The Beaver Argus.

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Beaver, Pa., Jan. 12, 1870.

IN order to give the Governor's message entire, in this week's ARGUS we are obliged to defer much other interesting reading matter.

The inauguration of Governor Geary takes place on the 18th inst., and already the Senate has appointed a committee to make the necessary arrangements for the event. There will be a large attendance on the occasion, and several military organizations from different parts of the State have signified their intention of participating in the ceremonies. In the evening the inauguration ball will be held at Brant's Hall.

IT is understood that on the occasion of the arrival of Mr. Peabody's remains at Portland, the United States government will be represented by its naval officers only. It would not be convenient for the head of a department to go at this time, and the suggestion to that effect has, after consideration, been rejected. It is possible the Governor of Massachusetts may be present to receive the remains and to take part in the ceremonies.

THE action of the New York Legislature in repealing the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment is variously discussed. The question thus raised was discussed by the House Judiciary Committee at the last session, and it is understood it is to be presented in each branch next week, so that both Judicial Committees may make a report upon it for the guidance of Congress.

THE Republican members of the State Legislature met on last Thursday, and nominated Mr. Mackey, present incumbent, for State Treasurer. Before going into caucus "noses" had been counted, and Gen. Irwin finding that he was without the requisite number of supporters, withdrew from the contest. Nineteen of the Republicans staid out of the caucus entirely; eight others voted for Gen. Irwin, notwithstanding he was not a candidate; and the remainder voted for Mr. M., whose votes nominated him. For a day or two before the caucus was held, the fight raged bitterly between Irwin and Mackey, and their respective friends; and so evenly balanced did the contest seem, that the Mackeyites thought it advisable to send to Washington for Gen. Cameron, who suddenly appeared upon the ground and took an active part in the settlement of the question. Mackey's money bags, together with the skill of the Winnebago Chief was too much for Gen. Irwin, and he yielded to the same pressure this year that was brought to bear against his election in 1869.

While we regret Gen. Irwin's defeat, we are nevertheless gratified in being assured that his successful competitor and friends will not realize as largely from the unexpended balance in the year to come as they are alleged to have done during the present one. The indications point unerringly to a radical reform in the management of our State finances by the speedy passage of wholesome legislative acts; and that this reform will be the result of the course of a number of Republican newspapers in Pennsylvania, is clear, beyond the shadow of a doubt. This much they have accomplished at least.

The Quay-*Commercial* libel suit has a new phase. During the preliminary hearing before the Alderman, Mr. Quay's counsel were in a hurry to get through, so that the information might be laid before the Grand Jury which was then, and continued in session for two weeks after the defendants were bound over. The latter after the Grand Jury had adjourned were anxious to know what action that body had taken in the matter, and were not a little surprised to find that neither Mr. Quay, nor the Quay-*Commercial* case had been brought before the Grand Jury at all. Their surprise was heightened on going to Atl. Neeper's office, and learning from that officer that he had made no return of the information, but withheld it. The only reason he gave for his conduct in the matter was that Mr. Quay's attornies had so directed, and that was sufficient authority for his action. The *Commercial* adds:

"We must say that the directions of Mr. Quay's counsel to the Alderman, and that officer's obedient course, in withholding the information whereby a speedy trial was prevented, were entirely consistent with their course on the preliminary hearing. But how all these things appear to the public? Are they consistent with the professed desire of Mr. Quay to have the truth developed, or of his counsel for a speedy trial? But one inference can be drawn from the facts as we have related them. That inference the public will inevitably draw. We desire to have the truth brought out, and so this and we have looked for a speedy trial. If the prosecution want time to enable witnesses to get out of the way, we can understand their motives. If they are afraid to face the truth—if the case has presented aspects they dreamed not of, whereby they themselves are virtually placed on trial—their course can readily be understood. The public are appreciend, will experience little difficulty in coming to a satisfactory conclusion on the subject.

IF any one believes that the Republican-Retrenchment-and-Reform Newspapers of Pennsylvania, have accomplished no good within the past year, let them read the proceedings of the Legislature for last week. He will then see that but about one half of the posters and folders employed last winter, are employed this session. This item itself, will save $20,000 or $25,000. Let the reader go a step further, and he will see that there will be no costly Legislature Record to pay for, for the session of 1870. To dispense with that "luxury" will save the State $75,000 or $100,000 more. Then too, in all probability, the Legislature will see that the Treasury is so managed that the State, and not the Treasurer, will be benefitted by the unexpended balance. These reforms were demanded by such Republican Journals as the Pittsburgh *Commercial*, Lawrence *Journal*, Washington *Reporter*, Beaver ARGUS, Lancaster *Express* and *Father Abraham*.

That they succeeded in obliging the Legislature to take favorable action upon them is one of the encouraging signs of the times. Let the good work go on. If the newspapers here refered to, can accomplish a similar amount of good each year, their editors should be looked upon as public benefactors by every tax payer in the State.

Governor's Message.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

GENTLEMEN: From the days of William Penn, the great and pious founder of our Commonwealth, it has been the universal custom of my predecessors, when making their annual communications to the General Assembly, to acknowledge their gratitude to, and dependence upon the Great Lawgiver of the Universe. In imitation of their noble example, let us earnestly invoke His blessing and guidance in our efforts to perform the great work of legislation now before us, in such manner as to meet His approbation, as well as that of our common constituents.

In transmitting to you the seventy ninth annual message since the organization of the present State government, it affords me the highest gratification to congratulate you and our fellow-citizens generally on their enjoying, to an unusual degree, the blessings of health, and unstinted prosperity; and that our principles and institutions—the pride and boast of every true hearted patriot—altho' tried again in the crucible of a heated political contest, the heavings of popular passion, and the collision of parties, from which we have just emerged, remain unimpaired and vital in every part.

Under such auspicious circumstances you have assembled, for the purpose of discharging the important duties, and assuming the special responsibilities which devolve upon you. It is extremely difficult, even with the greatest caution in your deliberations, to enact laws that will fully meet the expectations and approbation of all the people; but much of this difficulty may be overcome by avoiding legislation for personal and special interests, and not being unmindful of the magnitude of the interests of the State, and of its rapidly advancing population, wealth and influence to destinies beyond the reach of human vision. A nobler heritage was never given to man than we possess; geographically and politically of the greatest importance; an area of more than forty-four thousand square miles; diversified with mountains, valleys, plains and rivers; mountains covered with majestic forests of valuable timber of almost every variety; plains dotted with comfortable homesteads, and presenting well cultivated farms and luxuriant fields marked by the advancement of agriculture—the parent supporter and stimulant of every species of industry, exchange and commerce; hills and valleys with teeming mines of all the varieties of coal, iron, oil, salt and other minerals; with farmers, manufacturers, mechanics, wool growers, coal and iron miners, oil producers, and merchants full of activity and confidence; with thousands of miles of railroads and canals to transfer the vast products to market, and accommodate the travel of tens of millions of happy and prosperous people. Nor should we be forgetful of education in all its branches, of the public charities, prisons, reformatories, the collection of properly imposed taxes, the speedy reduction of the State debt, the preservation of order, and the more certain protection of life, business and property. All these interests, and perhaps others of equal importance, demand legislation of the most enlightened, liberal and comprehensive character.

In conformity to the requirements of the Constitution, I proceed to invite your attention to such measures as are deemed necessary for your consideration, and to assure you of my willingness to share with you the anxieties and responsibilities of all legislation calculated to advance the prosperity of the people and the best interest of the Commonwealth.

FINANCES.

From the reports of the Auditor General and State Treasurer, the following statement has been carefully prepared, and exhibits the receipts and disbursements for the fiscal year ending November 30, 1869:

Balance in treasury Nov. 30, 1868...	$1,012,933 37
Ordinary receipts during the fiscal year ending November 30, 1869...	5,516,711 28
Total in Treasury during year ending November 30, 1869...	6,529,644 65
Disbursements.	
Ordinary expenses paid during the year ending Nov. 30, 1869...	$2,485,111 27
Loans, &c., redeemed at Treasury...	209,644 00
Loans redeemed by Commissioner of the Sinking Fund...	332,764 00
Interest paid at Treasury	170,645 74
" paid by Com'rs of the Sinking Fund...	1,525,587 97
	$4,853,774 16
Balance in Treasury Nov. 30, 1869...	$1,675,869 49

It will be observed from the above that part of the loans and part of the interest are paid at the Treasury, and part of both by the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund. This produces a complication of accounts; which in order to avoid, and to simplify the financial statement, I recommend that authority be given by law to charge the Commissioners with the whole amount of the State debt, and also with all the money applicable to the payment thereof, and that they alone be credited with all payments on both principal and interest of the State debt.

PUBLIC DEBT.

The following is a statement showing the nature of the indebtedness of the Commonwealth, on November 30, 1869:

Funded debt, to wit:	
6 per cent. loans...	$23,311,180 00
5 per cent. loans...	7,377,381 28
4½ per cent. loans...	112,000 00
	$30,800,561 28
Unfunded debt, viz:	
Relief notes in circulation...	$86,297 00
Interest certificate outstanding...	13,086 52
Interest certificates unclaimed...	4,446 38
Domestic creditors' certificates...	14 67
	103,876 57
Aggregate debt Nov. 30, 1869...	30,914,437 85
Public debt Nov. 30, 1868, was...	33,326,917 13
Deduct the amount redeemed at the Treasury during the year ending Nov. 30, 1869, viz: 6 per cent loans, $412,867 18	
Relief notes cancelled... 19 00	
	412,886 18
Pub debt Nov. 30, 1869, as above...	32,914,530 95

REDUCTION OF THE PUBLIC DEBT.

At the commencement of the present administration in January, 1867, the total outstanding indebtedness of the State was thirty-seven million, seven hundred and four thousand, four hundred and nine dollars and seventy-seven cents. Since then, and up to November 30, 1869, the sum of four million, eight hundred and eighty-nine thousand, eight hundred and sixty-eight dollars and eighty-two cents have been paid, and at five per cent, the sum of $244,493,44, in interest is annually saved to the Commonwealth. Consequently, the total amount of indebtedness of the Commonwealth on November 30, 1869, was thirty two million, eight hundred and fourteen thousand, five hundred and forty dollars and ninety five cents.

The reduction during the year ending November 30, 1869, amounts to four hundred and seventy-two thousand, four hundred and six dollars and eighteen cents.

ASSETS IN SINKING FUND.

The assets remaining in the Sinking Fund are as follows, viz: Bonds of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, six million, three hundred thousand dollars. Agreeably to an act dated March 30th, the Sinking Fund Commissioners delivered all the obligations of the Sunbury and Erie Railroad Company, being third mortgage bonds, to the Allegheny Valley Railroad Company, and received therefor thirty-five second mortgage bonds of one hundred thousand each, making in all three million, five hundred thousand dollars, executed by the said Allegheny Valley Railroad Company, and guaranteed by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, the Northern Central Railroad Company and the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad Company, payable to the Commonwealth as follows, viz:

The principal of one of said bonds ($100,000) shall be payable each and every year, beginning January 1, 1875, and so continuing annually thereafter until the said sum of three million five hundred thousand dollars shall be paid, with interest thereon from January 1, 1872.

The citizens of Pennsylvania have always borne taxation not only patiently but cheerfully, and they are still as willing as ever to contribute to the payment of all the obligations resting upon the State; but they expect their public servants who are intrusted with the management of their affairs to act upon the most prudent and economical basis. In a word, they demand reform in the management of the financial affairs of the State, and as far as possible, the retrenchment of all unnecessary expenditures.

On the 30th of January last, replying to a resolution of the Senate, I said:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, through the Clerk of your Honorable body, a copy of the following resolution, passed on the 12th inst., to wit:

"*Resolved*, That the Governor be requested to submit some plan to the Senate to secure the State from loss by the accumulation of large amounts of surplus funds in the Treasury."

"In reply, I beg leave to direct your attention to my message of Jan. 8th, 1868, in which I say, 'the balance now in the Treasury might be rendered productive by being invested in the bonds of the State, bearing six per cent. interest' and to the message of January 6th, 1869, where I remark, 'whenever there may be surplus funds in the Treasury, they can with safety and benefit to the State, be employed in the purchase of its outstanding bonds, and in saving the interest on them which would accumulate prior to their maturity."

Since making these suggestions, and maturely deliberating upon the subject, I have seen no reason to change my mind in relation thereto; and now submit the same plan, more specifically set forth, based upon the following statement of the loans of the Commonwealth, viz:

Amount of over due loans, including bank charter loans, and relief notes unredeemed...	$ 529,431 25
Am't payable in 1870, int. at 5 per ct.	1,488,815 65
Am't payable in 1871, int. at 6 per ct.	2,229,150 00
Am't payable in 1872, int. at 6 per ct.	4,903,150 00
Am't payable in 1873, int. at 5 per ct.	92,850 00
Am't payable in 1874, int. at 5 per ct.	7,500,000 00
Am't payable in 1877, int. at 5 per ct.	3,944,400 00
Am't payable in 1878, int. at 5 per ct	301,000 00
Am't payable in 1879, int. at 6 per ct.	400,000 00
Am't payable in 1882, int. at 6 per ct.	9,973,050 00
Am't payable in 1882, int. at 5 per ct.	1,185,050 00
Am't payable in 1885, int. 4½ per ct.	112,000 00
Amount of loans...	$33,810,017 90

To the liquidation of these loans the surplus funds in the Treasury could with great propriety be applied. This indebtedness is held in bonds bearing interest; and it will readily be perceived that this interest will be saved to the State upon whatever amount of these bonds may be redeemed, and the State be saved from all risks of loss by the accumulation of large amounts of surplus funds in the Treasury.

A few illustrations will show the beneficial working of this plan. At the termination of the fiscal year ending November 30th, 1868, there was an unexpended balance in the Treasury of $1,012,915 37. If the suggestions heretofore made had been carried out, the investment of one million dollars, at that time, in the five per cent. bonds that will fall due July 1, 1870, which I am credibly informed could then have been purchased at something less than their par value, the interest on the same, from November 30, 1868, to July 1, 1869, would be seventy-nine thousand, one hundred and sixty-seven dollars and sixty-seven cents, which has been lost to the State. Again on the 30, of November, 1869, there was in the Treasury an unexpended balance of $1,400,862 49. If one million, four hundred thousand dollars of this sum had been invested in the same kind of bonds, at par, on the 1, day of December, 1869, the interest for the seven remaining months, ending July 1, 1870, would be $40,833 34 but which, in consequence of nonconformity to this plan, will be lost to the Commonwealth. I cannot reiterate too strongly my recommendations on this subject, and would, therefore, recommend that a law be passed making it the duty of the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund to invest all surplus funds as rapidly as they accrue in the Treasury, in the purchase of bonds of the Commonwealth next falling due.

I beg, once more, to remind the Legislature that the salary of the State Treasurer should at least be equal to that of the Governor. It is only seventeen hundred dollars, a sum entirely insufficient to command the services of any responsible man, who is required to furnish a bond, with good and approved sureties, for handling at least five or six millions of dollars per annum, without the unlawful use of State funds, and subsidies from sources that dare not be revealed to the public, because they are positively prohibited by law, under penalties of no ordinary magnitude. Yet there are but few men who have held this office, however poor they may have been when they took charge of it, who have not become rich. There is certainly some advantage to be gained by the holding of the position of State Treasurer, unknown to the public, but which readily accounts for the disgraceful scramble, and for the political and moral debauchery which the people of this State seem to be doomed annually to witness in the election of that officer; and because of the disgrace it brings upon their representatives, the people hang their heads in indignation and shame. Then, in the name of the good people of Pa., I call upon the members of the Legislature, without distinction of party, to rise above the murkyness of the polluted atmosphere of the past, to the true dignity of manhood and exalted patriotism, and purify the election of Treasurer as well as that of every officer within this Commonwealth, and punish every one who tampers with the purity of elections. And then every one who shall have performed his whole duty to sustain the true interests of the State and to maintain the high dignity of her character, may return unpolluted and with a clear conscience to his constituents who will receive him with open arms, and with the joyful exclamation of "well done, good and faithful servant."

Liberal appropriations are made annually to our penitentiaries, lunatic asylums, and other charitable and beneficial institutions, without requiring from those who receive and disburse the money any satisfactory evidence that it has been faithfully applied to the objects intended. All officers of the State who receive public moneys, not excepting the Governor, are required by law and usage to settle their accounts, on proper vouchers, in the Auditor General's office. This is right; and there is no good reason why the same accountability should not be enforced against all those who receive annually such large sums of money from the bounty of the Commonwealth. I, therefore, recommend that a law be passed requiring all persons who receive and disburse State appropriations, take proper vouchers for all moneys so expended by them, and make quarterly settlements of the same in the Auditor General's office. This is important, not only to protect the interests of the State, but also the good name of those who receive and disburse the money, and of the members of the Legislature thro' whose influences the appropriations are represented to be procured.

For many years the general appropriation bills have been signed on the day of the adjournment of the Legislature, and I here repeat the suggestions of last year on this subject: "The Governor has been forced either to sign the bills without proper investigation, notwithstanding any objections he may have; suspend the means to defray the operations of the government for the ensuing year, or call an extra session of the Legislature. It is therefore earnestly desired that the appropriation bill be taken up, discussed and passed at a sufficiently early period during the session to enable the Governor to give it that thorough examination its importance demands."

COMMON SCHOOLS.

The peculiar interest which is always manifested by the people in the subject of education, is an inducement to lay before you more at length than would otherwise be done, the principal statistics of the system drawn from the report of the Superintendent of Common Schools.

There are within the State 1,971 school districts; 13,036 schools; graded schools; 12,900 school directors; 76 superintendents; 17,142 teachers; 815,753 pupils. The average cost of tuition for each pupil is ninety seven cents per month. The whole cost of tuition for the year is $3,500,704,26. Total cost including expenditures of all kinds during the year, $6,986,148,-92. Estimated value of school property $14,045,032.

Notwithstanding the fact that our school law was made general in the year 1848, it is remarkable that there still remains five districts within the State which have not yet conformed thereto. Hopes are entertained that four of these will soon accept the conditions of the law, and the remaining one, known as the Harmony district, under the control of the "Ecthonites," having a good school of its own, will probably not adopt the public school system so long as the present organization of that society exists. It is therefore a subject worthy of hearty congratulation that our school system has been so universally adopted by the voluntary consent and general acquiescence of the people.

As important auxiliaries to our common schools, the Normal schools are entitled to assume the front rank. Their flourishing condition may be understood by the following statistics: The whole number of students that have attended the four Normal schools is 10,237, of whom 321 have graduated. During the past year there were in these institutions 76 teachers and 4,178 students. Since my last annual communication, a State Normal School has been fully established and recognized at Bloomsburg, Columbia county. Its buildings are of the most finished and substantial character, and it commences its career under the most auspicious circumstances. Another is in a state of preparation at California, Washington county, and will probably be completed during the current year.

Your attention is again invited to the fact that there are about seventy five thousand children in the State that do not attend schools of any description, and who are permitted to grow up in ignorance and without employment, and in many instances, from lack of industrial and educational training become not only the votaries of vice, but a prolific source from which the inmates of our prisons and penitentiaries are supplied.

The number of children throughout the State attending private schools, is estimated at eighty five thousand.

The aggregate of the educational condition of the children of the Commonwealth, may be thus stated:

Attending the public schools...	815,753
Attending private schools...	85,000
Not attending school of any kind...	75,000
Whole number of children...	975,753

The subject of non-attendance by so large a portion of the children is specially and most earnestly commended to your consideration. It is true economy on the part of the State, if possible, to save these children from ignorance, vagrancy and crime. To neglect them would be inexcusable, if not criminal. Doubtless in your assembled wisdom you will be able to devise some effectual mode by which this evil can be remedied.

Many of the recommendations contained in the report of the Superintendent are of the utmost importance, and eminently deserving of serious attention and legislative action. The facts above set forth illustrate most forcibly the practical value of our most admirable common school system, and bear testimony that cannot be misunderstood, to the wisdom and liberality by which it has been conceived and so successfully carried into effect.

SOLDIERS' ORPHANS' SCHOOL.

Attention is invited to the report of the Superintendent of the Soldiers' Orphans' Schools, for the year ending May 31, 1869, in which is exhibited the whole expenditure, and the expenditures.

The whole number of children admitted to these schools from the origin to the 31st day of May, 1869, is four thousand, five hundred and nine; of whom three hundred and seven have been discharged on order, five hundred and eighteen on age, and fifty three have died; making a total of eight hundred and seventy eight, which left three thousand, six hundred and thirty one in the schools at the end of the year. Up to May 31, 1869, the number of discharges from the schools have exceeded former estimates by one hundred and seventy five. The number of applications for admission on file and unsatisfied, was seven hundred and one; some from every county in the State except six.

The sanitary condition of the children, as the schools have been remarkably good. And from the foregoing statement it appears that during the four years in which they have been in operation, the whole number of deaths has been less than one third of one per cent. per annum.

The entire cost for maintenance, education clothing and general expenses for the year ending May 31, 1869, differs but little from the original estimate of the Superintendent, and

Amount to...	$500,971,63
To pay which there was an unexpended balance of...	$6,001,74
Appropriated April 11, 1868...	400,000,00
Appropriated March 13, 1869...	50,000,00
	456,001,74
Balance unprovided for...	$44,969,89

For which sum there should be a special appropriation without delay, to meet the pressing wants of the teachers of the different institutions, who have been already compelled to await its payment for more than seven months.

In his last annual report, the Superintendent estimated the expenses for the current year terminating May 31, 1870, at $494,700. The sum appropriated for that year, by act of April 16, 1869, was $450,000. As the Superintendent reports the expenses will not materially vary from his estimate, there will therefore be a deficit of $44,700 for the current year, to be provided for during the present session.

For the maintenance of these schools during the year ending May 31, 1871, it is estimated that $534,500 will be required. Which sum I recommend to be appropriated, with the positive understanding that the expenditures shall not exceed that amount.

We are admonished by the rapid expansion of the system, and by the constantly increasing desire to obtain admission into these schools, that some definite limit should be determined upon by law. It is therefore recommended that the indigent children of Pennsylvania soldiers, who served in Pennsylvania regiments, and who died prior to Jan. 1, 1866, from wounds received or disease contracted in the U. S. service during the late war, shall be hereafter admitted and none others.

With unsparing patience, well considered measures, and earnestness of purpose, many defects have been eradicated, and the schools have been advanced to a more perfect and efficient system than that by which they were at first characterized, and elevated to a condition not second to any similar institutions in the country. This humane and philanthropic service is being performed by intelligent officers and faithful teachers, which will be more fully shown by their reports, communicated for the information of the Legislature.

The establishments of these institutions, where the destitute orphan children of the soldiers who lost their lives in the suppression of the late rebellion, are fed clothed and educated at the public expense, continues to command the cordial support, approval and encouragement of our citizens, and tends to elevate, everywhere, the reputation of Pennsylvania, (the first State to establish schools,) to the highest degree, for her justice patriotism and philanthropy.

Most heartily have the people indorsed the past action of their representatives in relation to these schools and there exist not a single doubt, but that they will most cordially approve all necessary appropriations for the continuance of the support, education and guardianship of these adopted children of the Commonwealth. To the honor, State pride and humanity of the Legislature is confided the guarding and maintaining of these sacred interests, and in the faithful discharge of this noble duty, you shall receive from me a special and zealous concurrence.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

The establishment of this college was undoubtedly intended as a progressive movement, and under the impression that it would contribute much to the easy acquisition of a combined knowledge of agricultural science, and literature, and to promote the practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits of life. It has been fostered by the most liberal legislation, and is endowed with the sum of $381,500, invested in United States and Pennsylvania bonds, yielding an aggregate interest this year of $25,551 00, which has been paid to the trustees of the institution. Thus far the most satisfactory results from the workings of the college have not been realized. But it is now under the direction of a president and six learned professors. It receives for its pupils only males over the age of fifteen years, qualified for admission by a good common school education. There are in it at present forty five students, with a fair prospect of a considerable increase in number. Tuition, board and the ordinary necessaries of life, are there furnished at a less rate than is generally demand for boarding alone, thus affording an extraordinary opportunity to the youth of the country to acquire an accomplished education with comparatively small expenditures. Under these circumstances the college deserves the indulgent sympathy and support of the people.

These experimental farms are connected with the college, purchased at an aggregate cost of $41,886 50. One is located at the college, one in Indiana county and one in Chester county. Operations have been commenced on them under the prescribed programme of a series of experiments with promises of complete success; the results of which are to be reported annually to the Legislature by the professor of agriculture. It is confidently expected that the record of these experimental results will prove highly interesting, and greatly beneficial to the community.

MILITARY.

The military department is one of great importance to the honorable history of the Commonwealth, and to that of her citizens individually. It is the custodian of all the military records of the State, which embrace that of every officer and private soldier, and the history of every military transaction performed by the State for the suppression of the rebellion. It has also in its custody all the regimental, State and National flags borne by our soldiers, and many trophies of war won by their valor on the field. All of which should be systematically and carefully preserved and perpetuated.

During the last three years all the staff officers required necessary by the war, and the different offices established for the convenience of the soldiers, have been discontinued, and the respective duties performed by them, as well as the official books and papers, have been transferred to the Adjutant General's department. He is, therefore, the only military officer remaining, to whom recourse is constantly had for statistics and information, not only by the soldiers and their relatives and attorneys, but by other States and by the War Department at Washington. All these circumstances, taken in connection with the present desolate condition of the volunteer militia in the State, induce me to request a continuance of Legislative care for the Adjutant General's department, and that it may be generously supplied with such appropriations as have been requested by the Adjutant General for the office.

An unusual martial activity prevails throughout the State, but more particularly in Philadelphia. The encouragement which has been afforded to the uniformed militia has been responded to with alacrity, and is exhibited as follows: In 1866; there were eight volunteer companies; in 1867, thirty eight; in 1868, sixty seven, and in 1869, one hundred and eighty four. No less than one hundred and seven companies were organized during the year ending Nov. 30, 1869, of which fifty six are in Philadelphia, and fifty one in other parts of the State.

This is a small but efficient and well equipped force, which, in case of riot, rebellion or other public danger would be ready at once to imperil their lives in the enforcement of the laws and the protection of the lives and property of the citizens. It is, therefore, desirable that the Legislature should give the volunteers such practical aid as would, in some degree, compensate them for the time and money expended to maintain their organizations, in which the people are as much interested as the volunteers themselves. For a more detailed statement of the Adjutant General will be found a very valuable document, containing much valuable information and many important suggestions. A careful perusal of its contents, and such action thereon, as seems to be demanded by their importance, is recommended.—Gen. D. B. McCreary has been elected to membership in one of your honorable bodies, and with his last report he closed his career as Adjutant General. In losing his valuable services from a position he has so ably filled for more than two years, the hope is indulged that the department will gain an intelligent and devoted friend, and an able and efficient advocate in the halls of legislation.

MILITARY HISTORY.

The report of the State Historian is deserving of your careful attention. In it you will find a detailed account of the operations of his department from its commencement to the present time. The work entrusted to his care is one of no ordinary character and responsibility, requiring talents of a high order, patient industry, careful research, and unbiased judgment. The labor to be performed is immense, and can only be properly appreciated by those fully acquainted with its magnitude. It embraces a faithful account of all the organizations of Pennsylvania troops during the war of the rebellion; the collection and adjustment, in a comprehensive form of each military organization, and an unprejudiced description of all military transactions of importance, so far as the volunteers of the State are concerned, in the camp and in the field, throughout the most terrible conflict of arms that has ever occurred in the history of the world. The propriety of such a work must be apparent to every intelligent citizen of the Commonwealth. Certainly it is due to the citizen soldiers, who offered their lives in the defense of their country, that their names shold, at least, receive a place in the archives of the State, toward whose honor and glory their gallant deeds have so large contributed.

The work of the Historian, when completed, will embrace four large octavo volumes, in which the name of every Pennsylvania volunteer will have its appropriate place. Two of these volumes are alredy completed, in a manner highly creditable to the Commonwealth. The third is rapidly progressing, and with a generous appropriation on the part of your honorable body the entire history will be executed, if not before, soon after the close of the present year. Most other States are publishing histories similar to this, and it is due to the importance of the subject, and to the credit of the State, that Pennsylvania should not be behind in this patrotic undertaking.

HOME FOR DISABLED SOLDIERS.

There is, probably, no State in the American Union that has contributed more liberally to the support of its charitable and benevolent institutions than that of Pennsylvania. The appropriations annually made for the benefit of the soldiers' orphans' schools, asylums for the deaf and dumb, blind and insane, and many other similar worthy establishments in which the poor, helpless and otherwise friendless, are cared and provided for, reflect great credit upon the Legislatures who have donated the requisite means for their support. But there is one other institution needed, and the claims for which are more strongly urged by every principle of humanity and patriotism, than any other now in existence, which has not yet received the attention its vast importance imperatively demands. This is a home for the soldiers who have "borne the battle" in defense of the honor, integrity and perpetuity of the American Union. No men living have as powerful claims upon the generosity and nurturing care of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as those, who, upon the battlefield, fought to protect it against threatened devastation and destruction, and who in this patriotic service endangered their lives, sacrificed their health, lost their limbs, and became enfeebled and disabled for life. And yet we daily see these men, (and who does not blush to see them?) to whom we owe the preservation of our government, the homes we enjoy, and almost everything we possess, hobbling about our streets on crutches, with missing limbs, and otherwise so enfeebled as to be entirely unfitted for any remunerative employment, begging their bread from door to door, or sitting upon the corners of the streets turning an organ for the few pennies the charitable passer by may feel disposed to bestow. Every one of these helpless men whose patriotic devotion to his country has brought him to this deplorable condition, is a burning reproach to the State for whose welfare he has met the most serious and lamentable of all misfortunes. All of them appeal, by their wounds and destitution, to the people of the Commonwealth for that care which in such contingencies, was promised the soldier of the Union, his widow, and his orphan children. It is time that all such pretences should be redeemed. The wounded and helpless soldiers have a claim upon the State which should not, and cannot be ignored. And I do most earnestly recommend, in the name and behalf of that measures be taken by your honorable body to establish for them a home where they shall be amply provided with the necessary comforts of life and no longer be compelled to be pensioners upon the scanty charity of the world. This is a debt the State absolutely owes, and no time should be lost in its honest liquidation.

INSURANCE DEPARTMENT.

In two former communications your attention was called to the importance of establishing in the State an insurance department similar to those existing in other States. But the Legislature has thus far failed to give it a subject that consideration which interests of such magnitude to the people seem to demand. Insurance departments in some of the States are regarded of paramount importance, as they effectually guard the interest of the insured, and through their healthy influence frauds and spurious companies—so common in Pennsylvania—are rendered almost impossible. The greatest benefit certainly would accrue both to the companies and to the policy holders, as has already been demonstrated in the States of New York and Massachusetts, where the subject of insurance has received the most careful study and attention, and been reduced to a science which commands the approbation and confidence of all who seek its protection. The security for such a department, with full powers to organize and examine all insurance companies, is sanctioned by the wisdom of experience. And as I have heretofore remarked, the result of the protection thus afforded is that, while foreign companies do immense business in this State, so little confidence is had in those of Pennsylvania that their business is almost entirely confined within her own limits; and even here foreign companies mitigate as secondary. To this same defect is attributable the operations of the numberless worthless companies that have addicted spring into existence without any solid basis, and as suddenly expired, to the injury of those whose confidence they obtained, and to the dishonor of the Commonwealth.

In view of these facts I earnestly repeat the recommendation made to the Legislature at its last session, that an insurance department be established, and a superintendent appointed by law, who shall have supervision and control over all insurance companies allowed to transact business within the State. The Community is deeply interested in this matter, and demand legislative protection.

Our laws in relation to life insurance companies are defective and need revision and correction. Without the protection referred to these laws bear unequally upon our own and foreign companies. The latter, being protected by legislative enactment, are encouraged to transact an immense amount of business within the limits of the Commonwealth, whilst our companies, having no such protection can do but little in other States. The consequence is, that foreign companies can readily afford to pay a license of *five hundred dollars* to conduct their extensive operations in Pennsylvania, whilst our companies would be compelled to pay an equal amount of license in each State that we demand of their companies in ours. This is not only oppressive to our own neglected companies, but it fails to furnish a just and equitable revenue from the various companies for the amount of business transacted. The tax should be made to bear equally upon all companies, whether home or foreign, and be adjusted proportionately to the extent of their several operations. This arrangement would be just to all—oppressive to none. The abolishment, therefore, of the license tax, and the substitution in its place of a reasonable and equitable tax, would meet the approbation of all companies, in favor of equal and exact justice, whether belonging to this or any other State. At the same time it would insure a large income to the Treasury. For instance, there are thirty seven companies, of which fifty six are in Philadelphia, and fifty one in other parts of the State. Now if these companies doing business in Pennsylvania, who each pay a license of five hundred dollars, making the sum of eighteen thousand and five hundred dollars. Not one of these companies would object to paying an equal tax of say one-half of one per cent. upon the amount of their business. This, in the aggregate of the thirty seven companies, is more than five hundred dollars, on which a tax of one-half of one per cent. would be $7 thousand dollars, increasing the revenue of the State from this source more than six thousand dollars and at the same time equalizing the tax in accordance with the business done and profits realized. An efficient law, establishing an Insurance Department, such as is recommended would meet this and all matters connected with the subject of insurance in all its branches.

THE AVONDALE DISASTER.

The recent disaster in the Avondale Coal Mine, in Luzerne county, is still fresh in the minds of the people. It caused a thrill of horror to spread throughout the country; and even in Europe it has been productive of the most painful emotions and deepest sorrow for the sufferers. Women and children who had been accustomed to regard the occupation of the miner as one of ordinary character, now look upon it as fraught with danger, and part with relatives and friends, when about to pursue their perilous occupation, with fearful forebodings. And even the sturdy miner, himself, trembles at his dangerous calling, and demands greater protection than has hitherto been afforded.

The history of this terrible calamity seems to be as follows: Early on the morning of the 6th of September last, one hundred and eight men entered the Avondale Mine to prosecute their avocation. None of them anticipated danger as they descended the fatal shaft; not one supposed that he was entering a tomb in which he was to be buried alive. But the destroying angel hovered over them and the shaft, costructed principally of combustible materials, having become ignited from some cause, yet undetermined, with surprising rapidity, was soon a sheet of flame, and huge burning timbers came tumbling above, choking up with fire and smoke the only avenue of escape. Sensible of their peril, the unfortunate men sought a place of safety, but it was not to be found. They cried for succor, but no earthly arm could give them help; hopeless they huddled together, and clasped in each other's arms, met death in one of its most frightful and agonizing forms.

Whilst this fearful scene was transpiring below, the immense wooden structure above the shaft took fire, and burning with frightful rapidity, was soon reduced to a crumbling mass. Thousands of men, women and children soon surrounded the place, and being unable to afford the slightest relief to their suffering friends below, filled the air with lamentations, appalling even to the stoutest hearts. Never before was a scene more heart rending witnessed within the limits of this Commonwealth, and it is trusted that through your prompt and efficient legislative action, another such will never be permitted to occur.

The mines in many cases are constructed and managed in the most selfish and parsimonious manner, the owners exacting the largest amount of profit from them, from the least possible outlay; consequently some of them, like that of Avondale, are nothing put underground man-traps, without any other outlets than wooden chimnies and those constantly liable to become blazing volcanoes, through which escape is impossible. The lives of so useful a class of men as our miners should not, and must not be permitted to be thus sacrificed upon the alter of human cupidity. Yet a reprehensible neglect to give them that protection by law which their valuable services, at best laborious and dangerous, unquestionably deserve, renders our mining system worse than that of any other country, whilst our mining interests are unequalled by those of any other part of the world.

The most appalling accidents on record have been traced to unsafe methods of ventilation, and more especially to the employment of our furnaces at or near the bottom of the shafts. Where the furnace is used, and the smoke is carried through a wooden chimney, it seems almost certain that sooner or later, by the inevitable accumulation of soot or carbon upon the frame work, it must ignite from the ascending sparks or from the heat of the furnace, and a conflagration ensue. To guard against this, it should be made obligatory, if the ventilating furnace be still allowed, to build the chimnies, the sides of the shaft, and the buildings surrounding it at the top with incombustible materials. But even this precaution is no sure safeguard, for the fire is liable, at any moment, to communicate with the "fire-damp" or gaseous vapors, that, despite of all known means of prevention, will generate in the best regulated mines. The propriety of dispensing entirely therefore, with the furnace, has received the serious consideration of scientific miners and engineers, and the fan, in many instances, has been substituted, which being worked by machinery at the surface, produces a more constant current of air, dispenses it more freely through the gangways and chambers, and, in all respects, accomplishes the object desired with better effect; and when the shafts and surface buildings are fire-proof, without the possibility of danger. This system of ventilation, with advantages so palpably obvious, will, no doubt, be universally adopted. But the very nature of mining operations subjects them to other dangers. The walls and roofing of the mines, from the effects of blasting and other causes, frequently give way and fill up the gangways so as to render them impassable, as in the more recent calamity at Stockton, which resulted in the death of ten persons. Hence it is absolutely necessary, and should be imperatively demanded, that every mine should have more than a single place of ingress and egress. Whether as regards fire, or any other source of danger to which the miner is exposed, this is the surest promise of safety. Whatever system of ventilation may be approved, or safety lamp adopted, the means of escape from the mines, when danger occurs, will depend very materially upon the provision made for the exit of the miner.

The best method of constructing, ventilating and working the mines, should be unhesitatingly adopted and rigidly enforced. The inquiry, therefore, into the causes which produced this shocking catastrophe—the various theories that have been promulgated concerning it—the remedies for preventing similar occurrences hereafter—the construction and ventilation of collieries, and the modes of conducting