

## GOVERNOR WELLS'S MESSAGE:

On Tuesday the message of Governor Heber M. Wells to the second session of the Utah Legislature was submitted as follows:

To the Legislature of the State of Utah:

The Constitution of this State directs the Governor to communicate, by message, the condition of the State to the Legislature at every regular session, and recommend such measures as he may deem expedient. In pursuance of this requirement, I have the honor to submit my views concerning some of the important subjects that will claim your consideration, and also to present a brief resume of the condition and needs of the several departments of State. The transition of Utah from Territorial life into the broader functions of Statehood has been attended, I think, with fewer complications than in most of the surrounding states. Upon the first State Legislature devolved the duty of providing necessary laws to set in motion the machinery of State government. The lawmakers were confronted with subjects of great importance. Problems which may be permanently and successfully solved only when experience has matured into intelligent judgment, had to be met and solved at once. Old precedents were found not always to be a true guide, old methods had to be quite generally discarded, and in the readjustment of laws, or methods, of institutions and undertakings, a conscientious regard for the public welfare and the rights of the people was the only safe criterion both for the legislator and the executive. It was inevitable that the work could not be fully completed and that some mistakes would occur. The responsibility of taking up the labor where the first State Legislature desisted, of correcting errors and omissions in existing laws, and of anticipating needs for the future, has been transmitted to you, and I have no doubt that the obligations resting upon you, as legislator, will be faithfully, honestly and intelligently discharged.

The selection of one of your fellow citizens to the exalted position of United States Senator from Utah will be an important duty, in the discharge of which great discretion and patriotism will be essential. I have no doubt you will rise to the occasion and that your choice will reflect honor upon yourselves and the State.

Among your earliest duties will be the necessity to provide for the immediate needs of State institutions, whose appropriations are exhausted. These include the University of Utah, the Agricultural College, the State Industrial School, the School for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind, the State Prison, etc.

The report of the code commission will be laid before you. In my opinion, its work has been well done, and the code, as arranged and presented to you, should be accepted in its entirety and that its harmony may be preserved, and then revised as your wisdom may direct. The members of the code commission are gentlemen of ability, of character and standing in the community, and it is a matter of public knowledge that they have devoted

their time and talent to the work, to the exclusion of their private practice, and with commendable energy and a conscientious regard for duty. The various State officers, including a majority of the district judges and also many of the county clerks, have made suggestions from time to time to the commission, relative to such errors and omissions in the laws as have come under their immediate observation. So that in this way the commission has constituted a reservoir of the best thought and experience in the State. Subjects of great public concern, such as the recent contest over the election, and the decision of the Supreme court thereon, and the recommendation of the grand jury of the Third district that private banks be subjected to State inspection, have been taken cognizant of, and wholesome provisions for correcting existing defects recommended. It has taken into account the needs of the State in the direction of new legislation, but only where it has been convinced of the absolute necessity therefor, in view of the requirements of the Constitution.

All these considerations are a guarantee that entitle the code to that respectful consideration at your hands which I have no doubt it will receive. With the presentation of its report, the contract with the code commission ceases, and if it is desirable that the members thereof be available for consultation and advice during the session, or that they be continued for the work of compilation, a new arrangement for such service will be essential.

Owing to the short interval elapsing between the end of the fiscal year and the meeting of the Legislature, (only eleven days) the report of the State auditor, which, when presented, will disclose the exact financial condition of the State, is not yet available. From his preliminary figures, however, I am enabled to give you a fairly accurate idea of the present financial status. The bonded debt of the State is \$900,000, as follows:

## TERRITORIAL ISSUES

Series 1. By authority of the act of the Legislative Assembly of 1888, 150 twenty-year, five per cent bonds of \$1,000 each, issued July 2nd, 1888, payable July 2nd, 1908, but with right of redemption after ten years, viz.: after July 2nd, 1898.....	\$150,000
Series 2. By authority of the act of the Legislative Assembly of 1890, 300 twenty-year, five per cent bonds of \$1,000 each, issued July 1st, 1890, payable July 1st, 1910, but with right of redemption after ten years, viz.: after July 1st, 1900.....	\$300,000
Series 3. By authority of the act of the Legislative Assembly of 1892, 250 twenty-year, five per cent bonds of \$1,000 each, issued July 2nd, 1892, payable July 1st, 1912.....	\$250,000

## STATE ISSUES.

Series 1. By authority of the act of the State Legislature of April 2nd, 1896, 200 twenty-year, four per cent bonds of \$1,000 each, issued July 1st, 1896, payable July 1st, 1916.....	\$200,000
Total.....	\$900,000

The current resources and liabilities as follows:

## RESOURCES.

Due from counties on tax account..	\$270,617 78
Cash in the treasury January 1, 1897..	114,823 63
	\$384,441 41

## LIABILITIES.

Warrants outstanding Jan. 1, 1897..	\$102,929 25
Unpaid jurors and witnesses' fees for 1896 (estimated).....	5,000 00

One half salaries of county officers for the fourth quarter of 1896 (estimated).....	5,000 00
Bounties on wild animals.....	1,000 00
Estimated deductions on taxes.....	42,894 00
Estimated amount held back on account tax sales for 1896.....	42,894 00
Apportionment of taxes due from counties to school fund.....	104,867 88
Excess of resources.....	90,380 28
	\$394,471 41

That is to say, when all the revenue resources are available and all the current indebtedness extinguished, there will yet remain a balance in the treasury of \$90,380.28. This extremely gratifying showing may be largely accounted for in the excess over last year's calculations of revenue from fees in the office of secretary of state, paid by corporations and insurance companies, and in the fact that some of the large appropriations, notably for the courts, the State board of land commissioners, and for extension of surveys, have only been measurably drawn upon. In ordering these balances and all other unused balances covered into the general fund, which I recommend as the correct course to pursue, care should be exercised to provide for all obligations incurred during the year for which the appropriation was made. If it should be corroborated, by later investigation, that these figures are accurate, a wise financial policy would direct, in view of general depressed conditions, that the taxpayers be relieved of a portion of their burdens by a decrease in the rate of taxation. Considering in this connection, the funds that will arise from sale of lands during the years 1896 and 1897, the interest of which will be available for the support of the schools and State institutions, and which will, in all probability, amount to a considerable sum, a reduction of one mill, at least, in the taxes, may, I think, be counted upon with reasonable safety. Such a consummation in the second year of our Statehood would, perhaps, be unprecedented, but I am sure it would be hailed with acclamations of rejoicing by the taxpayers.

While it is apparent that the revenues of the State from all sources will be sufficient, when fully collected, to meet all obligations and leave a surplus on hand, the fact remains that the treasury is not yet on a cash basis. It is my earnest hope that measures may be adopted by you that will accomplish this end and make the State warrants good for cash, no matter at what time of year they may be presented. The present difficulty is easily explained. Expenditures are necessary at the beginning of the year and during the year, and warrants are issued therefore under the law. The same are presented to the State treasurer, and if he have no cash in the treasury, applicable to their payment, the warrants are registered and marked "Not paid for want of funds," and must then be hawked about for perhaps ten or twelve months before the taxes provide sufficient funds in the treasury to redeem them. Such procedure necessitates conducting the various State institutions largely upon credit, and works a hardship also upon all holders of State warrants. The warrants are discounted at excessive rates or, in case of State institutions, pledged to the various banks as collateral security, and