

The Columbia Democrat.

"I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man."—Thomas Jefferson

H. WEBB, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.

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

FELLOW-CITIZENS:—The term to which my eligibility as the Chief Executive officer of the Commonwealth, as restricted by the Constitution, being about to close, I submit to the Legislature, the last annual message which the duty of my station enjoins upon me. In the performance of this duty, I cannot refrain from invoking your devout acknowledgments, with my own, to the Great Author of All Good, for His constant care and guardianship over the 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. Good has sprung out of evil—wisdom from danger—justice from ungenerous detraction. The clouds that for several years past, have hung upon our horizon, are breaking away; and the sunshine of prosperity once more begins to beam upon our path.

Within ten days after my induction into office, I felt myself called upon, by the highest considerations of duty, to communicate to the Legislature, a full and frank exposition of the state of our pecuniary affairs. Upon a careful examination, it was ascertained that the amount of the public debt, including surplus 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 income from all sources, was about four millions of dollars. To meet this amount, immediate provision had to be made, and, to add to the perplexing embarrassments, the great commercial convulsion, which has since reached its height, was then just beginning to be felt in its operation. For more than ten years immediately preceding that period, the State of Pennsylvania, from her well known punctuality and great natural resources, had experienced no difficulty in procuring upon loans, on favorable terms, any amount of money she needed, to extend and carry on her stupendous system of internal improvements. Both Foreign and American capitalists were competitors for the acceptance of her loans; and there seemed to be no limits to her credit and resources, except those which her own discretion imposed. She made large loans for the undertaking and completion of the various lines of improvement, and paid the interest upon these loans by other loans. Stimulated by these facilities, and forgetting the day ever would arrive when her interest must be paid, not by loans, but by taxation, a system of improvements, by railroad and canal; was undertaken, far more comprehensive than her necessities required, and far beyond her means to complete. The same reckless spirit which actuated the government, had seized upon her private citizens, and induced them to engage in undertakings equally indiscreet and unattainable. Within a very few years immediately preceding the commencement of my administration, banks were created to an extent, and with capital, unheard of in this Commonwealth at any former period. These banks, controlled by men moved by such impulses, very speedily exploded, and, as every rational man ought to have foreseen, overwhelmed, in their downfall, the entire business of the community. Within about

two years after I entered upon the discharge of the Executive functions, banks the aggregate capital of which amounted to more than two-thirds of the entire banking capital of the State, and furnishing more than that proportion of its currency, were compelled to wind up their affairs; and, in doing so, not only extinguished this amount of the ostensible capital of the State, but crippled the remaining banks, compelled them to withhold facilities from the business men of the community, and, by forcing their debtors, constituting a large class of men engaged in various pursuits of life, to discharge their liabilities, almost crushed the large and flourishing class of business men in all parts of the Commonwealth. To add still further to these perplexing evils; the condition of the pecuniary affairs of Europe, and of our own and foreign capitalists, who had sought for opportunities to make investments in this country, were induced to withhold their usual loans.

During a short period previous to my entering upon the duties of my office, our internal improvement system, confessedly incomplete, was very largely extended by making appropriations towards the construction of the North and West Branch and Erie Extensions, Wisconsin Canal, Allegheny Feeder and Gettysburg Railroad, besides guaranteeing the interest upon loans made to private companies, engaged in the construction of works leading into the improvements of the State. The amount which has been paid by the State for these and other improvements, which are wholly unproductive, is nearly nine millions of dollars.

The most strenuous exertions were required to obtain, during the first two years, a sufficient amount of money to pay the interest upon the State debt; defray the expenses of the government; and to pay off the large class of domestic creditors, naturally and justly clamorous for the discharge of their demands upon the State. Rigid economy was recommended, and enforced in all the public expenditures. The extended lines of improvement, which might have been completed a few years earlier by loans, were suspended in consequence of the inability of the State to raise the necessary funds; and finally the interest upon the public debt failed to be paid from the same cause, and the want of time requisite to mature a plan of taxation which would produce the necessary sum for that object. Not a single dollar has been appropriated, or paid, under my administration, towards the commencement of any new work whatever. The state of affairs was such, at its outset, as to forbid any such undertaking, however meritorious in itself, and I have strictly adhered to this rule of conduct. Shortly after I assumed the Executive duties of the State, I became satisfied that procrastination of the evil day, when resort to taxation was demanded by the most imperative obligation of duty, could no longer be indulged. Painful as was the alternative, I felt how deeply the honor of the State was involved, and recommended the imposition of a tax, which should supply an adequate sum to discharge the interest on the public debt, committing the details to the Legislature. The recommendation I reiterated, in the most earnest manner, and ultimately it received the sanction of the Legislature.

The assessment under the several laws, imposing a tax on real and personal property, and the amount paid into the Treasury, as follows:

Amount for tax assessed for	1841	\$416,784 85
	1842	659,512 47
	1843	968,708 40
	1844 about	968,808 49
Whole amount assessed for the past four years		\$2,013,814 21
Amount received in	1841	\$ 33,391 77
	1842	486,635 85
	1843	553,611 28
	1844	751,210 00
		\$1,825,050 90

Leaving the amount of tax outstanding on the first of December last, \$1,188,674 11

subject to exonerations, commissions, &c., which may be estimated at ten per cent.—The balance, it is fair to presume, will be made available the current year. Of the \$751,210 00 paid into the Treasury during the past fiscal year, only \$143,099 06 was received from the tax assessed for 1844 leaving outstanding, for that year alone about \$600,000 00. The receipts from

this source, for the present year, may therefore, be estimated at about \$1,260,000 00. The acts which have been passed upon the subject, and which are now in force, provide for the imposition of a tax, which, taking the valuation for 1844, of the real and personal property as a basis, will annually amount to the sum of \$1,453,000.—That valuation, it may be remarked, was considerably below that of 1841. If, therefore, the provisions of the act of 1844 be fairly carried into effect, in the valuation of property, and the collection and prompt payment of the tax, be enforced, the annual revenue hereafter to be derived from this source, will amount to at least \$1,500,000. This sum, with the other resources of the Commonwealth, will be entirely adequate to furnish the necessary amount to discharge the interest upon the public debt, and thus ensure the fidelity of the State to her engagements.

Without expressing the opinion that 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 the 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:

Funded debt,	6 per cent.	\$4,376,916 21
stocks,		5 34,721,534 46
		41 200,000 00
		\$39,293,450 67

Loan (relief issue) per act of 4th May, 1841 bearing an interest of one per cent \$1,175,000 00 six 171,636 00 five 71,542 00

Amount in circulation, \$1,438,165 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 to 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 \$10,331,166 00. The amount of interest guaranteed to private corporations, to 144,340 00. 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 \$15,000,526 00.

The annual interest on the funded debt of the State, payable at the Bank of Pennsylvania, exclusive of interest on certificates issued for interests, is \$1,747,030 12 falling due respectively on the first of February & 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 \$97,880 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 1,047,385 15.

Leaving a balance in the Treasury on that day of \$ 665,851 88. There was also an available balance in the Canal Treasury, on the same day, of 39,497 00. The receipts during the months of December, exclusive of disbursements, were 139,681 23.

To which may be added the receipts over expenditures for the present month, estimated at 120,000 00.

Making the amount in the Treasury on 1st February about \$963,030 11.

This balance embraces the sum of \$50,000 of relief notes, which the State Treasurer withheld from cancellation on the 31st December, and which, 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; but 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, 1845. 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, & 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, applicable to that object, and it is not supplied, we shall, with much appearance of justice, subject ourselves to the reproach of our traducers, 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; 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 the disposition & ability of the State to comply with her engagements, will be fully realized.

The report of the Canal Commissioners will present to you, in detail, the operation of the public improvements, for the past year. The tolls collected in 1844 amount to \$1,167,003 42 being an increase over 1843 of \$172,159 10. The collections for the year exceed the expenditures the sum of \$629,658 82.

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 \$647,335 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. Reflecting 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 preceded, 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 outlived the storm. No man could witness the existing state of things without feeling conscious that this system was essentially vicious and 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 of May last a series of the most alarming and sanguinary riots broke out in the District of Kensington, in the county of Philadelphia. On their origin 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 if 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 salary lessor ought 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 heretofore 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 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, sub-divisions, and transfers of stocks, are taking place, & the whole system is becoming daily more laborious and complicated. I recommend an enquiry 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 committee, for corrections before he can give them his approval. Bills presented during the last hours of the session, and as is usually the case, on the days 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 south east side of the Capitol, stands in need of improvement and care. This ground was a donation to the State by the 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, in a great measure cut off the trade and business which that valuable tributary in our public improvements supplied. The State hold 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 re-construct 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 it right and proper to assist in their reconstruction. 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 to this undertaking.

The annual report of the Superintendent of Common Schools, will acquaint you