THE STAR AND BANNER.

BY D. A. & C. H. BUEHLER — "FEARLESS AND FREE." — TWO DOLLARS PER ANNUM.

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GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.

To the Honorable the Senators and Members of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly:

GENTLEMEN:—A kind Providence has greatly blessed our Commonwealth during the past year. No foreign war, no internal strife have interrupted or destroyed the peaceful quiet of our homes. All the great interests of the people have been eminently prosperous. The earth, in rich abundance, has yielded her increase to supply our wants, and reward with her bounties the labor of the husbandman. Labor, in every department of manufacturing and mechanical industry, has been stimulated and encouraged. The ravages of disease and the horrors of the pestilence have been averted from us; and whilst the cry of human suffering, from other States, has been heard invoking our sympathy and aid, we have been blessed with health and permitted to enjoy the comforts and happiness of social life. To Him who hath bestowed these blessings upon us, and upon whose care we are constantly dependent, should be ever paid the willing homage of our grateful hearts.

The report of the State Treasurer will exhibit to you, in detail, the operations of his department. The results are more satisfactory and encouraging than were anticipated.

The receipts at the Treasury for the fiscal year ending November 30, 1855, including the balance in the Treasury on the 1st day of December, 1854, ($1,240,928 72) amounted to $6,631,402 83. The total payments for the same period were $5,385,705 52; leaving a balance in the treasury on the 30th November, 1855, of $1,245,697 31. No loans, temporary or otherwise, were negotiated during the past fiscal year, as they were not required by the wants of the Treasury.

The receipts during the past year, from all sources, (excluding the balance in the Treasury on the first day of December, 1854,) were $5,390,474 11. The ordinary expenditures for the same period, including the interest on the public debt, were $4,139,512 28, showing an excess of receipts over ordinary expenditures of $1,250,961 83.

The extraordinary payments for the year were $1,246,193 24, as follows, viz:—To the completion of the new Portage railroad over the Allegheny mountains, $446,762 12; to the North Branch canal, $87,562 67; to the Columbia railroad, to re-lay south track, $133,100 00; to the payment of domestic creditors, $1,629 85; to the redemption of loans, $316,550 00, and to relief notes cancelled, $260,588 00.

The balance in the Treasury will be required for the payment of the interest on the State debt falling due in February next, and for unpaid appropriations. The interest on the funded debt of the Commonwealth, which became due in February and August last, was promptly paid; and it is gratifying to state that the interest due in February next will be paid with equal promptness. The credit of the State may be regarded as firmly established, and with proper economy and a careful and honest management of her finances, an annual reduction of her debt, to a considerable extent, may be confidently expected.

There is due by the Treasury to the sinking fund the sum of $335,011 39, to be applied to the redemption of the relief notes now in circulation, and to the funded debt of the Commonwealth. The greater part of the funded debt bears interest at the rate of five per cent. per annum; the balance bears a still less rate of interest. But as the temporary loans, which by law are to be first paid out of the available means of the treasury, bear interest at the rate of six per cent., it has been deemed advisable, as a matter of economy, to apply the surplus revenues to the payment of those loans. When these are liquidated, the amount due and properly applicable to the Sinking Fund will be paid, and its operation continued as directed by law.

Notwithstanding the revenues for the last four or five years have largely exceeded the ordinary expenditures of the government, yet in consequence of the large and insatiable demands upon the Treasury for the completion of the North Branch canal, the Portage railroad and other kindred improvements, the public debt, instead of being reduced, has been increased. This increase, with the amount and condition of the debt at different periods, will be seen in the following statements:

Statement of the funded and unfunded debt of the Commonwealth on the 1st day of December, 1851, as per report of the Auditor General.

Funded debt, viz:		
6 per cent. loans,	$2,314,923 51	
5 do.,	36,704,484 03	
4½ do.,	198,200 00	
Total funded debt		$39,216,707 54
Unfunded debt, viz:		
Relief notes in circulation,	650,163 00	
Interest certificates outstanding,	150,231 82	
Do. do. unclaimed,	4,448 38	
Interest on outstanding and unclaimed certificates, when funded,	9,752 91	
Domestic creditors,	82,932 74	
		897,528 85
Total debt December 1, 1851,		40,114,236 39

Statement showing the indebtedness of the Commonwealth on the 1st day of December, 1854, as per Auditor General's report.

Funded debt, viz:		
6 per cent. loans,	$532,104 33	
5 do.,	39,064,609 87	
4½ do.,	388,200 00	
4 do.,	100,000 00	
Total funded debt,		$40,084,914 20
Unfunded debt, viz:		
Relief notes in circulation,	491,361 00	
Interest certificates outstanding,	24,857 21	
Do. do. unclaimed,	4,448 38	
Interest on outstanding and unclaimed certificates, when funded,	1,870 97	
Domestic creditors' certificates,	2,707 01	
Balance of temporary loan of April 19, 1853,	560,000 00	
Balance of temporary loan of May 9, 1854,	450,435 67	
Total unfunded debt and temporary loans,		1,535,680 84
To these should be added the following relief notes, not included in the "relief notes in circulation," viz:		
Relief notes made by the Lancaster Bank, not charged on State Treasurer's books,	$25,000 00	
Relief notes put in circulation September, 1854, and not redeemed December 1, 1854,	50,000 00	
		75,000 00
Total public debt December 1, 1854,		41,698,595 74
Do do 1851,		40,114,236 39
Increase of debt in three years.		1,584,359 35

The funded and unfunded debt, including unpaid temporary loans, on the 1st day of December, 1855, the close of the last fiscal year, as per report of the Auditor General and State Treasurer, was as follows, to wit:

Funded debt, viz:		
6 per cent. loan,	$516,154 93	
5 do.	38,903,445 54	
4½ do.	388,200 00	
4 do.	100,000 00	
Total funded debt,		$39,907,800 48
Unfunded debt, viz:		
Relief notes in circulation,	258,773 00	
Interest certificates outstanding,	29,157 25	
Domestic creditors,	1,264 00	
Balance of temporary loan of April 19, 1853,	525,000 00	
Balance of temporary loan of May 9, 1854,	346,000 00	
Total unfunded debt,		1,160,194 25
Total debt December 1, 1855,		41,067,994 73
Total debt, as above stated, December 1, 1854,		41,698,595 74
Do. do. do. 1, 1855,		41,067,994 73
Decrease during the fiscal year,		630,601 02

This statement exhibits the gratifying fact that during the fiscal year ending November 30, 1855, the indebtedness of the Commonwealth has been reduced $630,601 02. During the same period large appropriations and payments were made for the completion of the new Portage railroad, re-laying the track of the Columbia railroad, and for other purposes. These demands upon the Treasury were, without the aid of loans, promptly paid.

Refusing to undertake any new schemes of internal improvement, limiting all appropriations to the actual demands of the occasion, practising strict economy in all departments of the government, and holding the receiving and disbursing agents of the Commonwealth to a rigid accountability, will greatly reduce the expenditures, and, under ordinary circumstances, leave an annual surplus of the revenues to be applied to the redemption of the public debt.

The estimated receipts and expenditures for the current fiscal year will be presented to you in the report of the State Treasurer. The receipts from the usual sources of revenue, above the ordinary expenditures, may exceed the sum of one million and a half of dollars. These estimates may approximate the true result, but cannot be relied upon with certainty.

By the thirty-eighth section of the act of the 16th of April, 1845, entitled "An Act to provide for the ordinary expenses of government, the repair of the canals and railroads of the State, and other claims upon the Commonwealth," the Governor was authorized to cause certificates of State stock to be issued to all persons or bodies corporate holding certificates for the payment of interest on the funded debt of the State, which fell due on the 1st day of August, 1842, the 1st days of February and August, 1843, and the 1st days of February and August 1844, in an amount equal to the amount of certificates so held, upon their delivering up said certificates to the Auditor General. In purguance of the authority thus given, certificates of State stock to the amount of four millions one hundred and five thousand one hundred and fifty dollars and twenty cents, bearing interest at the rate of five per cent. per annum, payable semi-annually, on the 1st days of February and August in each year, and redeemable on or after the 1st day of August, 1855, were issued. The minimum period fixed by law for the redemption of these certificates, expired on the 1st day of August last. No provision has been made for their renewal or redemption.

Although by the terms of the act authorizing these certificates of State stock, as also by the conditions of the certificates issued in pursuance thereof, the time of payment, after the expiration of the minimum period, is optional with the debtor—the Commonwealth—yet a due regard to the credit of the State requires that provision should be made for their renewal or redemption. To redeem these certificates a loan would become necessary, and as a loan cannot be effected, in the present financial condition of the country, on terms more favorable to the State, than those on which these certificates were issued, I would recommend that authority be given to issue the bonds of the Commonwealth in renewal of said certificates, bearing interest at the rate of five per cent. per annum, payable semi-annually, and redeemable on or after the expiration of twenty years; and that the bonds be issued with coupons or certificates of interest attached, in sums equal in amount to the semi-annual interest thereon, payable on the first days of February and August in each and every year, at such place as may be designated. This change in the form and character of the certificates, it is believed, will be so advantageous to the holders, without increasing the liabilities of the Commonwealth, as to induce a willing and prompt exchange, at a premium, for the bonds proposed to be issued.

The condition of the public works, their general operation, and the receipts and expenditures for the past fical year, will be presented to you in the report of the Canal Commissioners.

The aggregate receipts at the Treasury from the public works, for the year ending November 30, 1855, were $1,942,376 71. The aggregate expenditures, including ordinary and extraordinary payments, for the same period, amounted to $1,838,791 18, showing an excess of receipts, over all expenditures, of $103,585 53.

The extraordinary payments for the same year, (excluding $133,100 00 paid for re-laying the south track of the Columbia railroad, and $28,000 00 for re-building the Freeport aqueduct) were $690,427 78. The ordinary expenditures were $1,148,363 40.

Aggregate receipts, as above stated,	$1,942,376 71
Ordinary expenditures,	1,148,363 40
Net revenues for the fiscal year,	794,013 31

This balance exhibits a small increase in the net revenues, as compared with the net revenues of 1854; and notwithstanding the withdrawal of the transportation lines from the main line of the canal, the aggregate revenues for the last year have exceeded the revenues of 1854 by more than twenty-three thousand dollars. From the abundant crops of the past year, the improved condition of the monetary affairs of the country and the general revival of business, a large increase in the revenues for the current year may be confidently expected.

The sum of $161,125 25, has been paid into the Treasury by the Pennsylvania railroad company and other railroad companies, as the tax on tonnage passing over their roads. This amount largely exceeds the sum paid by the same companies in 1854.

The Delaware division exhibits a satisfactory result. The total receipts were $392,673 42; expenditures, $60,097 86; showing a net revenue of $332,575 56. If all our lines of improvement exhibited a similar balance sheet, the people would have less cause of complaint and more confidence in the general operation of the system.

There has been a large increase in the business and tonnage of the Columbia railroad, and a corresponding increase in the receipts therefrom. The operation of this road for the past year have been highly satisfactory. The operations of that part of the main line from the Junction to Pittsburg, including the Portage railroad, do not present so favorable a result. The receipts have greatly diminished, and were not sufficient to meet the ordinary expenditures. The revenues from the main line do not equal the receipts of the previous years. The causes of this reduction are apparent, and some of them have been referred to and enumerated. It is but just to add that the expenditures on this line have been much diminished by the avoidance of some of the inclined planes on the Portage railroad.

I regret to inform you that the railroad to avoid the inclined planes on the Allegheny mountain, has not been completed as was confidently anticipated. The delay in the completion of this work has occasioned much inconvenience to the business of the main line and a loss to the revenues of the Commonwealth. The expenditures have largely exceeded the original estimates for its construction; and although the sum of $277,730 00 was appropriated at the last session of the Legislature for the completion of this work—a sum covering the estimate of the engineer—yet after the expenditure of the whole amount thus appropriated, the road is unfinished; and to complete it, and pay the debts contracted, the further sum of $177,573 66, as now estimated by the engineer, will be required.—Either the estimates have been very carelessly made, or large sums of money uselessly and extravagantly expended in the prosecution of this improvement. As aiding the business of the main line, reducing still further its expenditures and relieving the Treasury from these constant demands, the announcement of its early completion will be hailed with pleasure by every citizen.

Although the completion of the North Branch canal, before the close of navigation, was certainly expected, yet this expectation has not been realized. The efforts of the present Superintendent, Mr. Maffit, during the past year, to complete and put in successful operation this canal, deserves the highest commendation. Everything that skill, energy, and industry could accomplish, has been done. The labor to be performed was great, and rendered more difficult and perplexing by the imperfect and fraudulent construction of the old work and some portion of the new. The large quantity of rocks, trees, stumps, and roots placed in the bottom of the canal, and the defective material used in the embankments, suffered the water to escape almost as rapidly as admitted, and rendered a re-construction of the work, in many places indespensably necessary. Its successful completion, it is hoped, will soon be announced.

It will appear by the report of the Committee of Ways and Means, made to the House of Representatives in 1849, that the entire amount necessary to complete and put in operation the unfinished portions of this canal was estimated at the sum of $1,106,037. The amount actually expended on the work since that period, as appears from the reports of the Superintendent, Engineer and Canal Commissioners is $1,857,377,52, being an excess of expenditures over the original estimates of $751,340,52; and the canal not yet in operation. With such facts before us—such evidence of mismanagement and reckless expenditure as the history of this canal shows, is not matter of surprise that the Commonwealth and people are burdened with debt and taxation.

In pursuance of the act of the 8th of May last, providing for the sale of the main line of the public works, after giving the notice required by law, I caused the same to be exposed to public sale, at the Merchant's Exchange, in the city of Philadelphia. No offers were made, and consequently the works remain unsold.—Sealed proposals for the "sale or lease of the main line," were subsequently invited, as directed by the seventeenth section of the said act, and the proposals received are herewith submitted to the Legislature for their action and final disposition.

Having on a former occasion presented my views of the propriety and policy of a sale of this branch of our public improvements, a repetition of the sentiments then expressed becomes unnecessary. In relation to this subject my opinion has not changed. On the contrary the experience of the past, and a careful examination of the question in its economical and political relations, have strengthened and confirmed it. That the State should, long since, have been separated from the management and control of these works, the history of their construction and management clearly demonstrates. Public policy and public sentiment demand this separation; and every consideration of present and future interest requires their sale. The late financial embarrassments of the country—the imperfect character of some of the provisions of the bill authorizing the sale, together with the adverse influence of rival interests, defeated the recent attempt to sell. These difficulties have been, or can be, removed; and a sale yet effected on terms amply protective of the rights and interests of the people, and at the same time just and liberal to the purchasers.

To reduce the State debt and relieve the people from taxation, are objects worthy the earnest and anxious consideration of the Legislature. To accomplish these objects speedily and certainly, a sale of the whole or part of our public improvements becomes important and necessary. The revenues of the State, under the present system of management of the public works, are but little more than sufficient to pay the interest of her debt, and the ordinary expenses of the government. A sale of these works, for a fair consideration, and upon terms just and liberal, would constitute a beginning in the process of liquidation that would free our Commonwealth from debt and her people from consequent taxation. In every measure calculated to produce these desirable results, I will cheerfully co-operate with the Legislature.

The currency of the State, in its relation to banking institutions, and their increase, is a subject that demands careful and intelligent consideration. From a notice given of numerous intended applications to the Lgislature for new banks and an increase of banking capital, this subject will doubtless be presented to, and strongly urged upon your attention. Shall the number of banks and the amount of banking capital be increased? and if so, to what extent and in what localities? are questions of absorbing public interest.

Without desiring to assume a general and uncompromising hostility to all banks or to an increase of of banking capital, I cannot discover the necessity that requires, or the circumstances that would justify the incorporation of all that may be demanded from the Legislature. The incorporation of new, or the re-charter of old and and solvent banks, when indispensibly necessary and clearly demanded by the actual business wants of the community in which they may be located, should not be refused; under no other circumstances should their incorporation be permitted.

The necessity for increasing the number of banks should be determined more by the actual wants of legitimate trade, than by the number of applications and the wild fancies of stockjobbers and speculators. The sudden and unnecessary expansion of the currency should be avoided, and whatever tends to produce such a result ought to be discountenanced and prevented. In the creation of banks the true interests of the State and people should be consulted; and a just and honest discrimination, as to number, locality and the demands of trade, be exercised by their representatives. Public sentiment does not demand, nor do public or private interests require, the creation of numerous banks.

In the present condition of the finances, and in aid of the revenues of the State, (in addition to the taxes now imposed by law,) a reasonable premium should be required to be paid by all banks or saving institutions that may hereafter be chartered or re-chartered by the Legislature.

As appropriate to this subject, and intimately connected with it, I cannot forbear to express my disapprobation of a practice, that has heretofore obtained to some extent, of using the names of members of the Legislature as corporators in bills pending before them for the incorporation of banks and other companies.—Such a practice is pernicious, and cannot be too strongly condemned. It perils the independence of the Legislator—exposes him to unjust suspicions, and stamps with selfishness, at least his legislative action in the premises.—Legislation should be free, even from the appearance of improper motive; and every undue and corrupting influence, inside or outside of the Legislative Halls, should be resisted and condemned.

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

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

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

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

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

The report of the Superintendent of Common Schools will exhibit to you their condition and the general operations of the system throughout the Commonwealth, during the past year. To the valuable and useful suggestions of the report, I would earnestly ask the attention of the Legislature.

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

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

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

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

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

This result is in full harmony with the laws of mind and of human society. Teaching is a high and honorable profession, and no profession has more arduous and complex duties to perform—and no one operates on, or with such valuable and interesting material. The most thorough preparation is therefore requisite; and as the duties to be performed are not only responsible, but delicate, and may affect the social, political, moral, or religious feelings and rights of the citizen, no source is so safe, no authority for their discharge so free from suspicion or bias, as the State. Teachers trained by the State, and representing the vitality of its republicanism, will be the firm support and sure guarantee of its republican equality.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The House of Refuge in Philadelphia, and the Western House of Refuge near Pittsburg, are institutions of great excellence, having for their object the reclaiming of wayward and erring youth the employment of the idle—the instruction of the ignorant—the reformation of the vicious and depraved, and the relief of the wretched. They are schools, not prisons—homes, not places of punishment; they are a refuge to the neglected and outcast children and youth of our commonwealth. The success of the past is a sure guarantee of their future usefulness. They should receive your aid and encouragement. The "Blind" and the "Deaf and Dumb Asylums," in Philadelphia, invite our sympathy, and ask to share the benefactions of the Commonwealth. They should not be disappointed. The blind, in their darkness—the dumb, in their silence—will cherish the gift, and bless the generous donor.

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

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

"Omnibus legislation" having been condemned and abandoned, should not be permitted again to sully the records of legislative action. It cannot receive my approval.

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

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

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

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

By the act of the 16th of April, 1845, entitled "An act to increase the revenues and diminish the legislative expenses of the Commonwealth," it was provided that thereafter no private bill, therein described or taxed, should be enrolled in the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, or published, or have the force and effect of law, until the party asking or requiring the same should pay into the treasury of the Commonwealth the respective sums in said act. A large number of Acts passed by former Legislatures, and subject to this tax, remain in the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, the tax on them not having been paid. The number has been annually increasing, and will continue to increase, unless a summary remedy be afforded for the collection of the enrollment tax, or in default of its payment after a certain period, the Acts themselves be repealed. The amount of enrollment tax now due the Commonwealth is large, and should have been paid long since. I would therefore recommend the passage of a law repealing all Acts heretofore passed, subject to such tax, unless the tax be paid within one year thereafter, and further to provide that all such Acts hereafter passed shall not have the force and effect of law, unless the taxes respectively due thereon be paid within six months after their approval. Such a law would secure the payment of these taxes, increase the revenues, and at the same time check the demand for private Acts designed to be used or abandoned, as the calculation of chances, or the loss or gain of the parties in interest might determine.

By a resolution of the Legislature, passed the 27th day of March, 1855, requiring the "New York and Erie Railroad Company to communicate to the Legislature of this Commonwealth, a statement, certified under oath by their President, setting forth what quantity of land said company now hold in Pennsylvania—its location—how much they have heretofore disposed—its value—the value of what they now hold, and when the title to said lands were acquired," it was made the duty of the Governor to transmit a copy of said resolution to the President of said Company.—A copy of the resolution was transmitted as directed; and the answer of the President of the Company, communicating the information required, is herewith submitted to the Legislature.

On the 6th day of October last, I approved and signed the bill entitled "An act to repeal the Charter of the Erie and N. East Railroad Company and to provide for disposing of the same." In pursuance of its provisions, I appointed the Hon. Joseph Casey to take possession and have the charge and custody of the road. Before possession was taken, application was made by the Company to one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of this Commonwealth for an injunction to restrain the Agent of the State from taking possession of the road; and subsequently a cautionary order was made by the Supreme Court, in banc, to stay his proceeding under the Act. The questions involved in the application for an injunction are now pending before that Court, and will, it is expected, be determined early in the present month. The result will be made the subject of a special communication to the Legislature.

The recent fraudulent, if not felonious, abstraction of a large quantity of arms from the Arsenal at Harrisburg, has shown the necessity of additional legislation for the protection of the arms and other public property of the Commonwealth deposited in the Arsenals of the State. The taking and sale of the public arms and property, without authority of law, by the keepers of the Arsenals, or by others having them in charge, should be declared a felony, and punished with severity; and all persons purchasing or receiving the same, without proper authority, and knowing them to be the property of the Commonwealth, should be regarded as principals, and punished accordingly.

The bonds now required to be given by the Adjutant General and the keepers of the arsenals, for the faithful discharge of their duties, are insufficient in amount to secure the Commonwealth against loss from the fraudulent sale or taking of the property committed to their care. The sum in which these bonds are taken should be increased to an amount proportionate to the value of the property which is or may be deposited in the Arsenals.

Since the sale of the Arsenal in Philadelphia, the public arms in that city have been placed in a room or out-house procured for that purpose. As a depository it is unsafe and insecure. Better provision should be made for their safe-keeping.

The sum of thirty thousand dollars, arising from the sale of the Philadelphia Arsenal, is now in the Treasury to be expended under the direction of the Governor, in the purchase of a suitable lot and the erection of a new Arsenal. This sum is wholly insufficient for that purpose, and without additional appropriations, which are not recommended, this object cannot be accomplished. As arms and munitions of war can, when required, be transmitted with facility and rapidity, to distant parts of the State, the necessity for more than one Arsenal no longer exists. If the Arsenal at Meadville can be dispensed with without detriment to the public service, I would suggest for your consideration the propriety of authorizing its sale, and the sale of that one at Harrisburg, and with the funds arising therefrom, and the money in the treasury applicable to that purpose, the erection of a large and commodious Arsenal at Harrisburg, or elsewhere, as may be deemed most economical, safe and convenient.

The Legislature, at their last session, having failed to elect a Senator to represent this State in the Senate of the U. States, for six years from the 4th of March last, it becomes your duty to provide for an election to supply such vacancy. By reference to the existing laws regulating the election of Senators to represent this State in the Senate of the United States, it will be perceived that their provisions do not embrace a case like the present.

Having at the time of my induction into office, declared to my fellow citizens and their representatives, my sentiments in relation to questions connected with our national politics, their reiteration now will not be expected.—To the opinions then expressed I now re-affirmed