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THE GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.

This interesting public document is laid, in its full text, before our readers this morning. Its somewhat unusual length requires that our comments should be brief.

After a graceful introduction, which recognizes the manifold blessings enjoyed during the past year by the people of the Commonwealth, the Governor presents a concise but clear resume of the finances, embodying the most satisfactory figures, and completely vindicating the Republican conduct of our State affairs during the three years past as well as the year which has just closed. The debt has been reduced by $472,406 18 in the one year, and $4,889,868 89 in the three years since the Governor's first entrance upon office. His statement of the precise form of the remaining debt is so clear and compact that it will be always valuable for popular reference. We are not prepared to concur in the latter sense of the Governor's recommendation touching the investment of the entire surplus of cash, or unexpended balance in the Treasury, from time to time for the benefit of the Sinking Fund. For it would be manifestly unwise and impracticable that this available balance should be at any time in that way wholly absorbed. This Executive suggestion will, we learn, be substantially supported in the Report of the State Treasurer, but we foresee insuperable obstacles to its complete adoption. The State should have on hand no more cash, taken from the tax payers in any form, than it has use for, present or not remote, and that cash should be put where it can always be found when wanted. No place is better than the Treasury vault. If the sources of current revenue prove more productive than anticipated, a discretion might properly be given, either to the Treasurer alone, or to the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund, to set apart and apply a portion of that surplus as suggested by the Governor. Without such a discretion confided to some quarter, it is clear that any inflexible, rigid provision would be found to work more inconvenience than benefit to the public interests.

What is said of the Treasurer's office will strike forcibly upon the public ear. We learn that the reading of this passage created a great sensation in the Legislative halls.

The school system is judged by its fruits, and merits the Executive commendations. The 815,753 pupils have cost an average, each, of ninety-seven cents per month in private schools, 85,000 other children are educated. It is a sad drawback to these gratifying statements to hear that there are still 75,000 others of our youth, who are growing up without any instruction whatever.

The Message adverts with expressions of just pride to the policy which has established and maintained the schools and homes for soldiers' orphans. A limit is suggested for the public justice in this direction to which we shall again refer at an early day.

We learn that the situation at the Agricultural College is more encouraging for the future than faltering at present. A more extended organization of the volunteer military force is regarded as desirable, and its encouragement urged. The Military History of the State will be completed at an early day. A Home for Disabled Soldiers is urged as a matter worthy of the legislative attention. The recommendation for a change in the mode of taxing insurance companies is supported by cogent arguments. There is force in the suggestion that a Statistical Bureau should be added to the Library.

The revision of the Civil Code is to be completed early this year, and the election of an additional Supreme Judge is recommended. Herein, this message will doubly interest the profession.

The Governor's reference to the Avondale Disaster, and to the crying need for more effective legislation for the protection of life in the mines, is forcibly expressed and must have an universal concurrence.

His remarks upon National affairs run cordially with an enlightened public sentiment, on all points which have any living and substantial public interest. We cannot all subscribe to his view of the Cuban question, but all of us must feel that, upon such questions as that of the Tariff or of the finances, the Governor is sound to the heart.

This message is long because it covers a very wide field, and is nearly exhaustive. As a public document, we do not hesitate to pronounce it the best yet presented from that quarter, and far superior to the average messages of his predecessors.

GOV. GEARY'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 constituents.

The remaining 'of yet the seventy-sixth 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 unmitigated prosperity; and that our principles and institutions—the pride and boast of every true hearted patriot—although tried again in the difficulte of a heated political contest, the bearings of popular opinion, 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. If is extremely difficult, even with with the greatest caution in your deliberations, to enact such laws will fully meet the wishes 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 noble heritage was never given to men than that which we possess; they geographically and politically of the greatest importance; an area of more than forty-four thousand square miles; diversified with mountains, valleys, plains, rivers; mountains covered with majestic forests of valuable timber of almost every variety; plains dotted with comfortable homesteads, and presenting well cultivated farms and industrial fields marked by the advancement of agriculture—the parent, supporter and stimulator of every species of industry, commerce and commerce; hills and valley 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 four 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 interests 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:

Receipts.

Balance in Treasury, Nov. 30, 1868	$1,012,925 37
Ordinary receipts during the fiscal year ending Nov. 30, 1869	5,241,711 28
Total in Treasury during year ending Nov. 30, 1869	6,254,636 65

Disbursements.

Ordinary expenses paid during the year ending Nov. 30, 1869	$2,465,114 27	
Loans, &c., redeemed at Treasury	109 644 00	
Loans redeemed, by the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund	962,722 00	
Interest paid at Treasury	170,863 74	
Interest paid by Commissioners of Sinking Fund	1,725 567 07	
		4,553,774 16
Balance in Treasury, Nov. 30, 1869		1,400,862 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 Nov. 30, 1869:

Funded debt, viz:		
6 per cent. loans	$25 211,180 00	
5 per cent. loans	7 277 254 28	
4½ per cent. loans	112,008 00	
		$32,700,564 28
Unfunded debt, viz:		
Relief notes in circulation	$96 267 00	
U. S. interest certificates outstanding	12 086 53	
Interest certificates unclaimed	4,443 33	
Domestic creditors' certificates	44 67	
		112,775 57
Amount of public debt, November 30, 1869		$32,813,340 85
The public debt on November 30, 1868		$33,286,947 13
Deduct amount redeemed at the Treasury during the year ending November 30, 1869, viz:	$472,382 18	
Relief notes cancelled	19 00	
		472,406 18
Public debt November 30, 1869, as above		32,813,540 85

Reduction of the Public Debt.

At the commencement of the present administration in January, 1867, the total outstanding indebtedness of the State amounted to *thirty seven millions, 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 twenty-eight dollars and eighty cents* have been paid, and as 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 30th, 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 critical, which are payable at the option of the Commonwealth after the 1st day of March 30, 1869, 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 dollars 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, 1875.

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 entrusted 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 20th 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 January, 5, 1869, 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 6, 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 loans of the Commonwealth, viz:

Amount of loans payable in 1872, interest 6 per ct.				$ 2,422,218 43
Do. do. 1873, do. 6 do.				1,000,000 00
Do. do. 1875, do. 6 do.				4,967,150 00
Do. do. 1877, do. 6 do.				10 250 00
Do. do. 1877, do. 5 do.				7,900 000 00
Do. do. 1878, do. 6 do.				6,536 400 00
Do. do. 1879, do. 6 do.				211,00 00
Do. do. 1879, do. 5 do.				400,000 00
Do. do. 1880, do. 6 do.				9,272,150 00
Do. do. 1880, do. 5 do.				3,135,500 00
Do. do. 1882, do. 4½ do.				112 000 00
Amount of loans				32,610,567 90

"To the liquidation of these loans the surplus funds in the Treasury could, with great propriety, be appropriated. This indebtedness is held in bonds bearing interest; and it will readily be perceived that the 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 workings of this plan. At the termination of the fiscal year ending November 30, 1868, there was an unexpended balance in the Treasury of $1,012,925 37. If the suggestions heretofore made had been carried out, by the investment of one million of dollars, at that time, in the five per cent. bonds that will fall due July 1, 1870, and 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 30th 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 1st 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 non-conformity to this plan, will be a loss 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 to the Treasury, in the purchase of the bonds of the Commonwealth next falling due.

THE STATE TREASURER.

I beg, once more, to recline 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 securities, for eighty thousand dollars, and to run the risk of handling at least five or six millions of dollars per annum, without the unlawful use of the 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. If there are but few men who can hold 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, if in the name of the good people of Pennsylvania, 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 other officer within this Commonwealth, and punish every one who tampers with the purity of elections, whatever may be his position or pretensions. 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."

ACCOUNTING FOR DISBURSEMENTS.

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. This is wrong, and should be corrected without delay. All officers of the State who receive public money, not excepting the Governor, are required by law and can produce their accounts, or 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, to take proper vouchers for all moneys so expended by them, and to make quarterly settlements of the same at 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 the members of the Legislature through whose influence the appropriations are represented to be secured.

EARLY APPROPRIATIONS.

For many years the general appropriation bills have been signed on the day of the adjournment of the Legislature, thereby repeating any 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 on 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; 18,836 schools; 2,445 graded schools; 12,000 school directors; 78 superintendents; 1,000 teachers; and 815,753 pupils. The average cost of tuition is ninety seven cents per month. The whole tax of complete school system for the year is $3,500,765 26. Total cost including expenditures of all kinds during the year, $6,983,148.92. Estimated value of school property $14,045,632.

Notwithstanding the fact that our school law was made general in the year 1848, it is remarkable that there still remain five districts within the State which have not yet conformed thereto. Hopes are entertained that the coming Legislature will soon accept the conditions of the law, and the remaining one, known as the Harmony District, under the control of the "Economites," having a good school of its own, will probably not adopt the public school system of the State, if they do, 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 inferred from the following statistics: The whole number of students that have attended the four Normal schools is 10,237, of whom 831 have graduated. During the past year there were in these institutions 76 teachers, and 4,178 students. Since my last annual communication, the Normal school has been fully established and recognized at Bloomsburg, Columbia county. Its buildings are of the most substantial character, and it commences its career under the most auspicious circumstances. Another is now in a state of organization 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 who do not attend schools of any description, and who are permitted to grow up in ignorance and without employment, and, in many instances, for want of industrial and educational training become not only 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:

A tending the public schools	815,753
Attending private schools	85,000
At attending schools of any kind	75,000
Whole number of children	975,753

The subject of non-attendance by so large a portion of 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 such as these 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 highest 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' SCHOOLS.

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 their condition, circumstances and expenditures.

The whole number of children admitted into these schools from their 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 not acted on, was seven hundred and one; some from every county in the State except six.

The sanitary condition of the children in these schools has 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

Amounts to	$400,977 62
The pay which there was an unexpended balance of	9 406 74
Appropriated April 11 1866	400,000 00
Appropriated March 14, 1869	50,000 00
	859,384 36
Balance unprovided for	44,566 88
	$904,951 24

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 waiting for compensation in vain for payment for more than seven months.

In his last annual report, the Superintendent estimated the expense for the current year, terminating May 31, 1870, at $494,700. The amount of loans contracted during the year ending November 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 itself for 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 much practical aid as would, in some degree, compensate them for the time and money expended to maintain their organization, by which the people are as much interested as the volunteers themselves.

The report of the Adjutant General will be found a very interesting 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 to your. Mr. McCreary has been elected to membership in one of your honorable bodies, and with his last report before you will be able to advise as 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 the 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 such military organization, and an unprejudiced description of all military transactions of importance, so far as the volunteers of this State are concerned, in the camp and in the field, throughout the most terrific 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 it is due to the citizen soldiers, who offered their lives in the defence of their country, that their names should, at least, receive a place in the archives of the State, toward whose honor and glory their gallant deeds have so largely 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 already 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 work will be completed at an early hour. 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 patriotic undertaking.

HOME FOR DISABLED SOLDIERS.

There is, probably, no State in the American Union that has contributed more liberally toward the support of 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 similar worthy establishments in which the poor, helpless and otherwise friendless are provided and cared 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 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 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 not a sure safeguard, for the fire is liable, at any moment, to communicate with the "fire damp" or other 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 fireproof, 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 wall and roofing of the mines, from the effects of blasting and other causes, frequently give way and block 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 avenue of ingress and egress. Whether as regards fire, or any other source of danger to which the miner is exposed, this is his only chance of life, and a law to this effect, with a system of ventilation may be approved, or safety lamp adopted, the means of escape from the mines, when danger occurs, are so limited, and the chances for the provision made for the exit of the miner.

The best method of constructing, ventilating and working the mines, should be intelligently studied, and the best system adopted rigidly enforced. The inquiry, therefore, into the causes which produced this shocking disaster, and the various theories that have been promulgated concerning it, the remedies for the prevention of such a terrible calamity hereafter, the construction and ventilation of collieries, and the modes of conducting their operations so that the operatives may generally escape from the shafts, imperilling their lives, are proper subjects for legislative consideration.

Such a law, and such a code of laws which commands the approbation and confidence of all who seek its protection. The necessity for such a department, with full powers to organize and examine all insurance companies, is sanctioned by the wisdom of experience. Laws have heretofore been enacted, the result of the protection thus afforded, is, that whilst foreign companies do immense business in this State, little confidence is had in those of Pennsylvania that their business is almost entirely confined within the State limits, and that the people of this Commonwealth will never again be appalled by a calamity, within her limits, so sad as that of Avondale.

BOARD OF PUBLIC CHARITIES.

In accordance with the act of the last Legislature, a Board of Public Charities has been appointed, consisting of the following gentlemen, viz; Gen. Thomas B. Kay, one year; Hon. Thaddeus Stevens, Esq., four years; Hon. G. Dawson Coleman, three years; George L. Harrison, Esq., two years; Hon. Thomas Cochran, one year. The Board organized by electing Gen. Kane, President, and Hon. Wilmot Worthington, Secretary and General Agent. From the establishment of this Board, and especially from the high character and qualifications of the gentlemen who have consented to assume its important trusts and responsibilities, we have reason to hope for the most beneficial results. This change in the management of our charitable affairs is deemed of the highest importance by many persons who have given attention with the workings and management of these institutions.

A thorough review of the establishments receiving appropriations from the State by this board, will give an assurance to the Legislature and the people, that they are rapidly afford to pay a license of five *hundred dollars* to conduct their extensive operations in Pennsylvania, whilst our companies would be nearly oppressed by the imposition of the same license tax in States where their operations are exceedingly limited. And yet these companies are retaliated upon by such license law by adopting its provisions and demanding from our companies the same 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 produce 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 law, 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 larger income to the Treasury. For instance, there are *thirty seven* life insurance companies from other States doing business in Pennsylvania, who each pay a license of five hundred dollars, making the sum of eighteen thousand and five hundred dollars. Some of these companies would object to paying an equal tax of say one-half of one per cent. upon the volume of their business. This, in the aggregate of the thirty-seven companies, is more than five millions of dollars, on which a tax of one half per cent. would be twenty-five 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 received. An efficient law, establishing an Insurance Department, such as is recommended, would meet this and all matters conducted with the subject of insurance, in all its branches.

REVISION OF THE CIVIL CODE.

The law on this subject does not contemplate a full revision of the Commissioners to revise the general statutes of the State, before the session of 1871. It may, however, be important to state that this work has so far progressed as to make it almost certain that it will be completed and ready for the press as soon after the close of the present session as will allow time to bring within the code such of your enactments as may with propriety be incorporated.

The Commissioners will report for your consideration, the revised school laws, as the present edition is exhausted, and it would be inexpedient to reprint them, when they might be superseded by others in the course of the current year.

A general road law, and one for the support and maintenance of the poor, have heretofore been reported, but not definitely acted upon, and the frequent demands made for such enactments to correct many existing abuses, and supply a common public want, render it desirable that these enactments should receive your early attention.

The State census will be taken during the year, and the law for its regulation having in it some provisions not now required, a revised bill will be presented by the Commissioners for legislative action.

In view of these changes which the revised code is expected to produce, it is desirable that no more laws of a general character be enacted than is indispensably necessary, as they might occasion a necessity for a revision of what has already received appropriate attention, and cause delay in the completion of the work.

STATISTICS.

A great inconvenience has long been felt in every department of the executive and legislative branches of the government, for the want of properly recorded statistical information, relating to the development and growth of the resources of the Commonwealth. It is impossible for any State officer to report the actual or even approximate amount of any of our great natural resources, and it cannot be ascertained from year to year the amount of coal mined, petroleum produced, lumber cut or iron manufactured, without special reference to those who have charge of the industries growing out of these products. At very little cost and labor, statistics relating to all these objects could be gathered and annually embraced in a report to be made to and published by the Legislature. The value of such information would be of incalculable importance in an official way, as well as in the general business of the country. It would stimulate competition, exhibit the inexhaustible materials within our borders, and give our people and others, a more perfect idea of our wealth and resources. The recommendation made last year for the establishment of a desk for the collection and preservation of statistics relative to export and imports, agriculture, manufactures, coal, iron, oil, lumber, &c., and for the collection of mineralogical and geological specimens, and other things that may be deemed appropriate to such a department, is respectfully renewed, with the suggestion that the duties be attached to the office of the Librarian and his Assistant, with a reasonable increase of compensation, and an appropriation for the same.

PRISON DISCIPLINE.

In accordance with a law approved April 13, 1867, Mahlon H. Dickinson, Esq., of Philadelphia, was appointed "to visit, for philanthropic purposes, the prisons and almshouses in the various counties of the Commonwealth." His second report, which is herewith presented, embraces a vast amount of useful information, and will be found highly interesting and worthy of mature consideration. It will be seen that while some of our county prisons have been constructed and are being conducted with strict regard to the proper objects of punishment, others are utterly inflicting for any such purpose, and are a disgrace and reproach to a civilized age and a Christian people. The Commissioner, in regard to some of these, describes them "as being unsafe, where prisoners could not be held unless loaded with chains, where the sexes were not separated, where there was no discipline, or any effort made towards the moral or religious improvement of the inmates; the buildings totally unfit for the purposes of a prison; and where the prisoners become schooled in vice, and eventually graduated prepared for a life of lawlessness." In some of the prisons the cells are represented as contracted dungeons, into which not a ray of sunshine or a draft of pure air can enter, and in which a human being could not possibly live through a lengthy term of sentence. And in still others, the consequence of the want of proper accommodations, all classes of criminals, from the most hardened and aged to the young of tender years, are permitted to congregate, and indulge in card playing, profanity, and almost every species of immorality and crime. Under such circumstances, reformation, which is the grand object of divine, and should be of all human laws and institutions, is rendered impossible; whilst hideous lessons of vice are taught and learned, to be practiced when future opportunity offers. This is all wrong, and a remedy for the evil should by all means be applied. No community has a moral or legal right to inflict punishment as a mere retaliatory measure, or in such a manner as to endanger the health and life of the criminal, to prevent his being in the better condition of his nature, and to absolutely harden him to the commission of crime.

The commissioners appointed "to inquire into the various systems of prison discipline, as practiced in other States and countries, and compare with what is known as the Pennsylvania system," will submit you their report at an early day, from which you will learn that the capacity of our penitentiaries is at present competent for the safe keeping and proper punishment of all offenders of the higher grades, and that work houses and houses of correction are needed for those whose crimes are of a trivial character, and who, by reformation and future usefulness may be accomplished by a humane system of discipline, such as will be recommended.

THE JUDICIARY.

Communications have been received from various parts of the State, representing that the present judicial force is inadequate for the purposes desired. Since the number of judges was added, the business of the courts has greatly increased, with our rapidly expanding population, and the vast increase in the commercial and business operations of our growing Commonwealth. How far relief should be afforded is well worthy of careful consideration.

In one district of the Supreme Court, over seven hundred new cases have been docketed in one year. These cases involve very large amounts, and important legal principles; and their proper adjudication imposes upon the judges great labor and responsibility. In the other districts of this court the argument lists are also becoming very large, and it is impossible to dispose of the business with that promptness and intelligence demanded by the public interests; and especially in the trial of appeals, as now required by law, assigned to duty in the court of *nisi prius* at Philadelphia. I therefore earnestly commend the additional judge for this court, believing it a public necessity, in justice to the many suitors, and to the bar, who have been more work than should be required of the present number of men, let them be ever so laborious and efficient.

BOUNDARY LINE.

In obedience to an "act to settle, determine and perpetuate the northern boundary line of the Commonwealth," approved March 20, 1869, I appointed James Worrall, Esq., of Philadelphia, and Strickland Kneass, Esq., of Philadelphia, both civil engineers, Commissioners on the part of Pennsylvania, to act "in conjunction with the Commissioners on the part of the State of Delaware."

The Governor of that State was promptly furnished with a copy of the act, and informed of the appointment of Commissioners under it, and his co-operation was asked. So far as I am advised, no action of any kind has been taken by Delaware on the subject; and consequently the work above referred to has not been performed.

Your special attention is invited to the reports of our Commissioners, which is herewith communicated.

IN MEMORIAM.

It is eminently proper that special notice should be taken of the decease of such persons as have occupied prominent positions in, and been distinguished services to the State. Conspicuous among these were Hon. Joseph Ritner and Hon. David R. Porter, both of whom died during the present administration. During their eventful lives they shared largely in the public confidence and regard, and filled many posts of honor, trust and responsibility, including that of Governor, with distinguished fidelity and patriotism. They were conspicuous and identified with all the grave and important questions of State policy and administration, through the eventful period in which they lived, and contributed largely to shape and strengthen the firm foundations of our Commonwealth, upon which others have been enabled to build securely. They have passed away, ripe in years and full of honors; and it is respectfully submitted whether it is not proper for the Legislature to take some appropriate notice of the lamented death of these two distinguished public servants.

PARDONS.

It has grown into a custom to regard an application for Executive clemency as an indispensable part of the machinery of criminal justice. Because the Executive is invested with the power of pardon, it is by many supposed that he has not only the right, but it is his duty to examine into every allegation of error, and give a favorable response to every appeal for clemency; and hence, petitions for pardon are becoming so numerous that the mere examination of them is expensive of a large amount of valuable time; at least an hour in each case, exclusive of the time occupied in correspondence with the judges, district attorneys and other parties. Criminals are no sooner convicted, than their friends, and other interested parties, who seem to think it is the Governor's constitutional duty to nullify the laws instead of seeing that they are faithfully executed, prepare a raid upon him, and employ in their importunities for pardon every device human ingenuity can suggest, and if but a tithe of the representations set forth were believed, one would be led to suppose that our courts are daily guilty of the grossest blunders, and that justice is far more blind than she has ever been painted by the most skillful artist.

During the year ending December 31, 1869, there have been fifteen hundred and fifty applications for pardon, of which sixty-two, or four per cent., were granted, eleven hundred and eight rejected, and three hundred and eighty are still under advisement.

For some reason, not easily understood, a portion of public sentiment has become perverted on this important subject of pardons. The framers of our government, as I understand it, never contemplated or intended an indiscriminate use of the pardoning power. It was only designed for the correction of manifest errors or oppressions, palpable mistakes, cases of after-discovered evidence, and others of exceptional character. Both the theory of our government and public policy require that the pardoning power should be kept within those reasonable limits; and not be made an instrument to defeat the execution of the laws and the administration of public justice. All ordinary cases, therefore, are wholly outside of, and in conflict with, the principle on which Executive clemency should be based, and should be presented for consideration. It is earnestly hoped the public will understand and act in accordance with this view of the subject, as due alike to the Executive and a proper regard for the execution of the laws.

NATIONAL AFFAIRS.

Having laid before you a general survey of the affairs and condition of the State, which relate to the common welfare, I affirm me also the highest gratification to add that the amicable intercourse and pleasant relations which have so long existed between the government of Pennsylvania and the governments of all the other States and of the Union, continue unimpaired; and consequently our resolution, "to preserve, protect and defend" these fundamental principles of humanity, equal rights and equal justice to all, universal freedom and a united country, is greatly strengthened.

The general relations of the National Government, as set forth in the recent annual message of the President, continue to be "peace at home and without entangling alliances abroad;" the reconstruction of the States lately in rebellion is being rapidly accomplished—the revenues are being faithfully collected—the National debt is being liquidated at the rate of about one hundred million dollars per annum, and repudiation has been emphatically repudiated. A strict and uncompromising adherence to this policy by a prudent and economical administration has already restored the National character to the fullest confidence in the minds, not only of our countrymen but of foreigners, and has allayed all spirit of discontent that might have been dangerous to the stability of our institutions.

There is another subject also of National importance