

Bradford Reporter

WEDNESDAY

Regardless of Denunciation from any Quarter.—Gov. PORTER.

(BY E. S. GOODRICH & SON.)

TOWANDA, BRADFORD COUNTY, PA., JANUARY 22, 1845.

NO. 62.

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.

The Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

FOLLOW-CITIZENS.—The term to which my eligibility, as the Chief Executive officer of the Commonwealth, is limited by the Constitution, being about to close, I submit to the Legislature the last annual message which my station enjoins upon me. In the performance of this duty, I cannot refrain from invoking your devout prayers, with my own, to the Great Author of All Good, for His aid and guardianship over the best interests and welfare of our beloved Commonwealth. Upheld by His paternal arm, we have been rescued from the most distressing embarrassments and difficulties to which, in a time of peace, any people were ever subjected. We have sprung out of evil—safety and wisdom from folly—and emerged from a spirit of ungenerous denunciation. The clouds that for several years past, have hung upon our horizon, are breaking away; and the sun of prosperity once more begins to beam upon our path.

Ten days after my induction into office, I felt myself called upon, in the highest considerations of duty, to communicate to the Legislature, a frank exposition of the state of pecuniary affairs. Upon a careful examination, it was ascertained that the amount of the public debt, including the revenue from the United States, was a little upwards of thirty millions of dollars, and the deficit in the Treasury during the year 1839, beyond the amount from all sources, was about millions of dollars. To meet this deficit, immediate provision had to be made; and to add to the perplexing embarrassments, the great commercial crisis, which has since reached its height, was then just beginning to operate. For more than two years immediately preceding that of the State of Pennsylvania, from its known punctuality and great resources, had experienced no difficulty in procuring upon loans, on any terms, any amount of money needed to extend and carry on her system of internal improvement.

Both Foreign and American capitalists were competitors for the acquisition of her loans; and there seemed no limits to her credit and resources, except those which her own necessities imposed. She made large loans for the undertaking and completion of various lines of improvement, and the interest upon these loans was forgotten. Stimulated by these loans, and forgetting the day ever when her interest must be paid, she incurred, by railroad loans, a debt of improvements, far more extensive than her necessities required, and far beyond her means to pay.

The same reckless spirit pervaded the government, had upon her private citizens, and induced them to engage in undertakings of a very few years immediately after the commencement of my administration, banks were created, and with capital, unheard of in the Commonwealth at any former period. These banks, controlled by such impulses, very soon exhausted, and, as every man ought to have foreseen, crashed in their downfall, the entire credit of the community. Within two years after I entered upon the charge of the Executive functions, the aggregate capital of which had amounted to more than two-thirds of the banking capital of the State, was reduced to less than that proportion. These banks, were compelled to suspend their affairs; and, in doing so, they extinguished this amount of capital of the State, but left the remaining banks, completely without facilities from the press men of the community, forcing their debtors, constituting a large class of men engaged in various pursuits of life, to discharge their debts, almost crushed the large and thriving class of business men in all parts of the Commonwealth. To add to these perplexing evils, the pecuniary affairs of the Commonwealth became almost as deeply embarrassed as our own; and foreign capitalists had sought for opportunities to invest in this country, and were induced to withhold their

contributions to the improvement of the Commonwealth, and to the relief of its pecuniary affairs. The details of these laws are, in all their minute particulars, the most equal and just, in the objects selected for taxation, and the rates imposed, I will remark that, they seem to be substantially conformable to public opinion. There is a defect in providing for the punctual enforcement of the laws imposing and collecting the taxes, and I beg leave to

recommend, to the consideration of the Legislature, the adoption of some more efficient mode of attaining this end. This might be done by inflicting penalties on the collectors, or other officers, found delinquent in the discharge of their duties. That class of individuals is as little entitled to indulgence or sympathy as any others engaged in the execution of the laws.

The entire amount of the public debt at this time is:

Handed debt 6 per cent. stocks	\$4,370,816 21
" " " "	34,721,531 46
" " " "	200,000 00
Total	\$39,292,450 67

Loan (relief issue) per act of 4th May, 1841, bearing an interest of one per cent.

" six "	\$1,175,000 00
" five "	171,636 00
" four "	91,642 00

Amount in circulation, \$4,438,178 00
Balance due domestic creditors on certificates issued by the Auditor General 104,384 93

Amounting to the sum of \$40,835,013 60. The increase on the State Debt, since I assumed the duties of the Executive chair, may be properly understood, when it is stated that the interest which has accrued thereon since that period amounts to \$10,362,186 00. The amount of interest guaranteed to private corporations, to and the amount of appropriations towards the completion of unfinished lines of public improvements commenced prior to that time, about 4,500,000 00

Amounting to \$15,006,525 00. The annual interest on the funded debt of the State, payable at the Bank of Pennsylvania, exclusive of interest on certificates issued for interest, is \$1,747,030 12, falling due respectively on the first of February and August, of which the sum of \$873,515 06, is payable on the first day of February next. If it should be determined to pay the interest on the interest certificates on the 1st of February, then the further sum of \$97,890 84, will be required.

The receipts into the Treasury during the fiscal year, ending on the 30th November last, including a small available balance from the previous year, were \$2,511,237 03. The expenditures for the same period, including the amount of relief notes cancelled, were 1,647,385 15

Leaving a balance in the Treasury on that day of \$663,851 00. There was also an available balance in the Canal Treasury on the same day of 39,497 00. The receipts during the month of December, exclusive of disbursements were 139,681 23. To which may be added the receipts over expenditures for the present month, estimated at 12,000 00

Making the amount in the Treasury on 1st February about \$963,070 11

This balance embraces the sum of \$50,000 of relief notes, which the State Treasurer withheld from cancellation on the 31st of December if needed, may be applied by the Legislature to the payment of interest on the public debt. From the facts here presented, it is evident that the Commonwealth will be prepared to meet her interest falling due on the 1st of February. Attempts, it is true, have been made to create doubts in the public mind in relation to the propriety of paying the interest on that day, least there should be a deficiency in the Treasury, on the 1st of August. But it must be perfectly evident that the Treasury will be in ample funds, not only on the first of August next, but also on the first of February, 1846. And the very fact that the interest is paid on the first of February next, will increase the means and credit of the State to meet its interest in August, and afterwards, when it falls due. While, on the other hand, if when it is admitted that enough money to discharge the interest on the first of February, is in the Treasury, applied to that object, and it is not so applied, we shall, with much appearance of justice, subject ourselves to the reproach of our conductors, as wilfully dishonest, and regardless of the faith and honor of the State. With an exhausted Treasury and tarnished credit, we could plead our necessities in extenuation of our violation of contracts; but what shadow of excuse could be offered when this necessity has ceased to exist? None; whatever that good old-fashioned integrity does not brand as disgraceful, and unworthy our character as a sovereign State.

It must be gratifying to every Pennsylvanian to reflect that the credit of this great State, which has been, for upwards of two years, subjected to reproach, will thus be restored to the unsullied purity of character which, until this unavoidable reverse of fortune, she had steadfastly maintained. The claims of all her honest creditors will be punctually discharged, and the gross imputations which have been heaped upon her name wiped out, and the abiding confidence which we have ever felt in the disposition and ability of the State to comply with all her engagements, will be fully realized.

The report of the Canal Commissioners will present to you, in detail, the operations on the public improvements, for the past year. The tolls collected in 1844, amount to \$1,167,603 52, being an increase over 1843 of \$72,199 10. The collections for the year exceed the expenditures the sum of \$629,652 92. The report of the State Treasurer will explain, in detail, our financial condition. That officer estimates the receipts at the Treasury, for the current fiscal year ending 30th November, 1845, at \$3,005,000 00. To which add balance in Treasury, on 30th November last, \$663,851 88. Also the amount in Canal Treasury on same day, 39,497 00. Making a total of \$3,708,348 88. He also estimates the expenditures of the Commonwealth, for the same period, including interest on public debt, at \$3,061,013 56. Leaving a balance in Treasury on 30th November, 1845, of \$657,335 32.

There is, therefore, no manner of doubt that, henceforth, the State will be able to meet, not only the interest on her public debt, but all her other engagements of every description; the taxes now imposed by law, (if their collection and payment into the Treasury be strictly enforced), and the proceeds of the public improvements, with other sources of revenue, constituting a fund amply sufficient for that purpose. Recurring to the history of the past six years, what a satisfactory answer does it furnish to the objections of the enemies of Republican Government, against its stability and its honor. Oppressed by personal embarrassments—weighed down by public liabilities—reproached for not doing what the most manful struggles were unable to accomplish, the people of Pennsylvania have still borne themselves steadily in the darkest hour, have submitted to taxation, grievous at all times, and particularly so in convulsions of business, and have at last reached the solid footing which public integrity and public fidelity in the end never fail to attain. The difficulties and embarrassments attending this struggle, will hardly be credited by those who have not shared them; and, I confess, it will ever be to me a source of proud satisfaction to compare the condition of the State, when the helm of Government was put into my hands, with its condition when I surrender it into the hands of my successor. I say not this to reproach those who proceeded, nor to diminish the just credit of those who succeeded me; but as an act of sheer justice to all who embarked with me in the gloomy and perilous voyage we have run since the 15th of January, 1839. It can hardly be possible for such a season of trial ever to occur again; but if unhappily it should, I trust those who are called upon to encounter it, will find something in our example to cheer and animate them to persevere in the discharge of their duty.

Having thus disposed of the financial concerns of the State, for the last few years, a subject of the deepest solicitude, I shall proceed to submit to you, but few special recommendations; for, at the present time, I deem it no more than an act of respectful courtesy to my successor, to leave entirely in his hands those recommendations of a general nature, which are usually expected to emanate from the Executive Department. There are a few topics, however, upon which I feel it to be my duty to offer some suggestions for your consideration.

The unexampled commotion and disturbance that recently prevailed in the business concerns of the country, have in a great degree, subsided, and left us in a state to survey the field of disaster with a calm and experienced eye. The throes and convulsions of the banking system, for a time, menaced all those institutions, with speedy downfall, but most of them have now outtrode the storm. No man could witness the existing state of things, without feeling conscious that this system was essentially vicious, & needed effectual reform. To make banks useful without being dangerous—to correct the evils without depriving them of all power to do good—to restrain them within their proper sphere, by rigid regulations, is an object at which, I think, all intelligent and honest legislation should aim. In this

opinion, I presume, there will be no discordance whatever, among well informed men. Early in the month May last, a series of the most alarming and sanguinary riots broke out in the District of Kensington, in the county of Philadelphia. On the origin of these riotous proceedings, I do not feel called upon to make any particular animadversions. It is enough to say, that a large amount of private property, dwelling houses and churches, were burnt and destroyed; and that a large number of valuable lives were sacrificed. To such an extent was the public safety endangered, that I was called upon, by the proper authorities of the city and county of Philadelphia, for an adequate force to arrest and quell these disturbances. I immediately ordered a very considerable number of troops, from adjoining districts, to repair to Philadelphia, and by assuming a firm and determined position, peace and order were temporarily restored.

In the month of July, similar outrages again were committed in the District of Southwark, in the county of Philadelphia, and with similar painful and bloody results. I was again called upon to interfere, and, a second time, repaired to the city of Philadelphia, having made similar requisitions upon the volunteers of neighboring districts, and, by the adoption of similar proceedings, lawless outrage was again suppressed, and public tranquility, as I trust thoroughly restored. On these occasions, the mob had procured fire-arms of nearly all descriptions, and used them both against private citizens and against the military, with deadly effect. I had the gratification to witness that the citizen soldiery, thus called, at an hour's warning, from their homes to the scene of bloody conflict, acted, in all emergencies, with a coolness, steadiness and courage worthy of veterans, and with a degree of forbearance, without shrinking from their duty, infinitely more to their honor. Officers and men all behaved in a manner entitled to the highest commendation. I refer you to the report of Major General Patterson, herewith transmitted, for the detailed operations of the military, on the occasions to which I have referred. It is due to these citizen soldiers, to make speedy and adequate remuneration for their services. I submit it to the Legislature to ascertain the time to be allowed them, and fix the amount they ought to receive; but I must urge upon its consideration, in the most earnest terms, the justice and propriety of their claims. Men who abandon their daily pursuits of life, leave their wives and children without protection or support, and peril their lives in the public service, either against foreign or domestic foes, are justly entitled to a liberal compensation from that public whose laws they have defended. The salutary lesson taught by the rigid, though considerate enforcement of the laws, by means of the military, and the firm and enlightened course pursued by the judicial tribunals and the officers in Philadelphia, entrusted with the duty of bringing offenders before them, will doubtless prevent a recurrence of these evils, and guarantee, hereafter, the peace and good order of that community.

Although the system of imprisonment adopted by Pennsylvania, some years ago, at the establishment of her Penitentiaries, has been justly regarded as the most admirable to be found among all nations, yet there is one department which remains to be provided for, that of establishing, in connection with each of our State Penitentiaries, a department for the charge of the insane inmates. There have been, almost every year, since I have been Governor of the Commonwealth, some unfortunate persons confined in the Penitentiary, of this description, who, either were partially insane when committed, or became so afterwards. As the law now stands, there is no remedy for these cases, but to pardon them, or confine them in the same manner as other criminals are confined. Both these modes are often times wrong, and I respectfully urge it upon your consideration to make some provision for redressing the evil in future. The State debt now consists of thirty-seven distinct loans, for each of which, a separate set of books must be kept in the loan office of the Commonwealth. Constant divisions, subdivisions, and transfers of stock, are taking place, and the whole system is becoming daily more laborious and complicated. I recommend an inquiry into the subject, and, if practicable, the consolidation of these loans into some uniform system.

The careless manner in which bills are transcribed, is a subject which calls for some remedy. It not unfrequently happens that the Executive is compelled to return bills to the comparing committees, for correction, before he can give them his approval. Bills presented during the last hours of the session, and, as is usually the case, on the day after the adjournment, cannot undergo this correcting process, and are necessarily placed upon the statute book, with such errors as they may contain.

It has likewise been discovered, after the publication of the laws, that whole sections which had passed both houses, had been omitted in the transcribed bill, and sections inserted which had never received the sanction of the Legislature. I deem it only necessary to call your attention to this evil, without making any recommendation as to the proper remedy.

During the time I have been in office, no appropriations have been made to furnish the Executive Chamber, in a manner which seems to me to be suitable to the character of the State. I have avoided calling the attention of the Legislature to this subject for obvious reasons; but a sense of delicacy no longer restrains me from pressing upon your attention, the necessity of supplying the Executive Chamber with furniture and conveniences, a little less unbecoming than those that are found there at present.

The public grounds surrounding the Capitol, notwithstanding that considerable sums have been appropriated to improve and embellish them, are still in a condition not at all creditable to the capital of the State; and especially that portion, not enclosed, upon the southeast side of the Capitol, stands in need of improvement and care. This ground was a donation to the State by the respected founder of Harrisburg, and it is scarcely just to his memory to treat his munificence with such negligence.

The taste and self-respect of a people are strikingly exemplified in the structure of their public buildings, and in the embellishments surrounding them. If strangers were to adopt this as a criterion by which to estimate the character of the citizens of Pennsylvania, we should have little cause to be proud of the judgment they would form of us. I beg leave to recommend that a suitable appropriation be made to render our public grounds somewhat more worthy the character of the people of the State.

The unfortunate destruction of the bridge of the Cumberland Valley Railroad Company, over the Susquehanna, at Harrisburg, by fire, has, in a great measure, cut off the trade and business which that valuable tributary to our public improvements supplied. The State holds in that company, stock to the amount of \$70,000. The original cost of the bridge was \$124,000—and it will probably cost \$90,000 to re-build it on the most approved plan. The condition of the company is such as to forbid the hope of its being able to raise the whole of the funds necessary to reconstruct it. Many of the numerous bridges erected over that river, have been, from time to time, destroyed by floods and otherwise, and I believe that the Legislature, in every instance, has thought it right and proper to assist in their re-construction. I would, therefore, recommend the subject to the favorable consideration of the Legislature, and urge the propriety of making a reasonable appropriation to aid the company in this undertaking.

The annual report of the Superintendent of Common Schools, will acquaint you with the progress and condition of these institutions, during the year together with his views respecting the improvement of the school system, and the means to be adopted for that purpose. It is highly essential to the success. Uncertainty in this respect, is attended with deleterious consequences, and productive of derangement in the practical operations of the system. Whatever is calculated to promote the cause of popular education, is worthy your most serious and earnest attention. On it depends, in an eminent degree, the honor of our Commonwealth, the distinction and happiness of her citizens, and the perfection and perpetuity of our political institutions.

The report of the Adjutant General will be submitted to you, and will exhibit particulars in relation to the militia system. During the last session of the Legislature, an act was passed to reduce the expenses of the militia system, and provide a more rigid mode for the collection of militia fines. The provisions of this act are found to be highly beneficial in their operation, and it is believed, will enable the system to

be conducted in a more economical and efficient manner. It is believed, will enable the system to

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