

statehood were assumed, to bring about in such a short time. But so careful has been the administration of public affairs, that the Governor feels safe in advising that the State taxes be reduced twenty per cent below the rate of 1896, or from five mills to four for general State purposes. In regard to appropriations asked for various institutions, the Governor carefully and impartially lays before the legislators the claims and arguments made by the special custodians of such institutions, and where he endorses their request, says so in direct terms; where he conceives that the application is for more funds than the State ought to allow at present, he expresses that view in the kindest manner possible, yet with the most positiveness and clearness that prove him to be well informed upon the details of the matter he is considering. In his recommendations on irrigation, lands, forests, transportation, home industries, and all other topics which the message treats of, his advice is presented in courteous and easily comprehended terms, and is backed by a clearness and force of logic characteristic of an official of superior ability. Upon the various subjects of the message the reports and recommendations submitted to the Governor have been so simplified and succinctly stated by him that it must be a pleasure to the Legislature to receive them in such condensed and comprehensive form. To the general public the entire message will prove interesting and profitable reading; for, although it is a moderately lengthy document, it covers a great range and variety of topics not one of which is treated of in a tiresome manner or with over-elaboration. It is a timely, careful, pleasant address to the whole people through their legislative representatives, and in its statement of facts concerning the State, and its dignified, conservative, and opportune recommendations, it is an extremely valuable State paper.

THE LIGHT SNOWFALL.

Correspondents from different parts of the State express fears for the outcome in agricultural matters next season because of the comparatively small quantity of snow which has fallen this winter. A month ago the prospect was good for a big supply in the mountains from which to draw a bounteous portion of irrigating water in summer. The last days of November brought a goodly quantity of the needful and fastened it in the hills with a cold snap that will keep it there till summer, and it was anticipated that as winter came on there would be still further heavy deposits. But the latter have not materialized, the precipitation of moisture having been abnormally light the past month. From far north in Idaho down to the southern part of this State there has been little addition to the quantity of snow that was on hand in the first part of December, and the present cold, foggy weather does not indicate strongly further accumulation until the season is so far gone that what does come will be so light and warm that it will

melt quickly and will aid in dissolving that already on hand, unless the spring should be very cold and backward. At least this is the view expressed by agriculturists in various parts of the State, showing that there is considerable uneasiness because of the existing condition. It is to be hoped, however, that the storms that must come before winter has passed away will relieve this uneasiness. At the same time it is not well to take a too gloomy view of the outlook, since a pretty fair supply of water already is secured, to the extent at least that care in its use and distribution will avert any serious calamity. But the situation which exists and causes doubt in the minds of many ought to be a suggestion to those who are in localities suitable for reservoirs, to avail themselves of this means of storage for seasons when the snowfall is not at a time to hold the waters in the mountains in a frozen state until the heat of summer releases them.

PRAYER IN THE LEGISLATURE.

The manner in which the office and duty of chaplain have been spoken of by members of the Legislature, both in caucus and open session, has been calculated to expose to ridicule that which most of the people of our State regard as sacred. The great majority of the inhabitants of Utah are pre-eminently a religious community, and it rates harshly on their feelings to hear the subject of prayer spoken of contemptuously or even lightly.

When men are engaged in the discharge of labors or duties to which attaches great responsibility or solemnity, an appeal to the Deity for aid, light and guidance, uttered by themselves, or by a mouthpiece speaking in their presence and behalf, has a good effect. It tends to compose the mind, to calm and clear the judgment, to promote harmony and unity, and to increase faith in the beneficence of the Creator. A man who is religious or reverential in his nature has a desire for such a spiritual exercise, and derives help, comfort and courage from it; while a man who is neither religious nor reverential cannot easily be injured by listening to a prayer.

For these and other reasons it is quite consistent and appropriate that the daily sessions of a legislative body should be opened with prayer. But if the prevailing sentiment among the members of the body is one of contempt or even disrespect towards the chaplain and his sacred function, it were better to abolish his office. Better that there should be no public prayers in a legislative body, than that they should be made the subject of coarse jokes or irreverent comment.

FOREST PRESERVATION.

The suggestion of Governor Wells in relation to forest planting and preservation in this State should receive vigorous attention from the Legislature and others interested, that not only a government reserve may be established as proposed, but that

the State might do something of the kind and also induce a public sentiment that will enlist private landowners to pay greater attention to timber growing. The question of water supply makes the preservation of mountain forests an imperative necessity to the State's welfare, for with the denuding of the mountain sides of trees comes partial destruction of the great natural reservoir provided in this State for retaining in the hills the moisture that supplies the summer streams. Beside this there is the almost equally important item of timber supply for the State, for which millions of dollars now go out to other sections.

This matter of timber supply not only interests this State, which never was beautifully supplied, but many older and richer states which formerly were well stocked with forest growth, but have suffered by the diminution therein of recent years. One of these is New York, where the situation was of sufficient importance to receive attention last week in the inaugural address of Gov. Black. That state, said the new governor, has suffered, either through indifference or mere economy, in having been stripped of its most valuable timber lands, allowed its supply to be seriously impaired, and the most wonderful sanitarium in the world to be delayed and partially destroyed. Every element of economy and foresight, he says, is outraged by this course; private individuals have taken advantage of the state's neglect until of the entire Adirondack region, consisting of more than 3,500,000 acres, the state owns 941,000, less than a quarter, and of the proposed Adirondack park of 2,800,000 acres, it owns even a smaller percentage, about 661,000 acres. Of this proposed park more than 880,000 acres are held as private preserves, and more than 1,250,000 acres by lumbermen and others, so that of the proposed total area of 2,800,000 acres more than 2,000,000 are owned by private individuals, and more than 1,250,000 of the 2,000,000 acres so owned are now subject to fire and ax, and the devastation wrought yearly is appalling and disgraceful; over 450,000,000 feet of wood and timber are cut, and more than 100,000 acres stripped every year, while nothing is done to renew the supply.

With the government reserve suggested for this State by Governor Wells, and State and individual action on behalf of forest growth, not only will a serious drawback to the State be avoided, but the means of checking it can be made to enhance greatly the wealth and beauty of this region in its natural aspect. Now is a time for the Forestry association to get in some good work.

HOW NANSEN FEELS.

The long sojourn of Dr. Nansen and his companions in the Arctic regions seems to have had a curious psychological effect upon the daring sailors. It is now stated that they all plainly evince a more or less marked aversion to the company of fellow-beings, and that in the case of the great explorer himself this apathy is so pronounced