

should be free, even from the appearance of improper motives; and every undue and corrupting influence, inside or outside the Legislative Hall, should be resisted and condemned.

It is a cause of more than ordinary congratulation, that agriculture, the first, as it is the noblest pursuit of man, has, in its progress of development, vindicated its own importance, and assumed, in public esteem, the honorable position to which it is so justly entitled. Constituting, as it does, the substratum of our great mechanical, manufacturing, and commercial interests, it should ever be regarded as the chief source of State and National prosperity. First in necessity, it is the highest in usefulness of all the departments of labor, su training and promoting, in their varied and multiplied relations, all the other industrial interests of the country. Our financial and commercial prosperity is largely dependent upon the success of agricultural industry.

An interest so important should receive the encouragement of all classes of society. No longer a mere art—an exertion of physical strength, it has reached the dignity of a science; and to its progress and improvement the people and their representatives should cheerfully contribute. State and county agricultural societies have done much to promote this cause, and through their agency much valuable information has been collected, and diffused. Much yet remains to be done. More information is demanded. More efficiency in the collection and diffusion of useful knowledge is required. To secure this result, the establishment of an agricultural Bureau, in connection with some of the departments of State, would largely contribute. The importance of such a Bureau, properly organized, is an aid to the advancement of agricultural knowledge and the success of agricultural industry, cannot easily be over-estimated. The subject is earnestly commended to your attention.

By an act of the last session, an institution designated as the "Farmers' High School of Pennsylvania" was incorporated. The charter was accepted by the trustees, and the institution duly organized. An eligible site for the college has been secured in Centre county, and two hundred acres of valuable and highly cultivated land donated to the trustees, for the use of the institutions, by Gen James Irvin, of that county. The citizens of the county, with a liberality highly commendable, have pledged and secured to the trustees, for the use of the college, ten thousand dollars in addition to the land donated. This liberality shows that the farmers of Pennsylvania fully appreciate the importance of such an institution, and will support and sustain it. The course of instruction will be thorough and practical. Scientific and practical agriculture, with the usual branches of academic education, will be taught, and the effort will be to make good farmers, good scholars, and good citizens.

While individual liberality and energy have done much and will do more for this institution, an appropriation by the State, in such a sum as the Legislature may deem proper, would not only aid and encourage this laudable enterprise, but would be an honorable and just recognition of the important interests involved.

The laws now in operation, regulating manufacturing and other improvement companies, are in some of their provisions too severely restrictive, and should be modified. Legislation on these subjects has heretofore tended to restrain the investment of capital—check industry, and curb the energy of the people in the prosecution of those enterprises that aid the development of our immense resources, and contribute so largely to the wealth and prosperity of the State. Liberal and judicious legislation—encouraging individual enterprise—inviting the investment of capital and stimulating the various departments of manufacturing and mechanical industry, would greatly promote the interests of the people—increase our revenues, and give to the Commonwealth that prominence and position, in the sisterhood of States, to which the character of her citizens and her illimitable natural resources justly entitle her. To this subject your attention is invited.

The report of the Superintendent of Common Schools will exhibit to you

their condition and the general operations of the system throughout the Commonwealth, during the past year. To the valuable and useful suggestions of the report, I would earnestly ask the attention of the Legislature.

The operation and results of the system as detailed are highly interesting. Our educational system is slowly, but surely, conquering the prejudices and gaining the confidence of the people. Under the fostering care of liberal and enlightened legislation its ultimate triumph is certain. When the system was first introduced, it was supposed that it could be perfected and forced into general and vigorous operation by the mere will of the Legislature. Experience has proven, that in this, as in every other great social and moral reform, time and that consent which arises from a radical change in the popular mind, were required. This slow process of the acclimation of the new system to our social and moral atmosphere, has been in operation for nearly twenty years; and it is now evident that the period for another effective interposition of legislative aid and authority in favor of our noble system of common schools, has arrived. In whatever form this obviously proper and necessary interposition may present itself, if calculated to promote the great purpose in view, it shall receive my cheerful support.

After a careful examination of the subject, it is my clear conviction, that the system is now prepared for and requires increased efficiency in its general supervision—increased qualification in its teachers, and increased means of support.

The experiment of the County Superintendency wherever faithfully carried out, has not disappointed the expectations of the advocates of that measure. The improved condition of the schools, and the greater efficiency of the system, clearly establish the propriety and utility of such supervision. The official visits of an officer of the school department to some of the counties of the State, in connection with the County Superintendency, have demonstrated that the voice of public authority to sustain, and the presence of an official agent to encourage, have largely contributed to excite and maintain the deep interest now felt by the public in our educational progress and improvement.

The most marked improvement recently effected in the system, has been in its corps of teachers. With almost unparalleled disinterestedness and devotion to the noble cause in which they are engaged, the common school teachers of the State, have in almost every county been using all the means and appliances within their power, for self-improvement. These efforts, so creditable to them, have been highly beneficial in their results; and clearly prove the necessity, and point with unerring certainty to the establishment of State Normal schools. Teachers' meetings for a day have given place to institutions for a week; and these again to numerous Normal meetings continuing from one to three months. At every step in this progression, it has become more apparent that permanent institutions, with their proper professors and appliances, which nothing but the power of the State can provide, are demanded by, and would meet the wants of the system and the occasion.

In conceding this boon to our children, through their teachers, we are encouraged by the example of other countries, and the experience of the past. It is a remarkable fact, that no State of our Union, nor nation of the old world, has perfected its system of public instruction, without schools for the professional training of teachers, established and supported by the public authority and means; and it is no less remarkable, and still more encouraging, that no such institution has ever yet been abandoned. From Prussia, whose experience in this regard, is that of a century and a quarter, to that of our young sister Michigan, whose existence is as of yesterday, the Normal school has been tried throughout Christendom with unvarying success.

This result is in full harmony with the laws of mind and of human society. Teaching is a high and honorable profession; and no profession has more arduous and complex duties to perform—no one greater responsibilities to meet—and no one operates on, or

with, such valuable and interesting material. The most thorough preparation is, therefore, requisite; and as the duties to be performed are not only responsible, but delicate, and may affect the social, political, moral or religious feelings and rights of the citizen, no source is so safe, no authority for their discharge so free from suspicion or bias, as the State. Teachers trained by the State, and representing the vitality of its republicanism, will be the firm support and sure guarantee of its republican equality.

It is time also that the teaching mind should resume its true place in the schools. In the communication of knowledge, to be effective, mind, in sympathetic contact, must act upon mind, and with living, speaking energy, leave its impress there. The Great Master himself thus trained the school which was to reform a world. But now the book has too much intruded itself between the teacher and the taught. The teacher has too much become the mere exponent of the printed page, and the mind of the learner the impressed copy of the text. In thus saying, the value and importance of books, as a means of knowledge, are not intended to be overlooked or derided; but the uses of our best agencies have their limits; and when we find the book usurping the place of the teacher, to the injury of the mind of our youth, we should restore each to its proper position—require from each the performance of its appropriate functions, and thus confer upon both the full measure of their usefulness.

As an expedient to supply the place of regular Normal schools till established, and as a valuable auxiliary to them when in operation, the Teachers' Institute would be of unquestionable value. It would bring together the teachers of a county under the best influences, for consultation and improvement, and exhibit them before their fellow-citizens in their proper professional character. A portion of the means of the State, or of the respective counties, applicable to educational improvement, could not be more profitably applied, than to the encouragement of the meeting of at least one such institute, annually, in each county. An experiment of this kind recently made in the county of Chester, is said to have been eminently successful, and strongly indicative of the wisdom of the measure.

If, in addition to these, or similar measures, the Legislature should feel warranted—and the measure has all the sanction this executive document can give it—to make a large addition to the annual State appropriation to common schools, I believe that all will be done which the patriotism of the people's representatives can now effect; and I do not hesitate to express the opinion that the time has come for this prompt, full and decisive action. Let the integrity of the system, in its great purposes and objects, be maintained; and if changed, changed only to render it more efficient, and to increase its power for greater usefulness. Whatever else may distinguish your present session, it is hazing little to predict, that more honor and benefit will result from the perfection of the common school system of education, than from any other exercise of your legislative powers.

The public schools of Philadelphia are deserving of special notice and approval. In their various gradations, from the primary up to the high school, they are models worthy of imitation and their management and efficiency reflect great credit upon those to whom have been committed their supervision and control. It is to be regretted that these schools, so creditable to our great commercial and literary emporium, and so honorable to our Commonwealth, should find no place in the annual report of the Superintendent of Common Schools. As at present organized, these schools are independent of the State Superintendency, and do not report to the school department of the Commonwealth. As everything that relates to the operation of the common school system, and the condition of the public schools in the State, is important and interesting, the statistics of these schools should be furnished to the State Superintendent, that the same might be embodied in the annual report of the department. A modification of existing laws on this subject, so far as to require the controllers of the public schools of

Philadelphia, to report to the school department, the number, grade, and condition of their schools—the number of pupils, and generally such information in relation to their government, as may be deemed useful to the cause of education, is respectfully recommended.

To improve the social, intellectual and moral condition of the people—reclaim the erring, and ameliorate human suffering, are objects that commend themselves to the consideration of the philanthropist and the statesman. Our educational, charitable and reformatory institutions are justly the pride of the State, honorable alike to the wisdom that devised and the liberality that founded and sustains them. They have strong claims upon the bounty of the people, and I cordially recommend them to your care and the liberality of the Commonwealth.

The State Lunatic Hospital, at Harrisburg, in its objects and results, merits our highest approbation. The just expectations of its projectors and founders have not been disappointed. Kindness and love, with their softening and subduing influence, constitute the rule of its government. Many of its former unfortunate inmates have been restored to reason, to friends and home and the enjoyments of social life. Those that remain require our sympathy and aid. They should not be withheld. The report of the directors will exhibit, in detail, the operations of the institution.

The necessity and importance of providing additional accommodation for the insane of western Pennsylvania, have been strongly pressed upon my attention. The present accommodations are clearly insufficient, and these have been provided principally by the contributions of benevolent citizens. It is urged that the rapid advance of our population—the gloomy increase of the insane—and the inadequacy of the present asylums for their care and management, render it imperatively necessary that effective aid should be given to that portion of the State, for the establishment of a new and entirely distinct Western Insane Hospital, as a home to those of our fellow-citizens whose only alleviation is to be found in their own ignorance of the frightful misery with which they are burdened. The subject is worthy of calm and dispassionate inquiry. I will cheerfully co-operate with the Legislature, in all proper efforts to accomplish this object.

Should you decline to act upon this subject, I would then recommend that an adequate appropriation be made to the Western Pennsylvania Hospital for the purpose of extending its accommodations for the care of the insane, as distinct as may be practicable from the other class of patients and inmates. The charter of this institution is liberal in its provisions, and comprehensive in the objects liable to be brought under its care; embracing the insane, as well as the sick, helpless and infirm.

In this connection I would commend to your attention the Pennsylvania Training School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Children. The aid of this Commonwealth has heretofore been extended to this institution. It is a noble charity, and appeals to the best feelings of the heart. It deserves to share the bounty of the State.

The House of Refuge in Philadelphia, and the Western House of Refuge near Pittsburg, are institutions of great excellence, having for their object the reclaiming of wayward and erring youth—the employment of the idle—the instruction of the ignorant—the reformation of the vicious and depraved, and the relief of the wretched. They are schools, not prisons—homes, not places of punishment; they are a refuge to the neglected and outcast children and youth of our Commonwealth. The success of the past is a sure guarantee of their future usefulness. They should receive your aid and encouragement.

The Blind and the Deaf and Dumb Asylums in Philadelphia, invite our sympathy, and ask to share the benefactions of the Commonwealth. They should not be disappointed. The blind in their darkness—the dumb in their silence—will cherish the gift, and bless the generous donor.

Legislation, in regard to all questions of moral and social reform, should be carefully and wisely considered and matured. On no subject within the

constitutional authority of the Legislature, are people so sensitive; and no one more deeply interests every class and condition of society. Sumptuary laws, as a general rule, are of doubtful expediency; and as abridgments of the liberty and privileges of the citizen, can only be justified on the ground of necessity. While this is admitted, it cannot be denied that the evils resulting from intemperance, create a necessity for regulating and restraining by legislative acts, the traffic and sale of intoxicating liquors. To what extent this traffic should be restrained by positive law, must depend on the will of the people, determined by considerations of their own moral, physical, and social welfare. Whatever may be my own opinion, or that of the Legislature, or the people, in reference to the law of the last session "to restrain the sale of intoxicating liquors," it must be admitted that a full return to the license system in operation prior to the passage of the present law, is not demanded by enlightened public sentiment, and would not promote the good order or happiness of the community. That the laws then in existence were imperfect, and failed to check or control the evils of intemperance, is a proposition too plain to be doubted. That they need revision must also be conceded. In our large cities and towns, the evils of the system were more severely felt. The facility and cheapness with which licenses were obtained, operated as a premium to vice and immorality, and multiplied tipping houses and places where intemperance under the authority of law, was not only permitted, but encouraged. My immediate predecessor, in his last annual message to the Legislature, in reference to the then license laws, says: "So far as relates to the city of Philadelphia, they are peculiarly prejudicial to public morals, and seem to have been constructed to promote the convenience of drinking far more than to restrain its evil consequences." In this opinion I fully concur. That a remedy was demanded, all will concede. Whether the law of the last session was the proper remedy, it is not my province now to determine. Enacted by the representatives of the people, I gave that act my official approval. Recognizing the people as the source of all political power, and their representatives as the immediate exponents of their will, upon you will devolve the responsibility of further legislation if any, on this subject. In all its relations, economical, political, social and moral, the question is important, and its proper determination involves fearful responsibilities. It deserves, and should receive your serious consideration. If action is had, may we not hope that it will be such as will promote the virtue, morality, and true interests of our people and Commonwealth.

Legislation, so far as practicable, should be general and uniform. Local and special legislation should not be encouraged, when the desired object can be obtained by general laws. Such legislation is not only local and special in its character, but frequently temporary—the act of one session being repealed by the act of the next, and perhaps replaced by one still more objectionable, which, in turn, soon shares the fate of its predecessor. It crowds the statute book with useless and unnecessary laws—violates private rights—creates confusion and uncertainty—destroys uniformity of practice and decision—prolongs the sessions of the Legislature, and increases the public expenses. Our general laws regulating roads, highways, and bridges, and providing for the support and employment of the poor, constitute a well-digested system for the accomplishment of those objects; and yet under the system of local legislation heretofore practiced, we frequently find in different townships of the same county, local laws regulating these subjects, not only differing materially from the general law, but from one another. Reform in this regard is required, and to this I respectfully ask your attention.

"Omnibus legislation," having been condemned and abandoned, should not be permitted again to sully the records of legislative action. It cannot receive my approval. Numerous applications will doubtless be made for the incorporation of insurance, gas, water, and boom com-

panies. To facilitate action on these questions—economize time—reduce the expenses of legislation—secure uniformity, and confine the companies thereafter incorporated, to the legitimate purposes of their creation, I would recommend the propriety of enacting general laws regulating such corporations. Already laws of this character for coal, iron, canal, railroad, turnpike, plank, and bridge companies, have been passed, and in practice have been found highly useful and economical. Such laws, well regulated and carefully guarded, would be productive of similar results in their application to insurance and the other companies named.

The propriety of limiting and restraining corporate bodies to the objects and purposes of their creation, will not be denied or controverted. In relation to the powers and privileges of insurance companies, this plain principle has been overlooked and disregarded. By successive acts of legislation, many of these institutions have acquired discounting privileges, and nearly all the powers of banks, without their guards, restrictions, and liabilities. This has been effected by the magic of some general provision in the act incorporating the company, or by reference to some forgotten supplement concealed in the folds of an "omnibus bill," or in the mazes of the pamphlet laws. General laws, whilst they would confer on such companies all the powers necessary to accomplish the objects of their incorporation, would at the same time prevent an extension of privileges foreign to such associations. This subject is commended to your consideration.

The jurisdiction of the courts in relation to real estate, trusts, the incorporation of literary, charitable, and religious societies, manufacturing and other associations, has been greatly extended by recent legislation. This enlarged jurisdiction was conferred for the purpose of relieving the Legislature from the pressure of numerous applications for special legislation in the premises. The courts are, therefore, the proper tribunals to determine such questions; and in all cases where the subject matter is within their jurisdiction, the Legislature should refuse to entertain the application.

Divorces, unless in cases of extreme necessity, and clearly beyond the jurisdiction of the courts, should not be granted by the Legislature.

By the act of the 15th of April, 1845, entitled "An Act to increase the revenues and diminish the legislative expenses of the Commonwealth," it was provided that thereafter no private bill therein described and taxed, should be enrolled in the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, or published, or have the force and effect of law, until the party asking or requiring the same should pay into the Treasury of the Commonwealth the respective sums named in said act. A large number of acts passed by former Legislatures, and subject to this tax, remain in the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, the tax on them not having been paid. The number has been annually increasing, and will continue to increase, unless a summary remedy be afforded for the collection of the enrollment tax, or in default of its payment after a certain period, the acts themselves be repealed. The amount of enrollment tax now due the Commonwealth is large, and should have been paid long since. I would therefore recommend the passage of a law repealing all acts heretofore passed subject to such tax, unless the tax be paid within one year thereafter; and further, to provide that all such acts hereafter passed, shall not have the force and effect of law, unless the tax respectively due thereon be paid within six months after their approval. Such a law would secure the payment of these taxes, increase the revenues, and at the same time check the demand for private acts designed to be used or abandoned, as the calculation of chances, or the loss or gain of the parties in interest might determine.

By a resolution of the Legislature, passed the 27th day of March, 1855, requiring the New York and Erie Railroad company to communicate to the Legislature of this Commonwealth a statement, certified under oath by their president, setting forth what quantity of land said company now holds in Pennsylvania—its location—