GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.

(CONCLUDED FROM FIRST PAGE.)

attention, but to be constantly on the alert to frustrate every act that may have a tendency to jeopardize the public interests. To plead ignorance after a real or imaginary wrong has been done, is to acknowledge a want of attention to the trust reposed by his constituents. One bill, the authorship and knowledge of which has been generally disclaimed, passed both branches of the Assembly, and was sent in due form, with the signatures of the proper officers, for the Executive approval, and in several instances bills were passed and sent for approval in duplicate. All such hasty and careless legislation should be avoided, and the members of the session now about to commence be enabled at its close to give an account of their participation in every act, however unimportant. The Legislature, coming as it does, fresh from the ranks of the people, should set an example in economy, retrenchment, and reform. It is the custodian of the public interests; and any unnecessary extravagance or prodigality in the expenditure of public money is reprehensible. It was a matter of common notoriety at the last session that a number of subordinate officers in both branches of the Assembly, were appointed, to whom liberal salaries were paid, and who were never seen at their designated posts, and rendered no service to the State. This practice has been emphatically condemned by the press and the people, and will not be continued by any Legislature which means to acquire a reputation for faithful performance of duty.—Your attention is respectfully invited to the law on this subject as contained in sections fifteen to eighteen of the act approved the 7th day of May, 1855.

ANNUAL APPROPRIATION.

Your attention is directed to the practice of withholding the annual appropriation bill until the latest moments of the session. In the public estimation great importance is attached to this bill, and no action of the Legislature undergoes a closer or more careful scrutiny. Its provisions concern the entire community, and in their enactment too much caution cannot be observed. Last year the appropriation bill was not passed until the last night of the session, when it was hurried through both branches of the Legislature, and on the following morning presented for approval, without affording time for the necessary investigation, and subjecting the Executive to the alternative of signing it with all its imperfections, or suspending, for the ensuing year, the indispensable means for the operations of the State government. 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 it to receive that thorough examination which its importance demands.

REQUISITES OF OFFICE.

Very many serious complaints have been made for many years past relative to the disposition of the debris which annually accumulates about the Capitol. This seems to have been regarded as legitimate perquisites of certain attaches of the several legislative and other departments, and has consequently led to practices which should be prevented. It is alleged that valuable property has thus been taken possession of and applied to personal uses, or sold for mere nominal sums, and the amount obtained privately appropriated. A remedy for this evil is to allow no perquisite whatever to any of the employees of the government.—Salaries, sufficient in all cases for the services rendered, should be appropriated, beyond which no other consideration should be allowed. The adoption of this principle would remove the temptation for young men in the departments to resort to improper practices. All the public property, of every description, as well as the buildings and grounds, should be placed in charge of the superintendent appointed for that purpose, chosen for his known integrity and general capability, and required to give sufficient bonds for the faithful performance of his duties. All property and material not needed for public use, the superintendent should be required to sell at public sale, and pay over the proceeds to the State Treasury.

GENERAL RAILROAD LAW.

The subject of a general railroad law has long been agitated, and although it has found opponents, but few objections have been urged against it, whilst arguments accumulate in its favor. It seems impossible that any person can receive injury from its adoption, whilst its benefits may be felt by all classes of citizens. Even the chartered companies have no reasonable grounds for opposition. The intention of the proposed law is not to deprive them of any vested rights or franchises; but to secure to others the same privileges and opportunities for competition. It will open new avenues to distant markets; improve the value of property; give new impulse to immigration; put additional lands under cultivation; stimulate trade, agriculture, manufactures and mechanic arts to increased energy; furnish greater inducements and facilities for travel and add to our general prosperity. Other States have tried the experiment with satisfactory results, and there is no reason why Pennsylvania should be a laggard in the grand march of progress and improvement.

Next to the importance of creating additional railroads on the free principle, is the reduction of charges for passage and freight to minimum rates. This is a matter that concerns every individual. Transportation will increase in quantity in proportion to the reduction of its cost, and as the facilities increase and the costs decrease, the more vigorous will be the development of our industrial resources. Railroads will derive more benefit from low than from exorbitant charges. The increase of travel and freight will be vastly greater than the increase of expense. The transportation of a loaded car costs but little more than one that is empty. In the matter of passengers alone, it is reasonable to suppose, that the lower the rates of fare, the greater will be the number of persons to avail themselves of the privilege of railroad transportation. The same is true in regard to freight; for the engine that draws a half-dozen cars, can with nearly equal facility propel a larger number. Moreover, the road that is worked to its utmost capacity must necessarily, at very reduced rates, acquire greater profits than one that transacts but a small portion of the business for which it is competent. The adoption of a system of uniform rates for passengers and freight, so graduated as to be profitable to all immediately interested in the use and conduct of such works, would be productive of decided benefit in lessening the prices of food, clothing, fuel, and all the necessaries of life, to every citizen of the Commonwealth.

INSURANCE DEPARTMENT.

My attention has been called to the subject of insurance, and so important does it appear, that I deem it worthy of legislative consideration. Many millions of dollars are now involved, in the United States, in insurance, and the amount is being rapidly increased. To guard the interests of insurers, our laws are inadequate, and therefore need a thorough revision. Laws have been established in several of our sister States, and so successful have been their operations that the insurance companies acting under them command a respect and confidence which is not extended to those of Pennsylvania. Whilst a large portion of the insurance business of New York is done in this State, some of our companies have recently abolished their agencies in New York, because, as they say, no one will insure in a Pennsylvania company, in consequence of the laxity of our insurance laws. The policies of many organizations, under our present laws, are alleged to be worthless; and although they are continually failing, others of similar character are starting into existence. Within a few months five fire fire insurance companies have failed, and one of which had issued policies to over one million of dollars, and other serious defections are of frequent occurrence.

In view of these facts and the costly experience of the people, I would recommend the establishment of an Insurance Department, similar to those in New York and Massachusetts, that shall have supervision and control over all companies allowed to transact business within this State. Such enactment is required for the security of our citizens. Millions of dollars are paid out by them annually for insurance—much of it under such circumstances as to render it impossible for a private individual to know whether the company to which he pays is, or is not reliable. Careful supervision, by a superintendent appointed by law, and published reports of the same, under oath, would prevent much loss and fraud.

The security of the companies themselves require an insurance department.—The people demand protection from ignorance, fraud and insolvency. Consulting the insurance journals, we find as a general thing, Pennsylvania insurance companies are acquiring an unenviable reputation abroad, affecting the honor and good name of the State. The great purpose of the proposed department, should be protection, but in connection with it, there must be laws sufficient to cover all its legitimate expenses and prevent its becoming a burthen to the Commonwealth.

GAS.

Complaints have been laid before me by the consumers of gas in our large cities, and from a sense of duty and responsibility to them, I lay the matter before you. It is stated that they have no appeal or satisfactory mode of redress for alleged imposition of the gas companies. To what extent these complaints are just, it would be difficult to ascertain, but that there is cause for some of them may properly be inferred from the number, intelligence and respectability of the parties by whom they are made. There is no reason why such a state of things should continue to exist, whilst the people, through their representatives, have an easy and effectual remedy.

The Legislature of a neighboring State has created the office of inspector of gas and gas metres. A bill might be enacted creating a similar position in any city in which it may be required in this State, and such arrangements made as would ensure justice to consumers and producers without being an expense to the State.

STATUES FOR THE CAPITOL AT WASHINGTON.

Accompanying this will be found a circular from numerous members of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, relative to an act of Congress passed July 2, 1864, inviting "each and all of the States to provide and furnish statues, in marble or bronze, not exceeding two in number for each State, of deceased persons who have been citizens thereof, and illustrious for their historic renown, or from distinguished civil or military services, such as each State shall determine to be worthy of this national commemoration." The intention is to place the statues, when furnished, in the old hall of the House of Representatives, in the Capitol of the United States, which is set apart as a hall of national statuary, for that purpose. Other States will doubtless avail themselves of this privilege, and Pennsylvania should not be behind them in thus commemorating the memory of her distinguished dead.

PARIS EXHIBITION.

That Pennsylvania might be officially represented in the "Model American School House," at the "Universal Exposition of all Nations," I caused to be forwarded to the American Commissioner, at Paris, in July last, a box containing a large number of books and documents relative to the various departments of the Commonwealth, with a request that they be placed in a prominent position, that visitors from distant lands might have opportunity to obtain from their pages a correct idea of the progress and importance of the State. In acknowledging the receipt of this package the Commissioner states that its contents were disposed of as requested. And we are assured that the representation of the extent, characteristics, resources, progress and privileges of our country, as made in the "Farmer's Home," and "Free Common School House," attracted crowds of curious and interested visitors, and would scatter wide and permanently, in distinct form, the doctrines of our Republic, and "result in a rich return to the United States for the outlay, and a higher appreciation, among the people of Europe, of the statutes and institutions of this land of freedom and equality."

POLICE FOR THE MINING DISTRICTS.

In conformity to an act of Assembly, "for the better protection of person, property and life in the mining regions of this Commonwealth," approved April 12, 1867, and on the earnest appeal of many citizens, I appointed, immediately after that date, a marshal of police and a number of subordinates, to give protection to the inhabitants of Schuylkill and Northumberland counties. In these counties, for a long time previous, crimes of heinous character were of frequent occurrence. Combinations of desperate men were formed to overawe the proprietors and superintendents of the mines, and to control their management. Citizens were murdered in their dwellings and on the roads; others were driven from the counties; and a feeling of insecurity and terror very generally prevailed. The administrators of the law seemed powerless to suppress these outrages, or bring the guilty to punishment. Since the appointment of the new police force a remarkable change has taken place. All lawless combinations have been dispersed, the persons composing them have chiefly fled; not a single murder or atrocious crime is known to have been committed; an immense amount of capital that had been withdrawn has returned; and the people enjoy the assurance of safety and protection. A similar state of affairs to that which existed in the counties named is said to prevail in some parts of the oil regions, and applications have been made for the benefit of the aboved named act. It is, therefore, recommended that its provisions be extended to those, or to any other counties, upon the petition of a sufficient number of citizens, who shall furnish good reasons for desiring their benefits.

WEIGHTS, MEASURES, &C.

You will find among the papers I send you, a uniform decimal system of measures weights and currencies, including a new method of reckoning circles, time and longitude, together with the action of the Legislature of Maine in reference thereto. As the subject is one of general importance and interest, it is presented for your consideration.

FISH.

Herewith will be found the report of Col. James Worrall, commissioner appointed under the act of March 30, 1866, relative to the passage of fish in the Susquehanna river and its tributaries.

PENITENTIARIES.

From reports of the inspectors and directors, it will be seen that, in order to carry out the State prison system, additional accommodations should be provided, either by erecting extensions to the present buildings, or an additional penitentiary. The appropriation made at the last session for the erection of a hospital in connection with the Western Penitentiary has not been expended, the board of inspectors not being willing to select a site until it is determined by the Legislature whether or not additional wings or cells will be constructed.

COUNTY PRISONS.

Unfavorable reports are made respecting many of the county prisons. Some of them are alleged to be insecure and otherwise unfit for the purposes intended; others are of insufficient capacity and so overcrowded as to endanger the health of the inmates; while the management and discipline of nearly all might, doubtless, be materially improved. The policy is not a sound one that crowds together, indiscriminately, children and others convicted of their first and trifling offenses, with men and women whose whole lives have been blackened with crime.

PRISON COMMISSIONERS.

In accordance with an act of Assembly, approved on the 17th of April last, Messrs. William H. Armstrong, of Lycoming county, Theodore H. Nevin, of Allegheny county, Wm. M. Watts, of Cumberland, and Alexander Henry and M. B. Browne, of Philadelphia, were appointed commissioners "to inquire into the various systems of prison discipline, as practiced in other States and countries." These gentlemen entered upon their duties, and have visited various prisons, one of their number having gone to Europe for that purpose. The act requiring them to report to this session of the Legislature, does not allow them sufficient time to do justice to the subject, and they ask an amendment extending the time for their report until the session of 1869.

Among the accompanying papers will be found a report by Mr. Mahlon H. Dickenson, who was appointed in conformity with an act of the last Legislature, "to visit, for philanthropic purposes, the prisons and alms-houses in the various counties of the Commonwealth." The report will be found interesting in all its details, and the writer's suggestions deserving of especial attention.

PARDONS.

A report is herewith submitted of the pardons, remissions of fines, forfeited recognizance and death warrants, issued by me during the past year, with a tabular statement of those issued from 1791 to the present time. This report is made in accordance with a sense of duty to the Legislature and the public who have a right to be informed in what manner and to what extent the Executive clemency has been employed toward convicted criminals. It is also due to the Executive himself that his action in this regard should be understood. On no subject has there been greater misrepresentation than on that which relates to the exercise of the pardoning power. Accusations have repeatedly been published of its abuse, and cases have been cited in proof thereof, which were never even presented to my notice. Criminals were liberated from prison after sentence, and clemency united in relation to their pardon in cases in which no appeal for clemency had been made. Upon investigation, it has been ascertained that a custom prevails in the court of quarter sessions of Philadelphia, for counsel, [illegible] to draft petitions for pardon and to solicit signatures to the same, [illegible] from the petitioners, and [illegible] from the petitioners, and [illegible] from the petitioners, and