

Farewell address
of
Urban A. Woodbury
As it appears in the
Journal
of the
Joint Assembly.

1896

Thursday, October 8, 1896

Farewell Address

Gentlemen of the Senate and of the House of Representatives:

In accordance with the custom which has prevailed for the last twenty years for the retiring Governor to render to the people an account of his stewardship and to make such suggestions and recommendations as from his experience he thinks may be of value, I beg leave to submit to you the following imperfect account of some of the matters connected with my administration during the last biennial term. The framers of our Constitution wisely vested great power in the legislative branch of the Government, and but little in the executive. The veto power of the Governor is hardly worth the name, as it requires only the same number of votes to pass a measure notwithstanding his objections, as it does to pass it in the first place. He has but little control over expenditures. His influence is often potent in controlling the expenses of public officials and public institutions, but it is very little elsewhere. The expenses of each biennial term are determined by the legislature which sits at the beginning of it. The laws that are now upon the Statutes, and the laws you pass at this session, will very largely determine the State expenses for the next two years. My successor will have but little to do with them.

FINANCIAL.

Our expenditures have been unusually large during the last biennial term, but we have wisely adopted the principle of paying as we go, and you will find by referring to the Report of the Treasurer that the funded liability of the state remains the same as at the beginning of the term, viz: \$135,500.00

The payment of the temporary loan of \$50,000.00 is provided for in the estimated of funds available for the year ending June 30th, 1897.

The expenses of the State for the last biennial term, were..... 1,179,135.42

For the preceding term 920,397.48

Excess over preceding term \$258,737.94

Deduct from this the amount expended for permanent investments in State Asylum and House of Correction, etc., as shown by Auditor's report..... 212,000.00

And it will leave the excess of expenditures over the preceding term for other than permanent improvements..... 46,737.94

The other extraordinary expenses of the last biennial term, other than for permanent improvements, are as follows:

Cost of printing and editing Vermont Statutes, about..... 14,000.00

Paid for books for Town Free Libraries, under Act 1894..... 4,500.00

Expenses on account of Tuberculosis, about 20,000.00

Unpaid bills of Vermont State Asylum, accrued before July 1st, 1894, about..... 18,000.00

Total \$56,500.00

The amount of similar expenditures during the biennial term ending June 30th, 1894, was:

Addition to State Assylum \$47,000.00

World's Fair appropriation 26,750.00

Expenses of Committee on Revision of Laws 4,138.87

Total	\$77,888.87
The difference between this amount and the amount of like expenditures during the last biennial term, is.	\$21,388.87
To this add the amount mentioned above	46,737.94
and it makes the ordinary expenses for the last biennial term, in excess of the preceding term	68,126.81
I have analyzed the expenses of this term sufficiently to find that the above sum is very largely made up of three items, viz:	
The Court expenses exceed those of the preceding term.....	27,757.70
Debentures of General Assembly exceed	9,128.20
Salaries exceed.....	15,296.87

Total	\$52,182.77
The increase of salaries is very largely those of Judges of Probate and State's Attorneys.	
It was estimated by the Treasurer, in his report for the year ending June 30 th , 1894, that there would be funds available for the expenses of the fiscal year ending June 30 th , 1895, to the amount of.....	\$489,655.09
The Treasurer now estimates that there will be available funds for the fiscal year ending June 30 th , 1897, to the amount of	327,195.83
Or \$162,459.26 less.	
Reckoning that	212,000.00
will not be needed for public buildings, etc., for the present term – as most assuredly it will not – it will be seen that the amount available for expenditures, other than for public buildings, etc., exceeds the amount available at the beginning of the preceding biennial term, by	\$49,540.74
If the amount received from corporation should be the same as for the last biennial term, viz:	732,799.94
the amount required to be raised by taxation upon the Grand List will not exceed the amount raised for the last biennial term, which was.....	208,558.63
twelve cents on the dollar, even though no reduction in the ordinary expenses be made.	

The following will show the valuation and expenses of the several New England States, with the percentage of expenses to valuation in each, for the last year:

	Assessed Valuation.	Expenses.	Per Cent.
Maine	\$ 324,478,321	\$1,700,133.77	.0052
New Hampshire	286,756,618	674,744.96	.0023
Massachusetts	2,542,348,993	7,045,877.51	.0027
Connecticut	414,258,956	2,216,679.93	.0053
Rhode Island	359,529,451	1,671,835.36	.0046
Vermont – 1895	173,798,855		
“ Average total expenses per annum for last biennial term.		589,567.71	.0034
“ Average ordinary expenses per annum for last biennial term.		483,567.71	.0028

It will be seen that the per cent. of expenses of Vermont is less than those of any of the other New England States, except New Hampshire and Massachusetts. New Hampshire is, perhaps, more nearly like Vermont than any other of the New England States. Her valuation is considerably more, which will, in part, no doubt, account for less percentage of expenses. I believe that the court expenses of New Hampshire and of some of the other States mentioned, are paid by the several counties in which the courts are held, so the comparison is unfavorable to Vermont. It must be borne in mind, however, that the bonded indebtedness of Vermont is very much smaller than any other of the New England States, so that a much larger proportion of our expenditures are for current expenses than in any other of those States. While our expenses may not be excessive, I think it is due to our taxpayers that the closest scrutiny be given to all proposals of expenditure, that our people may be relieved of any unnecessary burdens. In the desire for retrenchment, care should be taken that no injustice be done any faithful public servant. I think it is only fair that our percentage of expenses should be based upon what I have called ordinary expenses, as those which have been termed permanent investments will not be needed in the next decade. The increased income from the State Prison and the lessened expense for the care of the insane will be favorably felt in the immediate future.

CORPORATION TAXES.

By referring to the Treasurer's report you will find that the amount received from corporations in taxes exceeds the amount for the preceding term by	\$ 40,648.76
Which excess was contributed by Savings Banks and Trust Companies.	
The total amount paid by corporations during the last biennial term is.....	\$732,799.94
Which amount is 62.1 per cent. of the total expenses, or 75.7 per cent. of the ordinary expenses of the State.	
Of this amount Savings Banks and Trust Companies paid.....	390,434.95
Or 54.1 per cent.	
The Railroads paid	209,162.46
Or 28.5 per cent.	
Life and Fire Insurance Companies and other corporation paid.....	127,192.53
Or 17.4 per cent.	
The ratio of the tax upon corporations to the tax of 12 cents raised upon the Grand List, is as 77.8 per cent. to 22.2 per cent.	
The Railroads paid	20,599.52
less than the preceding term,	
The Savings Banks and Trust Companies	41,881.33
more, showing the difference in the prosperity of the two classes of corporations.	

It may confidently be expected that the amount received for the next biennial term will considerably exceed the amount received during the last term

The office of Commissioner of Taxes is now one of the most important of the State offices. The present Commissioner had performed his duties with ability and promptness.

SAVINGS BANKS AND TRUST COMPANIES.

I invite your attention to the excellent report of the Inspector of Finance. It shows a marvelous increase in the assets of our Savings Institutions during these depressed times. They are a credit to the State and the men who manage them. During the most trying times through which we have passed and are now passing they have remained solvent and most of them have bettered their condition. The money intrusted to these institutions has always been returned to the depositors with interest. The seven-tenths of one per cent. upon deposits that the Savings Institutions pay into the State Treasury is an important item in helping defray State expenses, and I fully believe if the money that is now in these banks was in the hands of the depositors that not one-fourth of it would pay either State or town taxes. The law now relieves from town taxation a maximum of fifteen hundred dollars belonging to one person that may be in Savings Banks and Trust Companies April 1st of each year. I

believe it would be for the best interest of the State, both in keeping money at home and in largely increasing the taxes paid by the banks to the State, if, in addition to the fifteen hundred dollars – upon which the banks now pay taxes to the State – all sums that had been in the banks not less than six months previous to April 1st of each year be subject to the same rule. By this limitation of time no money could profitably be placed in the banks to avoid taxation. I do not think that town taxes would be appreciably lessened, and taxes paid to the State by the banks would be largely increased.

RAILROADS.

The work done by the railroad commission has been thorough and effective. The expenses have been moderate. The report is concise and comprehensive, and the cost of printing has been very much less than formerly. Contrary to the opinion of many people the power conferred upon the Commission by Statute is very large, and I believe the present Board has used its power without fear or favor. No Commission is more valuable to the State, in my opinion, than this. Very little of its work appears upon the surface. Many evils are corrected quietly that are never made public. The running of Sunday excursion trains upon some of the railroads in the State prevailed to some extent last summer. Believing such a practice is contrary to the moral sense of our people I suggest that the Railroad Commissioners be instructed by you not to allow such trains to be run. The Commissioners have performed their duties faithfully. While the railroads do not object to the Commission, they did not propose its creation, and would not, I believe, oppose its abolition. The Commission was created at the request of the people and for their benefit, and is, I believe, doing good and necessary work. The railroads of the country have severely felt the business depression that has existed for the past few years and our Vermont railroads have not escaped. After a brave but unavailing struggle against unfavorable conditions the Central Vermont Railroad, which for so long has been an important factor in the prosperity of our State, has passed into the hands of receivers. It is to be hoped that conditions will soon be favorable for its restoration to its owners.

VERMONT NATIONAL GUARD.

The expense of maintaining the National Guard is quiet considerable, but it is necessary in order to maintain our position as a State and to furnish our share of the means for a common defense in case of need. There is not a member of the National Guard from the Brigade Commander to the humblest private who does not in the service he renders the State sacrifice annually both time and money. The companies drill every week and usually turn into the company's treasury for the payment of expenses all that the State pays its members, and in addition each member pays annual dues. The members of the National Guard are not under obligation to the State for the compensation they receive, but the State is clearly under obligation to them for the services they render. Since the last meeting of the Legislature a permanent camp ground has been purchased near Fort Ethan Allen, upon recommendation of the Adjutant General, Brigade Commander and Colonel of the Regiment. This property joins the United States reservation and is close by the fine rifle range owned by the United States Government, which will be at the disposal of the State during musters. The ground has been prepared for use and is well adapted for the purpose, but having been graded only a short time it was not in good condition at the time of the muster in August, and I thought it not wise to use it this year so long as Col. Webb tendered the use of his property at "Oak Ledge" free of cost to the State. The rifle range at Fort Ethan Allen was used by the troops during the muster. The conduct of the members of the National Guard while in camp this year has never been excelled.

The members of the Guard are greatly indebted to Capt. Herbert E. Tutherly, U.S.A., Assistant Inspector General upon my staff, for his intelligent and indefatigable labors in their interest. The Adjutant and Inspector General and the Quartermaster General have performed their duties with their accustomed fidelity and efficiency.

STATE PRISON AND HOUSE OF CORRECTION.

The report of the directors of the State Prison and House of Correction indicates that these institutions have been well managed during the last biennial term and are in a very satisfactory condition. For the first time in the history of the State Prison that institution has been self-supporting, and it is gratifying to be able to predict that for the next five years the institution will probably show a net profit exceeding \$5,000 per annum.

Soon after the beginning of my term of office I ascertained that a contract for five years was about to be closed with the then contractor upon the same terms as he had had the contract for fifteen years previous, viz: fifty cents per day per convict. I sent for the chairman of the Board of Directors and requested him not to make a contract until I had time to look the matter up. In December, 1894, I visited Windsor and looked over the situation carefully. I found that most excellent discipline prevailed among the convicts and they seemed to be doing a large amount of work, and I was satisfied that fifty cents per day per convict with room and power and heat, and power and heat for a free shop outside of the prison walls, was too low compared with the price of free labor, although I had learned that no higher price was paid to any other penal institution in the country. After some two months of negotiation, I obtained an offer from A.E. Mann & Co. of Boston, for the labor at seventy-two cents per day, or twenty-two cents per day and \$66.00 per annum per convict advance over former price. In April 1895, I submitted this offer to the Board of Directors and the contract was closed. On the basis of one hundred and twenty convicts, the increased revenue to the State will be \$7,920 per year of three hundred days, or \$39,700 for the five years. I should state, however, that the increased power required probably will cost from \$1,000 to \$1,200 per year more than under the former contract. This most desirable contract has been made possible on account of the excellent discipline maintained by Supt. Oakes, who is, I believe, on of the best superintendents of penal institutions in the United States.

The House of Correction has been greatly enlarged and improved, for the details of which I refer you to the very comprehensive report of the Directors. The improvements have been judiciously and economically made under the supervision of Mr. Tuttle and Mr. Morgan. The superintendent of this institution is the right man for the right place. The directors of these two institutions are able, hones and painstaking men and they have performed their duties in an entirely satisfactory manner.

STATE ASYLUM.

By authority given by the last Legislature the State Asylum has been completed in accordance with the original design. An elegant barn has been erected and a dwelling house purchased and transformed into a ward for convalescents, and the laundry has been enlarged – all at an expense of \$150,000. I trust that all of you will have the privilege of visiting this institution, and I believe that you will admit that the money has been well expended and that the State has a fine property. I have not changed the opinion expressed by me at a meeting held during the last session of the Legislature, when this addition to the asylum was under consideration, that the saving to the State would be from ten to fifteen thousand dollars per annum. The institution is well managed both financially and for the interests of the patients. Much credit should be given Dr. Giddings, the superintendent, for his faithful and efficient labors. The trustees have been diligent and have rendered intelligent and valuable service. I invite your careful attention to the reports of the Trustees and Superintendent. The Superintendent estimates that the future cost of keeping a patient will be two dollars and fifty cents per week, or one dollar and twenty-five cents less than we should be obliged to pay were they kept in Brattleboro. This would make the cost per patient, per annum, sixty-five dollars less. Reckoning five hundred patients, the amount saved would be \$32,500 per annum. This saving will be for the future. It is but fair to say, however, that if the interest at four per cent. – \$14,000 – were reckoned on \$350,000 – cost of plant – the saving would be but \$18,500 per annum. The buildings are paid for, however, and the future saving will probably be as first above stated.

The institution is now of sufficient size to care for all the insane of the State and the law authorizing commitments to the Brattleboro Retreat should be repealed. The supervisors have performed their duties satisfactorily. While the State had its insane at the Brattleboro Retreat it was necessary to have supervisors of the insane to look after the interests of the State, but now that the State cares for the insane in its own institution their services are no longer needed, and the law creating the Board of Supervisors should, in my opinion, be repealed, and the very considerable expense they make saved to the State. The trustees of the asylum, one of whom should be a physician, with the superintendent are perfectly competent to manage this institution and care for the insane and should be vested with the necessary power so to do.

During my term of office two faithful public servants, Hon. Homer Goodhue, a supervisor of the insane, and Hon. William H. Hunt, a trustee of the Vermont Asylum for the Insane, have entered into rest. Both served their State faithfully, and will be much missed in home and public circles.

VERMONT INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

Nothing of unusual importance has transpired in this institution during the biennial term. The Trustees and Superintendent have, as heretofore, performed their duties with faithfulness and ability. The expenses of the school are necessarily large. It seems to me that some employment might be found for the boys that would lessen the net expenses of the institution, but I am not prepared to make any recommendations as to its nature. The per cent. of reformation is not as large as might be wished. The inmates enter the institution badly handicapped by bad hereditary tendencies. A good deal of the work done meets with but scant success. The Superintendent and Matron, Mr. and Mrs. Andrews, are earnest, Christian persons, and have at heart the moral and spiritual welfare of the inmates.

SOLDIERS' HOME.

This institution is being conducted by the Trustees on the same patriotic and beneficent lines as has uniformly been the rule under the immediate supervision of Col. and Mrs. Coffey. The men who marched to the music of the Union from '61 to '65 are being kindly and well cared for in their declining years. There is no appropriation more willingly made by the people of this State, than that for the Soldiers' Home.

STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.

The State Board of Health is composed of competent men who are greatly interested in their work. The work of this Board is of great benefit to the State.

FISH HATCHERY.

The comprehensive report of the Fish Commissioners will show that much has been accomplished during the last two years. During the early part of '95 it was discovered that the State had not a good title to the water it was using and that a mill was about to be erected above the fish hatchery in Roxbury, so that the water would be polluted and the fish destroyed. Although there was no authority of law, there was but one thing to do to preserve the property of the State, and I authorized the purchase, at a cost of \$1,000, of the mill site, which controlled the water, which action I trust will meet with your approval. I believe this industry which the State has established will grow more and more valuable each year, and its full benefit be more apparent in the near future. The Commissioners have been earnest in their desire to work for the welfare of the State in this direction, and have accomplished all that could be expected. The benefits of the work done are beginning to be seen, and I predict that in a very few years but few people will doubt the wisdom of the expenditures which have been made.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

The Board of Agriculture has been engaged in the same good work as heretofore. The members of the Board who have acted as Cattle Commissioners have been very busy, and, I believe, have done their work with good judgment and economy. The cost of the work has, however, been more for the amount done than it will be in the future, as services of veterinary surgeons can now be obtained at a less price than heretofore. I do not think the cost of the treatment of tuberculosis will be any more for the present term than for the preceding one.

EDUCATION.

The educational interests of the State appear to be in at least as good condition as they were two years ago. The University of Vermont and State Agricultural College, Middlebury College, and Norwich University have made substantial progress during the last two years, and are of great benefit to the educational interests of the State. The work of the Experiment Station of the State Agricultural college is increasingly beneficial to the agricultural interests of the state, and its work could ill be spared. The Normal Schools have been doing the same class of work that they have heretofore done. The Johnson school was very unfortunate in having for its principal a man evidently unworthy the position. Although he resigned before the close of the last term, the evil effects of his administration have not yet been entirely dissipated. If more firmness had been used when the difficulty first occurred, the evil effects of it would have been greatly lessened. I believe that justice demands that the money received from the State School tax should be distributed according to the number of scholars, instead of the number of schools, as now. I call your attention to the report of the Commissioners appointed

under Resolution No. 346, passed by the last legislature, to investigate the condition of Normal Schools. While I believe that one good training school for teachers is needed in this State, and that we should have one at as early a date as practicable, I am constrained to believe that the conclusions of the Commissioners are well grounded. The report of the Superintendent of Education is a valuable contribution to educational interests.

FIRE MARSHAL.

I desire to repeat my recommendation made two years ago that the office of fire marshal be created and that the expense of the office be borne largely or entirely by the insurance companies.

GOOD ROADS.

I am glad to be able to report that considerable progress has been made in the making of good roads during the last two years. There seems to be a general disposition in most towns to make the roads better. Wide tires upon wagons are coming into more general use, which will be marked benefit to the roads. The Commissioners have done excellent service.

I still adhere to the opinion expressed two years ago that the money collected by the State Highway tax should be expended in the counties from which it is received. The larger towns, which usually are the business centers, are directly benefited by having goods roads leading into them from the smaller towns of their own counties, but the City of Rutland, for example, is not benefited to an appreciable degree by the condition of the roads in the town of Wheelock, Caledonia County. The town of St. Johnsbury is benefited, and there probably is some justice in compelling its tax-payers to help the poorer town of Wheelock, but why should the city of Rutland or the county of Rutland be compelled to build roads in Caledonia or any other county? This argument is not forceful when applied to the State School tax, as education is necessary for the moral and religious welfare of a people, and when the weaker communities of a State are unable to maintain proper schools the stronger communities should assist them. Is there not a tendency now to look to the State for assistance for many things that the towns and counties should do themselves? All these questions should be determined by the law of right and not by the law of might. I have confidence in the fairness and good judgment of the people of Vermont and believe that in the end they will do what is just and right.

STATE GEOLOGIST.

In inviting your attention to the report of the State Geologist I will say that while I think that he has accomplished as much as any other person could with the limited means at this disposal, I believe that the value of his work is not worth to the State what it costs. I therefore recommend that the office of State Geologist and Curator of the Cabinet be abolished and the Sergeant-at Arms be given the custody of the cabinet.

THOMAS CHITTENDEN.

On the 19th of August last the monument which was erected in Williston to the memory of Thomas Chittenden, the first Governor of Vermont, was dedicated with proper and imposing ceremonies. The monument is one of which the State and the Town where it is located may well be proud. It is a fitting tribute to the memory of one of our most illustrious men.

AUSTRALIAN BALLOT.

I continue in the belief that the mode of balloting should be simplified. I think that the law ought to be changed so that a voter may be furnished with such a ballot inside of the railing or in the booth as he can use without marking, or without the erasure of any names or insertion of others unless he chooses to make them.

PROHIBITORY LAW.

The past two years have witnessed vigorous attacks upon the so-called prohibitory law. These attacks come largely from advocates of a high license system, but it must be admitted that some friends of temperance believe that unless the law can be better enforced in some of the larger towns that it ought to be modified or displaced by one that can be enforced. It is only just to the friends of the present law, who I believe comprise a very large proportion of the people of this State, that I state a few of the objections that are raised against it in the belief that in so doing you may be able to correct the evils that now exist, and thus promote the cause of temperance.

It is charged that the law is not impartially enforced by the officers whose duty it is to enforce it. It is said that certain influential parties in many towns are let alone and only the weaker dealers in intoxicants are disturbed, and that in a few larger towns open saloons are run with the full knowledge of the State's Attorneys. It is charged that the seizing officers are satisfied to seize only enough liquor to prove the guilt of respondents instead of seizing all they might easily find, that the prosecuting officers do not prosecute vigorously and constantly, that judges of the Municipal Courts and justices of the peace impose only the minimum or nearly the minimum fine, so that respondents will not be so much discouraged as to go out of the business and thus cease to be contributors to the support of said officials by the payment of frequent bills of costs. It is charged that the main business of many of the druggists, licensed by the Board of Pharmacy, is the sale of liquors unlawfully. These and many other things are said. These are serious charges if they are partially true and the most vigorous measures should be taken to remove the cause for such complaint.

From my knowledge gained during the last two years, I must say that the charges are sufficiently true to demand the attention of every lover of law and order, and believer in temperance. These things should be corrected under the present law as it is, if they can be, or the law be modified, so it can be respected. Temperance men must not blind themselves to the fact that something needs to be done. The enemies of temperance cannot contribute anything toward the solution of the difficulties. They simply propose high license which would mean open saloons made respectable by the sanction of law, which would be worse than the imperfect enforcement of the present law. In most of the smaller towns no such condition exists as is claimed to exist in larger towns. In considering the faults of the present law it must be borne in mind that all sumptuary laws are unsatisfactory. All attempts to control the sale of spirituous liquors have been attended with almost insuperable difficulties in States that have the license system. These State have tried one kind of license system and then another in the vain endeavor to find one that is perfect. There is no license system in force in the United States that would, I think be preferable to our present law. I am, therefore, in favor of the present law with such changes or modifications as time and experience may prove necessary. That the law has been of great value in restricting the sale of liquors during the forty-four years that it has been in force no reasonable person will deny. There should be no hesitation in modifying the present law if you believe it will lessen the drinking of intoxicating liquor. The law given Moses on Mount Sinai was modified when the new dispensation came. It is pertinent to inquire why the law is not better enforced. There are several reasons, among which may be mentioned want of interest of the people, especially the business men, in its enforcement. Not that they do not want the law enforced and the liquor traffic stopped, but they are busy with their own affairs and think they have no duties in connection with it. Although there are many thoroughly competent and honest Sheriffs, State's Attorneys, Grand Jurors, Judges and Justices, it will be found, wheret he law is flagrantly violated, that those officers are either timid, incompetent or dishonest. No one has any power to suspend or remove any of those officials. It is claimed by some prosecuting officers and there is some ground for the claim that they enforce the law as rigidly as public sentiment will sustain them. I think, however, that in most cases they mistake the real public sentiment, as I do not believe there is any community in Vermont in which an officer will not be sustained in enforcing the law impartially and with firmness and good judgment. No community will sustain an officer who allows an open saloon on a main street to run undisturbed and prosecutes some man for furnishing his comrades liquor from his bottle. Every officer whose duty it is to enforce the law and sustain order knows before he accepts the office the many disagreeable duties he will have to perform, and unless he is willing to accept the responsibility he has no right to accept the office. Whatever may be the remedy for the evils that exist it is not in my opinion more law. We have law enough now. Our statutes are fairly groaning with the weight of it. Better one page of law that is enforced than a library full that is not and cannot be.

I will make, however, a few suggestions of changes, viz: That the Judges of the Municipal Courts be paid salaries instead of fees. This will be, in my opinion, of great benefit in the enforcement of the law and will cost the State less than under the present fee system. It will relieve the Courts from the accusation that they impose small fines so that respondents will be frequent contributors to their support. I would also suggest that the law be so changed as to stop, if possible, the device frequently resorted to by the saloon keepers of employing persons called "fine-takers," so that only first offenses will be found and small fines imposed. I would change the law so that persons convicted the first time of selling would be punished the same as for second offenses, if there had been previous convictions of a person or persons for violation of law in the same place. The Board of

Pharmacy should be authorized and directed to annul the licenses of druggists who are convicted of illegal selling.

VILLAGE CHARTERS.

I call your attention to the report of the Commissioners appointed by me under Resolution No. 348, Acts of 1894, to investigate Village Charters. I concur in their conclusions.

The report of the Commissioner appointed by me under Resolution No. 347, Acts of 1894, relating to uniformity of laws in the several States, will be placed before you, and will be of interest.

BUSINESS.

The severe business depression with which this country has been afflicted for the past few years has been felt in Vermont, but not in so marked a degree as in some other States.

The low prices of agricultural products are to be regretted, but our people are contented and hopeful. Vermont is all right. Her people are patriotic and whenever the Republic is threatened with harm her sons respond quickly. In 1861 Vermont responded nobly by sending 33,000 of her sons to fight manfully for the preservation of the Union. And now in this year of grace 1896, when the material prosperity of the country is threatened, she responds to the summons by sending 53,000 of her patriotic sons to the polls to deposit their ballots for the cause of good government and sound finance. The wave of depression which has been passing over this country for the past two or three years, and which has affected Vermont as well as other portions of the country will, I believe, on the first Tuesday of November, be met by an incoming wave of prosperity that will, with irresistible force, submerge the discordant elements now striving for the mastery and restore confidence and happiness to our people.

CONCLUSION.

I wish to testify of the faithfulness to their duties of all the State Officers, members of the various Boards and Commissions with whom I have had official relations during my term of office. I desire to express my sense of obligation to the people of Vermont for their kindness and forbearance during the administration of the high office in which they, with such generous partiality, placed me. It is a great honor to be the Chief Executive of such a people.

The duties of the office have been pleasant to me, but I leave it without regret. I am conscious of having done and of having left undone some things that I ought to have done. Whatever I may do or wherever I may be in the future, I will always have in mind the welfare of our beloved State. I wish you a pleasant session and one that will be profitable to the State. God save the Commonwealth.

CHAUNCEY W. BROWNELL,

Secretary of State, Clerk