

GOVERNOR WELLS'S MESSAGE.

The Legislature of the State of Utah:

The Constitution of Utah, in defining the duties of the Governor, provides that he shall communicate by message the condition of the State to the Legislature at every regular session and recommend such measures as he may deem expedient.

Congress has conferred upon Utah constitutional government, and it is the proud privilege of her citizens, for the first time, to assume entire control of their own affairs. To you has been delegated the law-making power, and it is expected that you will proceed promptly and wisely to enact such legislation as will successfully complete the organization of the new State government, and provide the necessary machinery to put the same in motion. Having the fullest confidence in your ability to rise to the occasion, and assured of your patriotic desire to serve your country well and faithfully, I promise you my active and cordial cooperation.

I beg leave to call your attention to our financial condition. Owing to the fact that the reports of the outgoing Territorial officers have not yet been submitted, and owing further to the limited time intervening between the installation of the present State officers and the meeting of the Legislature, it is impossible to prepare such a statement of the financial condition of the State as I desire, but the reports of the Territorial officers will be available early in the session, and I shall then communicate with you further upon this subject.

The bonded indebtedness of the State is \$700,000. The bonds were issued in three series, to wit:

Series 1. By authority of the act of the Legislative Assembly of 1888, 150, twenty-year, 5 per cent, non-taxable bonds of \$1,000 each, issued July 2, 1888, payable July 2, 1908, but with right of redemption after ten years, viz: after July 2, 1898—\$150,000.

Series 2. By authority of the act of the Legislative Assembly of 1890, 300 twenty-year 5 per cent non-taxable bonds of \$1,000 each, issued July 1, 1890, payable July 1, 1910, but with right of redemption after ten years, viz: after July 1, 1900—\$300,000.

Series 3. By authority of the act of the Legislative Assembly of 1892, 250 twenty-year 5 per cent, non-taxable bonds of \$1,000 each, issued July 2, 1892, payable July 1, 1912, without provision for previous redemption—\$250,000.

The interest upon said bonds is, by the terms of the law authorizing their issue, made payable semi-annually, on the first days of January and July respectively, and amounts to \$35,000 per annum.

I am unable, at this time, to compute the floating indebtedness of the State, although it may be relied upon, that including unredeemed warrants and deficiencies of State institutions, the State will owe, after all taxes due from the several counties are paid in, at least \$100,000. The extra burden to be borne by the State will be for the salaries of State officers, support of the State prison, the courts, the Legislature, etc., previously supported, wholly or in part, by the United States; and until the taxes of 1896 become available,

there will be no means to conduct the State government. It is apparent, ahead of the careful investigation which it is incumbent upon me to make, the result of which I shall communicate to you later, as stated, that provision must be made to pay off this floating debt and meet the running expenses for the next nine months. It may be set down as an indispensable necessity, therefore, and as the most prudent and economical method of placing the State treasury upon a cash basis, which is a coveted consummation to any government or any business concern, that an issue of bonds be made; although the amount of the issue should, of course, be kept down to the lowest possible limit, and the rate not more than 4 per cent. It is my opinion that new State bonds will sell readily at par, both in our own market and in the Eastern financial centers at 4 per cent, and the advisability of adding the outstanding 5 per cent bonds by a new 4 per cent issue, which would produce a saving of \$7,000 per annum, will also be presented for your consideration. As soon as the lands granted under the enabling act, or a portion of them, may be disposed of, it is provided that the interest on same may be devoted to the support of the various State institutions. Ultimately there is little doubt that these proceeds will very materially relieve the State tax fund, but it may not be even hoped that any such relief can be obtained for a year or more, or the obvious reason that legislation must first be provided for the selection, appraisement and sale of the lands, and after that the various incumbrances will have to earn their interest.

The subject of the disposal of these lands being so closely interwoven with the financial future of the State, my suggestion concerning the same will be included in the later special message. In view of the extra burdens already and our inability to realize additional revenues from interest on sale of lands during the present year, it will, no doubt, devolve upon you to increase the tax rate, though to what extent cannot be estimated at present. The revenues will be materially increased from the assessment of patented mines and coal lands and net proceeds of mines, and it is possible the assessed valuation for 1896 may be increased over that of last year by the exercise of greater diligence on the part of assessors and the board of equalization. The amount of property that has escaped taxation, notwithstanding the efforts of the board of equalization, in the last four years, I am convinced, is very large. Examples are frequent, in every county, where patented lands have not been assessed, simply because the patents are not recorded, notwithstanding that present laws require county courts to obtain from the U. S. surveyor-general plats showing the patented lands. Merchandise is not assessed in Utah for one-third of its value. Cattle and sheep are not assessed for more than one-third their number. It will be incumbent upon us to unite in correcting evils of this nature. These suggestions are neither conclusive nor adequate upon the subject of our finances, but are simply made to admonish you that greater revenues must be provided and the utmost economy practiced by you in order to make the financial ends meet.

Prominent among your duties will be the selection of two of your fellow-citizens to represent the State of Utah in the Senate of the United States, the highest legislative council of the nation. May your discharge of this responsibility be characterized by such wisdom and patriotism as shall reflect honor upon yourselves and the State.

The Constitution provides that the Territorial seal shall be used until otherwise provided by law. A State seal should be adopted at once.

The supreme court and attorney general are temporarily located in the joint city and county building, Salt Lake City. The governor and secretary have succeeded without any express authority, to the offices formerly occupied by the Territorial governor and secretary at the so-called "Industrial Home," which is United States government property, and the auditor, treasurer and superintendent of public instruction have no prescribed offices in which to transact their business with the public. I recommend that you arrange suitable quarters on the most economical terms possible, for the State officials, and provide the same with respectable furnishings.

I commend to your earnest consideration the legislation required by the Constitution, in order to make all its provisions operative.

The Utah penitentiary, formerly belonging to the United States and under the control of the United States marshal has now become the property of the State. By the terms of the enabling act, the penitentiary and all the lands and appurtenances connected therewith, and set apart and reserved therefor, are granted to the State. The property consists of 200 acres of land, seventy-eight acres of which are under cultivation. The prison is a modern structure, having been built by the United States several years ago, at a cost of \$300,000, and is in all respects an up-to-date prison. It has 240 cells, and capacity for 500 prisoners, though the present number incarcerated is only 189. A rock wall, nineteen feet in height, four and a half feet thick at the bottom and two feet thick at the top, surrounds the buildings.

The farm can easily be made to yield sufficient potatoes, corn, beets, cabbage, onions, tomatoes and garden produce to supply the prisoners.

Upon admission of the State, the title to the property passed from the United States to the State of Utah, and the control thereof, under the Constitution, is vested in the board of State prison commissioners, which board is to have such supervision of all matters connected with the State prison as may be provided by law. Temporarily, and until otherwise ordered, the board of State prison commissioners has continued Nat M. Brigham, the United States marshal, in charge.

It is extremely important that regulations be provided for the proper management of this institution, including authority for the board to appoint a warden, and to employ such guards and assistants as it may deem proper.

The cost of operating the penitentiary by the government has been \$40,189 per annum. By rigorous economy, it is my opinion that this expense may be reduced to \$30,000, and I recommend the appropriation of that amount.