, and examinations of this kind are but of little value. The most efficient examination ought to be made of at least once a quarter, by an expert accountant, who should visit the institutions at irregular seasons without the slightest notice to the officers. He could render valuable aid by suggesting improvements in the management of the state institutions. The governor, as the chief executive of the state, is virtually responsible for the proper management of the state institutions. To enable him to be brought in closer touch with their management, I would suggest that he be authorized to employ an expert accountant, who should be an expert accountant, or other officer if directed by the governor, the accounts of all the state institutions and state boards. He should also be subject to the order of the governor at all times, with au-

thority to examine the accounts of county treasurers far enough at least to protect the state in the matter of state taxes and school taxes. It is a sad state of affairs that there is a difference of almost \$100,000 in these accounts emphasizes the importance of this last suggestion.

Inmate and Inmate Asylums.—The dictates of humanity demand that the tenderest care should be given to our unfortunate fellow-citizens who have been bereft of their reason. No reasonable expense should be spared to provide for their comfort or to furnish the best medical attendance attainable. At present the two asylums at Topeka and Oswatomie seem inadequate to provide adequately for all of this unfortunate class. The detached building at Oswatomie for female patients, authorized by the last legislature, is now nearly completed, and when proper provisions shall have been made for furnishing and fitting it for occupancy, it will furnish accommodations for about three hundred females. This will relieve for the time being the pressure upon the two institutions; but additional room will soon be required. To provide for this need, the asylum at Topeka should be completed by the erection of a ward building for women, and a clearing or administration building. When the institution was opened in 1870, with a capacity of 125 patients, temporary accommodations for officers were provided in one end of one of the ward buildings, and they have ever since been occupied for that purpose. This greatly lessens the comfort of the patients, and the temporary arrangements should be abolished at the earliest possible moment.

The present laws for the commitment of the insane to the asylum seem to be relics of barbarism. There is something absolutely repulsive to me in the sight of a sheriff taking a young lady from her home as he would take a person accused of a crime, and bringing her before the court, where a gaping crowd of curious people have gathered to see her tried by a jury like a thief. I cannot see where there could be any danger of a person being unlawfully deprived of his liberty if for about three hundred females, should be abolished at the earliest possible moment.

Reformatory.—The legislature in 1883 appropriated \$50,000 to purchase a site and to commence the erection of buildings for a reformatory, for the confinement of a class of young criminals whom it would be possible to reform and turn to lives of usefulness. It is a startling fact that the number of criminals in the country at large is steadily and surely increasing. There seems to be a large class of vagrant, worthless men from which the supply is constantly recruited. The effect of confinement in the state prisons seems to make confirmed criminals out of those who in some measure might be called incidental convicts. Primarily, the object of all punishment for crime in the present system is to reform the criminal, but it is a better and a cheaper safeguard to society to make a good law-abiding citizen out of the young man who has fallen into evil ways, than it would be by repeated convictions to keep him in the penitentiary. Other states have adopted a system of reformatories with marked success, and I suggest to you a careful investigation of their systems and the results that have followed, with a view of carrying out the original plan for a similar system in this state.

In pursuance of the act of the legislature of 1883, the commission was appointed, and a site for a reformatory was selected at Hutchinson, the citizens of that county donating \$60 acres of valuable land for that purpose. Two hundred thousand dollars have since been appropriated by the legislature, and nearly the entire amount has been expended in the erection of buildings, some of which are completed while others are in an unfinished condition. It is claimed that a small appropriation for the purpose of putting in heating apparatus and completing the cells would render it fit for occupancy, and that the labor of the prisoners could then be utilized in completing the work, giving them occupation and beneficial employment, and avoiding bringing them into competition with other industries of the state. This is a matter that demands your prompt and careful consideration, and a system of reformatory, with marked success, and I suggest to you a careful investigation of their systems and the results that have followed, with a view of carrying out the original plan for a similar system in this state.

State University.—The superior institutions of learning are receiving an attention that was never before bestowed upon them in the history of the country, and there is a spirit of emulation among the universities upon a high plane. Our university has always been the pride of Kansas, and it should be the purpose of our state to make it a great university in the widest sense of the term, equal to any in the United States. The university has already accomplished a great work. It has an able and enthusiastic faculty, and its business matters have been managed with signal ability. It is the pride of every Kansan who appreciates its great worth, and it is his duty to give it every aid which it is in his power to give, and to withhold from it any needed aid.

There is one interest in Kansas over which I wish to call your attention, and that is the interest of the farmer. Whatever promotes that interest develops the state. He is a public benefactor who can, by raising a new seed, or by developing a better mode of farming, increase the productivity of the soil, and one of the institutions that have done much to elevate farming in Kansas is the state board of agriculture. The great service rendered to the state by this board of agriculture has long been recognized not only in Kansas and America, but in foreign lands, in all of which its useful publications are sought and studied as the highest authority on matters pertaining to our condition, prosperity and progress. In fact, the high standard of its work and efficiency has become so well understood that older states, disesteemed with an abortive liberality, are now asking to be shown the methods by which Kansas has been able to accomplish such far-reaching results along these lines with such a minimum of cost. Much of this success of this department is undoubtedly due to its having been held aloof from party politics, and maintained as a strictly non-partisan body, a servant of all the people alike; and the highest wisdom suggests its being kept on this basis.

For doing the helpful work, which present conditions are making demand for in greatly increased volume, proper and generous provisions should be made in the line of clerical, printing and postage funds.

A slight change is recommended in the banking law and commodious rooms in the capitol are asked for the State Historical society. The governor also thinks that the three organized medical societies in the state should be equally represented on the board of health. Additional room for old soldiers in the home is asked and measures taken to provide for the fatherless.

The governor thinks the raising of fish should receive attention. He then touches on the coal oil inspector, state institutions, public highways, townships officers, state bonds, western counties, lotteries, gambling, bribery, election laws, commissions, and concludes with unbounded confidence in the future of Kansas.

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