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BY GEO. W. HOWMAN.

Freedom of Thought and Opinion.

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Select Poetry.



The Crop of Acorns.

There came a man in days of old,
To hire a piece of land for gold.
And urged his suit in accents meek;
One crop alone is all I seek;
That harvest o'er, my claim I yield,
And to its lord resign the field.

The owner some misgivings felt,
And sowed the seed with the stranger dealt,
But found his last objection fail,
And hunted eloquence prevail:
So took the proffered price in hand,
And for one crop leased out the land.

The wily tenant sneered with pride,
And sowed the spot with acorns wide,
At first like tiny shoots they grew,
And broad and wide their branches threw;
But long before these oaks sublime,
Aspiring, reached their forest prime,
The cheated landlord mouldering lay,
Forgotten with its kindred clay.

O! ye whose years unfolding fair,
Are fresh with youth and free from care,
Should vice or indolence desire,
The garden of your souls to hire,
No party hold—reject the suit,
Nor let one seed the soil pollute.

My child! their first approach beware;
With firmness break the insidious snare,
Lest, as the acorns grew and strove,
Into a sun-excluding grove,
Thy sins, a dark overshadowing tree,
Shut out the light of heaven from thee.

Gov. Pollock's Message.

Read in Harrisburg, Jan. 7, 1857.

To the Honorable the Senators and Members of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly:

FELLOW-CITIZENS: In obedience to the Constitution and laws of this Commonwealth, you have assembled to discharge the important and responsible duties that devolve upon you. To protect the rights and privileges of the people, to advance their interests, and to promote the welfare and prosperity of the State, should be the aim and end of all your legislation. In the discharge of my duties, it will be a pleasure to co-operate with you in the accomplishment of these objects.

The past year has been one of unusual prosperity. The bounties of a kind Providence have not been withheld from our Commonwealth. A plentiful harvest has rewarded the labor of the husbandman. Honorable industry, in all its departments, has been encouraged. No financial embarrassments—no commercial distress—no political or social evils, have interrupted the progress, or checked the energies of the people. The great interests of education, morality and religion, have been cherished and sustained. Health and peace, with their attendant blessings, have been ours. To Him who rules the nations by His power, and from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift, we are indebted for these mercies, and to Him should be given the homage of our devout gratitude and praise.

The financial condition of the Commonwealth is highly satisfactory. Every demand upon the Treasury has been promptly met and paid, without the aid of loans. The operations of this department will be exhibited in detail in the report of the State Treasurer.

For the fiscal year ending November 30, 1856, the receipts of the Treasury (including the balance in the Treasury on the first day of December, 1855, of \$1,243,697 33) have been \$6,621,637 64. The total expenditures for the same period, were \$5,377,142 22. Balance in the Treasury, Dec. 1, 1856, \$1,244,795 42.

Excluding the balance in the Treasury on the 1st of December, 1855, the receipts, from all sources, were \$5,378,240 33. The ordinary expenditures for the same period, were \$4,113,144 77, showing an excess of receipts over ordinary expenditures of \$1,265,095 56.

The extraordinary payments for the same year, were \$1,262,997 45, as follows: To the completion of the Portage Railroad, and for the payment of debts previously contracted on that work, \$181,494 11; to the North Branch Extension, \$122,728 52; to re-lay the south track of the Columbia railroad, \$267,000 00; for motive power in 1855, \$118,049 42; to enlarge the Delaware division of the Pennsylvania canal, 1854—55, \$13,960; for general repairs in 1853—54—55, \$63,965 11; to domestic creditors, \$151 63; to old claims on the main line, examined by the commissioners, and paid under the act of May 22, 1856, \$130,824 09; to the redemption of loans, \$327,824 47; and relief notes cancelled, \$38,217 00.

The interest on the funded debt which fell due in February and August last, was then paid, and that which becomes due in February next, will be paid with equal promptness, out of available means now in the Treasury. The punctuality with which the interest on the public debt has been paid, and the ability of the Treasury to meet all legitimate demands upon it, have inspired public confidence in our securities, and contributed largely to establish and maintain the credit of the Commonwealth.

The Commissioners of the Sinking Fund report the sum of \$722,432 93 as due by the Treasury to that fund. This amount will be applied to the redemption of relief notes now in circulation, and to the payment of the funded debt. Hereafter the available means in the Treasury have been applied to some extent in payment of outstanding temporary loans, which bear an annual interest of six per centum; it

being deemed advisable as a matter of economy to pay these loans, rather than the funded debt, which bears a much less rate of interest. It is expected that the balance of the temporary loan will be paid before the close of the current year, and the operation of the sinking fund resumed and continued as directed by law.

The funded and unfunded debt of the State, including temporary loans on the 1st day of December, 1855, as per reports of the Auditor General and State Treasurer, was as follows, viz:

FUNDED DEBT.	
6 per cent. loan	\$516,154 93
5 do. do.	38,903,115 81
4 do. do.	288,200 00
1 do. do.	100,000 00
Total funded debt	\$39,807,370 74

UNFUNDED DEBT.	
Relief notes in circulation	\$258,773 00
Interest certificates outstanding	29,137 25
Domestic creditors	1,264 00
Balance of temporary loan, April 18, 1853	525,000 00
Balance of temporary loan, May 9, 1854	346,000 00
Total unfunded debt	\$1,160,104 25

Total debt, December 1, 1855 \$41,007,494 22

The funded and unfunded debt at the close of the last fiscal year, December 1, 1856, was as follows, viz:

6 per cent. loan	\$511,781 00
5 do. do.	38,808,994 50
4 do. do.	288,200 00
1 do. do.	100,000 00
Total funded debt	\$39,808,975 50

UNFUNDED DEBT, VIZ:	
Relief notes in circulation	\$250,556 00
Interest certificates outstanding	24,091 37
Interest certificates unclaimed	4,418 38
Domestic creditors	1,161 00
Balance of temporary loan, April 19, 1853	400,000 00
Balance of temporary loan, May 9, 1854	184,000 00
Total unfunded debt	\$831,859 75

Total debt Dec. 1, 1856 \$40,701,835 25

Total debt Dec. 1, 1855 \$41,007,494 22
Do do 1856 \$40,701,835 25
Decrease \$305,659 97

It thus appears that during the past fiscal year the sum of three hundred and sixty-six thousand one hundred and fifty-eight dollars and ninety-seven cents has been paid in liquidation of the public debt. This, taken in connection with the fact, that during the year ending November 30, 1855, six hundred and thirty thousand six hundred and one dollars and two cents were paid on the same account, exhibits the gratifying fact, that the process of reducing the public debt has commenced; and, unless checked by reckless mismanagement and extravagant expenditures, must continue until the people and the Commonwealth are relieved from the debt and taxation with which they are burdened. In addition to this reduction of the public debt, large appropriations and payments were made for the completion of the Portage Railroad, and for debts previously contracted on that work; for old and unsettled claims recently adjusted by the commissioners appointed under the act of last session; for re-laying the south track of the Columbia railroad; for enlarging the Delaware division of the canal, and for other purposes. These extraordinary demands upon the Treasury have ceased, or soon will cease, with the necessity that created them; and thus leave a still larger portion of the revenues to be applied in payment of the public debt.

A careful examination of the financial condition of the Commonwealth—her sources of revenue and the probable future expenditures, has inspired the hope that the time is not far distant when the public debt will be fully paid, and this without increasing the subjects of taxation. It has already been shown that the revenues of the past year exceeded the ordinary expenditures \$1,265,095 56 cents. The estimated receipts and expenditures for the current year, which will be presented to you in the report of the State Treasurer, show that the excess of receipts, over ordinary expenditures, may reach the sum of \$1,500,000.—These estimates, although approximations, will not be far from the true result. Allowing, then, \$100,000 for annual extraordinary expenditures—and under a wise system of economy in no probable contingency can they exceed that sum—we will have at least 1,000,000 to be appropriated annually for the payment of the public debt. With the rapid development of the wealth and resources of the Commonwealth—the increase of population—the value of real estate, and of the amount and value of property of every description, the revenues must and will continue to increase. This natural and necessary increase of revenue will supply every deficiency and every demand upon the Treasury that falls within the range of probability. If, then, the sum of one million of dollars be appropriated annually in liquidation of this debt, and the accruing interest on the sums paid be applied in the manner of a sinking fund, the entire indebtedness of the Commonwealth will be extinguished in less than twenty-three years. If these premises are correct—and their correctness can only be impaired by unwise legislation, or the imprudent management of our finances—the truth of the proposition is susceptible of the clearest demonstration. Assuming the public debt on the first day of December, 1856, to be, in round numbers, forty millions five hundred thousand dollars, and that at the end of each fiscal year one million dollars, with the accruing interest on former payments, will be paid, unerring calculation will determine the result to be as before indicated. Thus, before the expiration of the year 1879, Pennsylvania may stand released from the oppression of her public debt, and her people be released from a taxation imposed to meet its accruing interest, and to maintain the faith and credit of the Commonwealth. These

views are not utopian. By practising strict economy in all departments of the government—avoiding extravagant expenditure—refusing to take any new schemes of internal improvement, and holding a rigid accountability the receiving and disbursing agents of the State, their realization may be anticipated with confidence.

I must again call the attention of the Legislature to the subject referred to in my last annual message, in the following terms:

"By the thirty-eighth section of the act of the 16th of April, 1845, entitled 'An Act to provide for the ordinary expenses of Government, the repair of canals and railroads of the State, and other claims upon the Commonwealth,' the Governor was authorized to cause certificates of State stock to be issued to all persons or bodies corporate holding certificates for the payment of interest on the funded debt of the State, which fell due on the first day of August, 1842, the first days of February and August, 1843, and the first days of February and August, 1844, in an amount equal to the amount of certificates so held, upon their delivering up said certificates to the Auditor General. In pursuance of the authority thus given, certificates of State stock to the amount of \$4,105,150 20, bearing interest at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, payable semi-annually on the first days of February and August in each year, and redeemable on or after the first day of August, 1855, were issued. The minimum period fixed by law for the redemption of these certificates, expired on the first day of August, 1855. No provision has been made for their renewal or redemption."

"Although by the terms of the act authorizing these certificates of State stock, as also by the conditions of the certificates issued in pursuance thereof, the time of payment, after the expiration of the minimum period, is optional with the debtor, the Commonwealth, yet a disregard for the credit of the State requires that provision should be made for their renewal or redemption. To redeem these certificates, a loan would become necessary, and as a loan cannot be effected, in the present financial condition of the country, on terms more favorable to the State than those on which these certificates were issued, I would recommend that authority be given to issue the bonds of the Commonwealth in renewal of said certificates, bearing interest at the rate of five per cent. per annum, payable semi-annually, and redeemable on or after the expiration of twenty years; and that the bonds be issued with coupons or certificates of interest attached in sums equal in amount to the semi-annual interest thereon, payable on the first days of February and August in each and every year, at such place as may be designated. This change in the form and character of the certificates, it is believed, will be so advantageous to the holders, without increasing the liabilities of the Commonwealth as to induce a willing and prompt exchange at a premium for the loans proposed to be issued."

The report of the Canal Commissioners will be laid before you, and will exhibit in detail the condition of the public works—their general operation, and the receipts and expenditures of the past fiscal year.

The total receipts at the Treasury, from public works, for the year ending November 30, 1856, were \$2,006,015 66, being an increase over the revenues of the previous year, \$62,638 95. Of this sum \$1,013,889 were canal and bridge tolls, and \$992,426 46 tolls of the Columbia and Portage Railroads.

The aggregate expenditures for the same year were \$1,943,896 82, being an increase of those of the previous year, of \$105,105 46, the revenues exceeding the expenditures of \$62,118 84.

The increase of the revenues from the works would be encouraging, were it not for the fact that the expenditures were increased in a still greater proportion—the expenditure ordinary and extraordinary, exhausting almost the entire revenue from this source. The system must be defective, or more care and economy should be exercised in its management.

The receipts at the Treasury from the several divisions were as follows, viz:

Main Line	\$1,229,273
Susquehanna, North Branch and West Branch	426,800
Delaware	349,922
Total receipts	\$2,006,015

The extraordinary payments during the year amounted to \$808,892 16: ordinary expenditures, \$1,135,094 00; net revenue, (excluding extraordinary payments and for no purpose) \$871,011 90.

On the main line the tolls received at Treasury from the Columbia road, were \$9,676 50; expenditures, \$528,084 86; toll Eastern division of Canal, from Columbia the Junction, \$119,718 36; expenditure, \$53,048 50; receipts from the Junction Pittsburgh, including the Portage Railroad, \$778 00; ordinary expenditures \$304,702. The total receipts on the main line were, 229,272 86; aggregate expenditures, (excluding \$267,000 00 paid for re-laying the track of the Columbia railroad, and \$159 42 for motive power in 1855, and after Dec. 1st, 1856, were \$885,835 65, being excess of revenue over ordinary expenditure \$333,437 21.

Although the receipts from the Delaware division are less than those of the previous year, yet the general result of its operations is satisfactory. The net revenue at the Treasury was \$264,095 40. Its management has been characterized by a degree of economy too rarely practiced on some of the lines of our railroads.

However important this division may be to the trade and business of that portion of the State, its proposed enlargement should be undertaken, unless demanded by real and over-riding necessity. The experience of the past, as connected with the Allegheny and railroad, and the North Branch ex-

should warn us against undertaking, without great caution, any new measure of improvement, which may drain the treasury, without adding materially, if at all, the public interests. If left in good order by efficient and timely repairs, its capacity will be fully equal to all the demands of its trade and business.

The Portage railroad is not fully completed. An additional appropriation may yet be required to complete, for the fourth time, this road. It is anxiously hoped that this unproductive improvement may soon cease its constant demands upon the Treasury. Every year's experience more clearly reveals the impolicy of the State in undertaking this work.

It gives me no ordinary pleasure to inform you that the North Branch extension of the Pennsylvania canal has been so far completed that boats freighted with coal and other products were successfully passed through its entire length from Pittston to the Junction canal.— This work was commenced in 1836—suspended in 1841—resumed in 1849, and finished in 1856; although its completion was officially announced in 1853. It extends from Pittston to the New York State line, a distance of about 84 miles, following the valley of the Susquehanna to Athens, and thence along the Chesapeake river to the State line, where it joins the Junction canal, and is connected with the New York improvements.

The importance and value of this improvement cannot easily be over-estimated. Passing through one of the richest mineral and agricultural portions of the State, it offers to the immense and valuable products of that region a safe and cheap transit to the markets of New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. In the completion of this canal the difficulties to be overcome, and the labor to be performed, were great. Both these, to a great extent, have been accomplished under the superintendency of Wm. R. Maffet, Esq., to whom this work was assigned.

This canal although completed, and before the close of navigation, used for the purpose of transportation, is not perfect. Sinks in the bottom, from the nature of the formation and soils through which it passes, slides from the hills, and breaches may occur, but these, after a few years of well applied labor, will be diminished, and by vigilance and care entirely prevented.

This improvement, although subject to the rivalry of competing railroads, if kept in good condition, under proper management, will receive its full share of coal and other tonnage.— It is anticipated that the revenues, for the current year, will equal, if not exceed the expenditures; and increasing with the facilities afforded, and the rapid development of trade, will, instead of its heretofore increasing dependence upon the Treasury, take precedence in revenue over any other canal in the Commonwealth.

In relation to the propriety and policy of the sale of the main line of our public improvements, my opinion has not changed. Every consideration of public policy, of present and future interest, requires the separation of the State from the management and control of these works. The expenditures on that portion of the line, between the Junction and Pittsburg, largely exceeding the revenues, the excess averaging annually not less than \$150,000; and causes are in constant operation that will still more increase this deficiency. This continual drain upon the Treasury, to sustain a work, so unproductive, should at once be checked. A sale of the main line, for a fair consideration, and upon terms just and liberal to the purchasers, is the proper remedy. Such sale, on terms simply protective of the rights and interests of the people, can, by proper legislation, be effected. In connection with the payment of the public debt, this question becomes deeply important. The sale would constitute a new era in the financial history of the State, and assure a still more speedy reduction of the public debt, than that to which reference has been made. The subject is earnestly commended to your favorable consideration.

The subject of banks and banking capital in its relations to the currency—the general interests of trade and commerce and the industrial pursuits of the citizen, deserve your careful attention. My views expressed in a former communication remain unchanged. The incorporation of new, or the re-charter of old and solvent banks, when actually necessary, and demanded by the wants of legitimate trade in the community where located, should be favored; under no other circumstances should either be permitted. In the creation of banks, the interests of the State and the people should be consulted, and a just discrimination as to number, locality, and the demands of trade be exercised.

The rapid increase of population, the importance and value of our home and foreign commerce, the constant development of the material wealth of the State, the extent of our manufacturing, mechanical and agricultural industry, the fact that the State is flooded by a depreciated currency introduced by private bankers and brokers, might justify, under the restrictions and limitations indicated, a judicious increase of banking capital within our Commonwealth.— This, whilst it would aid the operations of trade, and supply the real business wants of the people, would, at the same time, remedy, to some extent, the evils of a depreciated foreign and illegal currency.

By the act approved the 6th day of November last, the thirtieth section of the act of 1850, regulating banks, will be, after the first day of July next, extended to all incorporated saving fund, trust and insurance companies. That section declares that it shall not be lawful for any of the said banks to issue or pay out any bank notes other than those issued by itself, payable on demand in gold or silver; notes of specie paying banks of this State which are taken on deposit or in payment of debts, at par, at the counter of the bank where paid out; or

notes of banks issued under the authority of the act of the 4th of May, 1841, at the option of the person receiving the same."

These enactments were intended to protect the community against the evils of a depreciated currency, and prevent its introduction from other States. However well intended they will fail to secure these objects, unless made to embrace private bankers and other of that class, whose profits are largely dependent upon their introduction into the State of such a currency. In many instances the notes of our own banks are collected by private bankers and brokers, and with these, or with the specie withdrawn from the banks issuing them, they purchase depreciated and foreign bank paper which is paid out of the State, at less than the usual rate of interest, and their notes, often of a less denomination than 5, and always at a discount brought into the State and put into circulation in the manner indicated, and this, too, under an agreement with the bank making the loan, that the notes thus paid out shall be kept in circulation. The effect of this system of private banking has been to limit the circulation of the paper of our own banks, and substitute in its place a foreign, depreciated, and often a worthless currency. In justice to the bank, trust and insurance companies, paying a heavy annual tax to the Commonwealth for their privileges, and for the protection of the people against these evils, either the provisions of the thirtieth section of the act of 1850 should be repealed, or further extended so as to embrace private individuals and associations, who may monopolize and control, to the detriment of the public, this traffic in depreciated bank paper, without restraint and without taxation.

The report of the Superintendent of Common Schools, will exhibit to you the number and condition of the schools—the number of teachers and scholars, and the general operations of the system during the past year. To the valuable statistical information of the report, and the useful suggestions for the improvement of the system, I invite your early and intelligent consideration.

From a small and comparatively unimportant incident of the State Department, the care and management of the public schools of the Commonwealth, with their seventeen hundred districts, ten thousand directors, twelve thousand teachers, and over five hundred thousand scholars, have become the most important and laborious branch of that Department. The increased and increasing business of the system has been met by a correspondent increase of zeal, labor and efficiency in the officers to whom the law has committed its general direction and supervision. They should be sustained by wise and generous legislation. The magnitude and importance of the system, in its political, social and moral relations to the present and future of the people, require that this should be done.— The guardianship of the mind of the State should occupy a distinct and prominent place among the noble institutions of the Commonwealth. It should receive the efficient aid and encouragement of the government, and be sustained by a virtuous and intelligent people. If the revenue and treasures of the State—her public improvements—her lands and their titles, require and deserve the marked and distinctive care of the government, how much more should her mental and intellectual treasures, richer than gold—the social and moral improvement of her people, more valuable than canals and rail roads—the titles of her youth to the boundless fields of knowledge, higher than any of earth or ought growing out of its ownership, claim an honorable position, and receive a care and aid commensurate with their greater value and usefulness.

The county superintendency, wherever it has been committed to faithful and efficient men, has fully vindicated the wisdom and policy of that measure. It is slowly but surely removing the prejudices and gaining the confidence of the people. Whatever defects time and experience may develop, in this or any other branch of the system, should be promptly corrected. But until the necessity for change is established, the system, in its union and integrity, should be maintained; and if changed, charged only to render more certain the accomplishment of its noble purposes and objects.

A sufficient number of competent and well trained teachers is the great want of the system. In its structure and organization it is as perfect in not more than any of the systems of our sister States. But the teacher is wanted to give it proper vitality and efficiency; to develop its true force and value; to secure the great object of its creation, the thorough education of the youth of the Commonwealth. How can this want be supplied? How are teachers to be trained and provided to meet this educational demand? Must we be dependent upon the training schools of other States? Must our system be jeopardized, and its success perilled, by waiting the slow and unaided efforts of voluntary associations to furnish the much needed teacher? Voluntary association of common school teachers have accomplished much in their disinterested and noble efforts to remedy this defect. They are worthy the highest commendation—they deserve every encouragement.— They can and will do more; but unaided they cannot accomplish the object desired.— The Legislature must provide the remedy—they can supply the deficiency. It should be done promptly and effectually. No subject of greater interest can occupy your attention as legislators—no one appeals more earnestly to duty and patriotism.

In a former communication to the Legislature the establishment of State Normal schools, for the education of teachers, was urged as indispensably necessary to the perfection of the system. With full confidence in their utility and necessity, I again recommend them. These institutions, with their proper professors, and appliances, supported by the State, would meet the wants and elevate the character of our common schools.

Teachers' Institutes, as auxiliary to Normal

Schools, when in operation, and supplying their place till established, should be aided by the State. One such institute in each county, meeting annually, under the fostering care of the government, would be productive of most beneficial results. Whilst it would improve teachers and prepare them for their important and responsible duties, it would elevate and dignify a profession long neglected and undervalued by those most deeply interested in their honorable labors. These measures, as also an addition to the annual State appropriation for common schools, in an amount only limited by the necessities of the Treasury, would give energy to the system, increase its efficiency, and thus promote the true interests of the people and the Commonwealth.

Our educational, charitable and reformatory institutions have strong claims upon the bounty of the people, and I cordially commend them to your care and liberality.

The State Lunatic Asylum at Harrisburg, and the Western Pennsylvania hospital for the insane, and other kindred purposes at Pittsburgh, are noble charities, and deserve the aid and encouragement of the State. The annual reports of these institutions will be laid before you, and will exhibit in detail their operations during the past year.

The House of Refuge in Philadelphia, and the Western House of Refuge near Pittsburgh, are institutions of great excellence, and their results clearly establish the wisdom of the policy that founded and sustains them. They ought not to be neglected; nor should the aid of the Commonwealth be withheld from them.

The "Blind" and the "Deaf and Dumb Asylums" at Philadelphia, and the Pennsylvania Training School for idiotic and feeble minded children, are institutions that appeal, in silence and sorrow, to the best and purest feelings of the heart, and ask your sympathy and aid.— They should receive a generous share of the benevolence of the State.

Agriculture, in its varied departments, is the great interest of the Commonwealth. It is the basis alike of financial and commercial success, and of State and national prosperity. An interest so important should be fostered by the State, and honored by all classes of society.— To its promotion and success all should cheerfully contribute. In a former communication I recommended the establishment of an Agricultural bureau, in connection with some one of the State Departments, to give efficiency to the collection and diffusion of useful knowledge on this subject, and to encourage scientific and practical agriculture. Science, with wondrous energy, has aided the husbandman in his honorable vocation, and profilers still more help.— The State should nerve his arm and cheer him onward in this, the first and noblest pursuit of man. This subject, in connection with an appropriation to the "Farmers' High School of Pennsylvania"—an institution destined to be an honor to the Commonwealth—is recommended to your favorable consideration.

The "Polytechnic College of Pennsylvania," established by the enterprise and liberality of some of the patriotic citizens of Philadelphia, as a school of the applied sciences, deserves honorable mention, and should receive the confidence and patronage of the public. In the teachings of this institution, literature, science, and art, in happy union, meet to prepare our young men for the practical business of life, for mining, mechanical and civil engineering, and for promoting intelligently and efficiently the great interests of manufacturing and agricultural industry.

The laws on the statute book regulating manufacturing and improvement companies, require revision. They are unnecessarily stringent in many of their provisions, and thus defeat the object of their enactment.

They drive capital from the State, instead of inviting its investment here; and instead of encouraging individual and associated enterprise and energy in the development of our immense natural resources, they bind and crush both by severe restrictions, unwieldy limitations and personal liabilities. The subject deserves careful attention and liberal legislation.

I have so frequently expressed my views in relation to local, special and "omnibus" legislation, that their repetition now becomes unnecessary. Legislation, so far as practicable, should be general and uniform. Local and special legislation, when the object desired can be secured by general laws, or by the action of the courts, should be avoided.— "Omnibus legislation" cannot, under any circumstances, be justified or approved. Too much legislation is an evil that prevails extensively in legislative halls. Its avoidance would not be injurious to public or private interests.

The practice of delaying the passage of the general appropriation bill until the last days of the session, and incorporating in it provisions incompatible with its general character, and obnoxious, when standing alone, to insurmountable objections, is highly censurable and should be discontinued. The attempt thus made to force, by a species of legislative legerdemain, the passage of objectionable measures through the Legislature, and compel their sanction by the Executive, has been too often successful. The practice cannot be too strongly condemned, it cannot receive my sanction.

The militia law of the State is imperfect in many of its provisions, and should be revised.— The powers and duties of the Commander-in-Chief should be more clearly defined; as also of the other officers connected with the military organization of the Commonwealth. This is necessary to prevent a conflict of jurisdiction between other departments of the government, and to give greater efficiency to our military system. Volunteer companies should be encouraged; our entire military system should be remodelled, and made to occupy that honorable position which from its importance and necessity it deserves.

Near the close of the last session of the Legislature, I transmitted to that body an ordinance passed by the Select and Common Councils of