

Farewell address
of
Carroll S. Page
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Thursday, October 6, 1892
Farewell Address

Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives:--

The constitution of our State has wisely made it the duty of the Governor to prepare and lay before you such matters as seem to him to demand your consideration.

Whether the retiring Governor should so far trespass upon the prerogatives of the Governor-elect is to attempt to mark out your course of action, is a debatable question. The administration of public affairs for the next biennial period is his administration; its success or failure, its popularity or unpopularity depends in no small degree upon his advice and his recommendations.

Prior to 1876 retiring messages in Vermont were not common, but, inaugurated by Governor Fairbanks and continued by Governor Proctor and his worthy successors, the custom has come to be honored to such an extent that I do not feel that I may properly depart from it. But in what I have to say, I shall confine myself to a few of the more important matters suggested by events transpiring during the two years of my administration.

The Governor-elect has, during the past month, made the examination of our several State institutions his special work, and will make such suggestions with reference thereto as he deems advisable, and I deem it only an act of courtesy to him to omit any recommendations concerning these institutions. You will have before you the reports of the heads of the several departments, which, with such special recommendations as the incoming Governor may offer, will serve to guide you in such legislative action as you will be called upon to take.

It is, however, but just to the officials with whom I have been associated during the past two years, to say in passing, that our relations have always been the pleasantest, and I recall no single instance of remissness or dereliction in duty. If anything has occurred in any department which in any way reflects discredit upon the State, it has not come to my notice.

An examination of the various official reports will show, I believe, that with hardly an exception the different institutions of the State have been conducted upon a basis of reduced expenditure, and that, too, without in the slightest degree impairing the efficiency of the service.

EDUCATION.

The school law of 1890 was the result of a compromise between widely differing factions which, during the last moments of the session, brought forth a piece of patchwork so ambiguous that I felt compelled to call upon the Supreme Court to say what the legislature did and did not design to enact. You will doubtless be called upon to rectify such of its provisions as two years' experience has demonstrated to be unwise, unless as some of the best educators of our State insist should be done, you conclude to start from the bottom and build a new system based upon the idea, fast being adopted by our sister states, that the only true plan is that predicated upon town rather than district supervision.

The general trend of thought in all advanced educational work seems to favor the town system of schools, and I believe that the time is not far distant when it will be adopted in Vermont. Although involving a greater outlay, it certainly means better teachers and better schools.

I especially urge that this is the most important of all topics which will come before you for consideration. Early in the session it should be placed in the hands of a committee made up of the ablest and strongest of your respective bodies, to the end that hasty legislation thereon be avoided, and the best possible results reached. With a foreign element pouring in upon us at the rate of 500,000 annually, the safety of our institutions will be endangered unless that element can be assimilated. Patriotic men everywhere are looking upon this great subject with alarm. This heterogeneous mass can only be made homogeneous by education, and unless we are willing to make great sacrifices in order that the second generation may, by education, become

imbued with the spirit of republican institutions, the time is not far distant when we shall be compelled either to maintain a standing army to suppress anarchy, or to close our doors to the emigrants of the world.

You will have before you the report of the superintendent of education. It contains the results of the experience, not only of the superintendent himself, but also of the county supervisors of the State.

DEAF AND DUMB, BLIND AND FEEBLE MINDED.

Under the laws of our State the Governor is made commissioner of the deaf and dumb, the blind and the feeble-minded. The appropriation for these beneficiaries is \$11,000 annually and, although every application in behalf of deserving children has been granted, the total annual expense comes within \$6,000.

The expenses for beneficiaries of this class for the last biennial period have been as follows:

AMERICAN ASYLUM FOR THE DEAF AND DUMB,
HARTFORD, CONN.

School year 1890-'91, 8 pupils,	\$1,419.60	
School year 1891-'92, 9 pupils,	<u>1,400.00</u>	
		\$ 2,819.60

CLARK INSTITUTION FOR DEAF MUTES,
NORTHAMPTON, MASS.

School year 1890-'91, 5 pupils,	\$ 875.00	
School year 1891-'92, 7 pupils,	<u>1,225.00</u>	
		\$ 2,100.00

PERKINS INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND,
SOUTH BOSTON, MASS.

School year 1890-'91, 9 pupils,	\$2,625.00	
School year 1891-'92, 8 pupils,	<u>2,400.00</u>	
		\$ 5025.00

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR THE FEEBLE-MIONDED,
BOSTON, MASS.

School year 1890-'91, 4 pupils,	\$957.99	
School year 1891-'92, 3 pupils,	<u>900.00</u>	
		\$ 1,857.99
Total expenses of all beneficiaries during the terms indicated		\$11,802.59

REFUNDING OF DIRECT TAX.

One of the most important acts of the fifty-first Congress was the passage of a law refunding the direct tax collected of the state to supply the pressing necessities of the national government in the War of the Rebellion.

Under this act Vermont was entitled to \$179,407.80, and on the 26th day of August, 1891, the legislature, having been convened for that purpose, complied with the requirements of the act of Congress by passing an act authorizing the acceptance of this amount in full settlement of Vermont's claim. The sum was paid to the State in due course, and has been used as provided by law in paying current State expenses.

The adjustment of this matter involved the prior consideration of a large claim which stands against the State for arms furnished to Vermont at the time of what is known as the St. Albans raid. That matter is still unadjusted, but there would seem to be little doubt that in due time justice will be done our State, and this charge wiped out on the books of the department. Vermont has already placed herself in an honorable position with reference to this claim by providing for a commission to act in conjunction with a commission to be

appointed by the national Congress to adjust the whole matter. I should come short of my duty were I to omit to accord a large measure of credit for the favorable outcome of this matter to Hon. E. Henry Powell, who, as State Auditor, gave to its adjustment a large amount of patient labor.

WEEKLY PAYMENTS.

In my inaugural message I urged the passage of a law compelling corporations and individuals employing help in large numbers to pay their employees weekly. I again urge upon your attention the advisability of the enactment of such a statute.

I know how earnest are the protestations of several of the large corporations of our State against such a law, but having in my own business for more than twenty-five years followed the practice of paying my employees weekly and in money, I have become thoroughly convinced of the wisdom of this policy, and believe that those who oppose the enactment of a statute looking to this end, stand in their own light in so doing. But, however this may be, your duty is to legislate for the greatest good of the greatest number, so far as you can do so and be just to the minority.

Wrongs and injustice often creep in under the system of monthly or indefinite payments or payments in merchandise. Remember that it is your duty, as well as constitutional right, to correct these wrongs.

STANDARD OR UNIFORM INSURANCE POLICY.

There is no tax which our people are called upon to bear which is more burdensome than that of insurance against fire. The practice of some of our sister states—notably Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania—now is to require all insurance companies to write a uniform policy prescribed by law.

There is no contract at once so common and so important as the contract of insurance. It is held by nine-tenths of our people, and in the contingency of a fire has a value measured oftentimes only by the face of the policy. Its universality and great importance make it of the first moment that the terms employed be as simple, and the conditions incorporated therein be as few, as possible, consistent with the scope of the contract. The ordinary policy with its manifold conditions is quite too complex for the comprehension of the average policy holder. This complexity is somewhat enhanced by the fact that hardly any two of the fifty-one companies doing business in Vermont use the same form of policy. Were a uniform policy prescribed by law, the policy holder, though ignorant of the legal effect of his contract, could rest in the full assurance that he held a policy devoid of technicalities and fair in its conditions.

I therefore recommend that a statute be enacted requiring the insurance commissioners, acting with a committee appointed by you, to prepare a uniform or standard form of policy to be used by all companies writing stock insurance in Vermont.

PROHIBITORY LAW.

At each succeeding session of our legislature the charge is made that the prohibitory law is a failure, and that its repeal should be the first labor of the session. That this session will prove an exception in this regard is hardly to be expected. The shibboleth of these would-be reformers is "Prohibition does not prohibit." During the past month I have devoted considerable time to an investigation as to the truth or falsity of this claim. My information has been gathered from the prosecuting attorneys from the different counties, from the Superintendent of the House of Correction, and from other official sources, and the facts ascertained go to show conclusively that the law is today being more faithfully enforced than ever before. The number of commitments to the House of Correction for the past two years has been 360, compared with 271 for the biennial term preceding; while the fines and costs collected have been \$4,702.10 as compared with \$2,474.37 for the same period.

The manner in which the prohibitory law is being enforced in Vermont is fast making the liquor traffic unprofitable, and when the element of profit is eliminated from the business, the prohibition problem is practically solved. I believe that with five years more of as honest enforcement as the law has had for the past two, the illegal traffic in intoxicating liquors will be practically stopped in our smaller towns and greatly

diminished in the larger. Public sentiment is moving in the right direction, and I am confident that you will take no backward step in whatever you may do with reference to the prohibitory law.

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLOT LAW.

Our first trial of the Australian ballot law has resulted in some differences of opinion as to its adaptability to Vermont. The claim is made that no necessity therefore exists in our State, and very likely you will be called to pass upon propositions for its amendment and perhaps for its repeal.

It is not improbable that the experience of our recent election may suggest some slight amendments to the law, but the general principles thereof should not, in my judgment, be disturbed. He serves his party best who serves his country best, and the broad-minded citizen, however strong a partisan he may be, will welcome any system that compels political parties to bring forward their best, knowing that if they do otherwise a discriminating voter will place his seal of condemnation upon its unpatriotic action.

I believe there should be some changes made which will enable the electors to cast their votes without as much assistance as was necessary at our recent election. Without any change a second trial would undoubtedly show a very marked improvement over the first, not only because of the confidence which the elector will feel in himself after having passed through his first experience, but because of the extensive discussions in the columns of every newspaper in the State and everywhere among the masses, concerning this radical departure from the old method. These discussions will tend to educate the people so well during the next two years that scarcely any citizen of fair intelligence, who can read and write, will need assistance at the election of 1894. But to make assistance unnecessary, even for the uneducated, I believe we should adopt the original feature of the Australian system by placing after each name to be voted for an emblem, which shall after each Republican nominee could be placed the national flag next to the square in which the voter makes the cross. The intelligent Republican would understand before entering the booth that by voting for the flag he voted for the nominees of his party. In like manner an eagle might designate the nominees of the Democratic party, and a fountain those of the Prohibition party. With these precautions taken and the number of booths doubled so that the elector could deliberately and in his own time study the ballot, I believe the work of the election officers would be practically nothing.

Vermont justly boasts of the purity of her ballot, the absolute certainty that every citizen within her borders may, without fear of intimidation, cast one vote and have that vote honestly counted. What shall be said then if having put our hands to the plough we turn back? Should we not, as a people who believe that the right of suffrage is the chief, the most sacred safeguard of our liberties, willingly submit to any slight inconvenience which the law may occasion?

Vermont cannot afford to return to the old ways; our State pride forbids; our love of justice forbids; and I believe the law will become more and more popular, as its ways are better understood, with every lover of fair play and an unintimidated, un-bought ballot. May we ever be willing to keep it pure though the sacrifice be an hundred times greater than that demanded by our present law.

I shall ever take pride in the fact that during my administration Vermont placed herself squarely abreast with that better element in American politics, which is today everywhere demanding, a freer, purer ballot, north and south, and when that is assured I believe, in the language of the sainted Lincoln, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

IMPROVEMENT IN HIGHWAYS.

There is and should be a healthy public sentiment in opposition to creating new offices of any kind to be supported out of the public treasury, and I dislike very much to urge upon you any course conflicting with this sentiment, but I believe the time has arrived when the question of improved roads should receive a measure of attention not hitherto accorded to it. Our sister states have deemed the subject of highways of sufficient importance to warrant the expense of a state engineer, whose duty it is to counsel with and advise the road commissioners of the different towns upon this important topic. I think I am justified in saying that the needless waste of the people's money in the department of highways is larger by far than in any other branch of public

expense, and warrants a careful investigation at your hands. Whether you will think it wise to appoint a supervising engineer or simply to appoint a commission to investigate the subject and report at the next session of the legislature, your own good judgment will dictate. But whatever course you may deem it wise to pursue, I earnestly advise that you take some decisive action at this session, looking toward an improved condition of our roads.

It is evident that the prosperity of our State is retarded by the lax and unsatisfactory system which now prevails in a large majority of the towns. Nearly all of our sister commonwealths are moving in this matter, while it is asserted by many that Vermont is positively on the retrograde. This is not sound economy or wise policy. It is penny wise and pound foolish for Vermont, which is today entering, as I believe, upon a new era of prosperity, to turn a deaf ear to the increasing demands of comfort and commerce by neglecting to provide for a better system of highways. I hope you will adopt a broadminded and liberal policy in dealing with this most important subject.

REVISED ROSTER.

By authority of an act approved November 26, 1888, there has been prepared, under the supervision of the adjutant and inspector general, a revised roster of all the troops furnished by Vermont in the war of the rebellion. It has been an expensive and laborious work, but it has corrected a multitude of errors, and had the results been none other than the correction of former reports relative to deserters from Vermont regiments, the volume would be worth its entire cost. In the valuable reports of Adjutant General Washburn, made during the pendency of the conflict, missing soldiers were often entered upon the roll as deserters while subsequent evidence discloses the fact that they had been taken prisoners and had met that fate which so many northern soldiers suffered in the prison pens of Andersonville and Salisbury. In other cases the simple error of entering the word deserter upon the wrong line in the muster roll had placed that heinous offence to the charge of the soldier, who would have laid down his life a hundred times rather than have been guilty of the alleged crime.

You will have the volume before you for inspection. It is a credit to Adjutant General Peck; it is a credit to our State; its publication has been an act of simple justice to the soldier, and in coming it will be regarded as invaluable to all those who desire that a correct record be preserved of those noble men to whose patriotism we owe the maintenance of our Federal Union.

CORPORATION TAX LAW.

By a reference to the report of the State Treasurer, which you will have before you, it will be observed that the total receipts from corporations under this law for the year ending December 31, 1891, were \$311,684.37, as compared with \$268,153.84 for the year ending December 31, 1889. I make the comparison between the years 1889 and 1891 because the year 1891 is the first year with which comparisons can be made under the new law, from the fact that the results given for the year ending December 31, 1890, were made up of a part of a year under the old and a part of a year under the new law. For the same reason the year ending December 31, 1889, is the last year with which we can make comparison under the old law. Comparing these two years we find that the revenue derived under the new law is more than 16 per cent larger than under the old. The tax derived from savings banks and trust companies for the same years, considered alone, shows an increase of more than 40 per cent. But I have been able to obtain still later results, which indicate that the year ending December 31, 1892, will show even a still larger per cent of gain than the year ending December 31, 1891, so that as a whole the showing is very gratifying and satisfactory.

The only litigation arising under the law is with the Western Union Telegraph Company, which claims that the portion relating to telegraph companies is unconstitutional, and they therefore resist payment of the tax assessed thereunder.

THE CELEBRATION OF VERMONT'S CENTENNIAL.

On the 19th of August last, in compliance with the provisions of an act of the General Assembly of 1890, our State celebrated the centennial anniversary of its admission into the Union. The celebration was held at Bennington in conjunction with the ceremonies attending the dedication of the Bennington battle monument.

It gives me great pleasure to be able to report to you that the entire proceedings were a success in every respect. The day was all that could be asked. The President of the United States, with several members of his cabinet, the Governors of New Hampshire and Massachusetts, with a large number of other State officials and distinguished citizens, graced the occasion with their presence. Civil and military organizations, in numbers larger than were ever before congregated in our State, combined to make the procession one of the largest and grandest and the ceremonies the most imposing of any ever witnessed in Vermont.

RESIGNATION OF SENATOR EDMUNDS.

On the 6th day of April, 1891, it being the twenty-fifth anniversary of his appointment to the office, Hon. George F. Edmunds tendered his resignation as United States Senator.

It is not saying too much to assert that when, after a quarter of a century of honorable service, he came to lay aside the senatorial mantle to assume the duties of private citizenship, he was universally and justly accorded the high distinction of being the greatest constitutional lawyer of his generation. This proud distinction is not the honor of Mr. Edmunds alone, but of Vermont as well. His fame is her fame—his distinction her distinction. With Mr. Edmunds as the acknowledged authority on all constitutional questions, and his venerable colleague, Senator Morrill, no less prominent in the domain of finance, Vermont, though one of the smaller of the States both in area and population, has been enabled to take and maintain during a long period of years, a prominent position in the councils of the nation.

On the 26th day of November, 1891, I appointed Hon. Redfield Proctor to temporarily fill the vacancy caused by Senator Edmunds' resignation. It becomes your high and responsible duty to elect some one, not only to fill out Senator Edmunds' unexpired term, but to represent Vermont in the Senate for the full term of six years from the fourth day of March next.

OBITUARY.

Since the session of 1890, our State has been called upon to mourn the death of two of Vermont's ex-Governors, Hon. John Gregory Smith, who was her chief executive from 1863 to 1865; and Hon. Paul Dillingham, who was Lieutenant-Governor during the same period, and Governor for the two years immediately following. Their deaths remove the entire line of distinguished men who presided over the destinies of our State prior to 1870, with the single exception of the venerable Governor Holbrook, who though 80 years of age, still enjoys comparatively good health at his home in Brattleboro.

Governor Paul Dillingham was for many years one of the leading attorneys of our State. Fifty years ago last month Vermont elected him to the National Congress as one of her honored representatives, a position he held until 1848. He took a deep interest in our country's welfare from 1861 to 1865, giving two sons to her service, one of whom, Major Edwin Dillingham, offered up his life on the altar of his country at Winchester, Va., on the 19th day of September, 1864.

Governor Dillingham died at the ripe age of 92 years. Up to within a short time prior to his death, he was in the possession of the full vigor of his faculties, continuing in partnership with his distinguished son, ex-Governor William P. Dillingham, until 1886.

Governor Smith was identified with the material interest of our State more prominently perhaps than any other man in her history. For more than forty years he was the executive head of the leading railroad system of Vermont; and during that time it is not too much to say that he always gave to the State the best railroad service consistent with a due regard to the rights of his stockholders. He believed that the welfare of his road was best subserved by the development of Vermont's material interests and acted accordingly.

As Vermont's War Governor he displayed executive ability of a high order, and his name will ever be remembered with fervent affection by the veterans of 1861, who had reason to know and value his painstaking labors to the end that every comfort which an appreciative State could bestow were promptly provided.

The death of Hon. Luther O. Greene, which occurred on the 18th day of September, 1891, deprived the State of its able inspector of finance. He was a conscientious and painstaking public servant, and while he was utterly devoid of ostentation or display, there was manifest in all his official acts a thoroughness which entitles his

administration to rank among the best. On the 23d day of October I appointed Hon. Fred G. Field of Springfield, his successor.

Since the last session of our legislature, Mrs. Horace Fairbanks has presented the State a fine portrait in oil of her late husband, who was Vermont's honored Governor from 1876 to 1878. In the long line of Vermont's distinguished sons, whose acts of large-hearted philanthropy and benevolence have enshrined them in the affection of her people, none holds a larger place than Horace Fairbanks. I have in behalf of Vermont thanked Mrs. Fairbanks for this worthy addition to the collection of portraits which adorn the walls of the executive chamber.

HASTY LEGISLATION.

During the last afternoon and evening of the session of 1890, I was called to pass upon 44 bills, covering nine-tenths of the important legislation of the session, including the Australian ballot law, the new school law, and the act making appropriations for State expenses for the two years then ensuing. The last named act included the corporation tax law. When considered with reference to their bearing upon the prosperity and welfare of the State, the school law and the bill for the support of government were of greater importance than all the other legislation of the session combined, and these two bills reached me between two and four o'clock in the morning, with the probability of an adjournment within thirty minutes thereafter.

The constitution imposes upon the governor the duty of an examination of all enactments of the General Assembly. Procrastination of this kind is not only detrimental to the best interests of the State, but is virtually depriving the governor of his constitutional prerogative. He should be allowed a reasonable time to consider all important bills. It may be stated, with reference to the school law, that the assistance of the Supreme Court had to be invoked to interpret it, while the Australian ballot law had to be supplemented by enactments of the special session.

I appeal to you as sensible men, sworn to the faithful discharge of your duty, to insist upon prompt action upon all the more important bills of the session. When committees, to whom bills are referred for consideration, fail to do their duty in promptly considering them, call upon them in terms that they cannot misunderstand to give an account of their stewardship. By pursuing any other course you will return home with the responsibility resting upon your shoulders of having passed laws so crude and so unsatisfactory as to render you justly amenable to the charge of unfaithfulness and of an unbusinesslike procrastination, which, if carried into your personal and private affairs, would mean certain bankruptcy.

Too much legislation is to be deprecated. Special legislation is generally unwise. Attend to the important work of the session with business-like promptitude and go home.

CONCLUSION.

I cannot close my official relations to the State without congratulating you upon the large measure of material prosperity enjoyed by almost every interest within our borders during the past two years. Our farmers have been blessed with exceptionally good crops, while prices for products of the farm have, as a whole, been fairly satisfactory. The artisan and laborer have found more than an average demand for their services, and at good wages. With the exception of a disturbance in the granite industry during the past summer every important industrial enterprise in our State, as far as I have been able to learn, has been exceptionally prosperous.

Our mills and workshops engaged in the manufacture of lumber, scales, organs, pulp, knit goods and woolens have generally been running on full time, while the output of marble is said to have been larger than ever before in the history of our State.

That best of all barometers of thrift, the savings banks, shows an increase in deposits during the past year of more than \$3,000,000. This growth is something hitherto entirely unprecedented in the history of our State. It is more than the entire increase for the twenty-five years prior to 1871, and more than one-third the increase for the last decade.

Statistics gathered by the board of agriculture show the encouraging fact that within the past year new manufacturing enterprises, with invested capital exceeding \$730,000, and employing 2,197 men, have been established in our State.

The development of the horse industry has been very gratifying, and is bringing large sums of money into our State. Vermont maple sugar is today the standard, and small as we are in area, our little State produces more in pounds than any other in the Union. As a pleasure and health-giving resort, Vermont is coming to be more and more appreciated. Our matchless scenery, pure air and pure water, combine to make our State a desirable home during the summer months for the wealthy residents of the large cities, and as a result there is a growing demand for village homes and small farms which promises to turn backward the tide of decadence in real estate values which has afflicted us for a quarter of a century.

All these and many other evidences of general thrift which might be recounted should impress you profoundly with the responsibility resting upon you to so legislate as to encourage and promote every material interest upon which the further growth and prosperity of our State depends, and as you address yourselves to your duties as legislators, may it be with hearts fervent with thanksgiving to a kind Providence which has not only given us the material welfare we enjoy, but has blessed us with a government which is known and recognized throughout the earth as being the purest, the freest and the best model of self-government on the face of the globe.

The Governor having concluded the reading of his communication, withdrew, and the joint assembly dissolved.

CHAUNCEY W. BROWNELL.
Secretary of State, Clerk.