

Farewell address
of
Allen M. Fletcher
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Farewell Address

Gentlemen of the Joint Assembly:

In accordance with that section of the constitution which provides that the Governor may bring to the attention of the joint assembly such recommendations as appear to him proper and necessary, I now direct your attention

First. To the policy of the State relative to agriculture. The present appropriation for the department of agriculture is wholly insufficient for the work, and entirely out of proportion to the appropriation for other departments of the State government. It should be materially increased.

Authority should be given the commissioner of agriculture to make and enforce such regulations as may be necessary to protect the State from invasion of insect life and plant disease; to enforce reasonable and sanitary regulation, and to control the standard of the various agricultural products of the State. How can the commissioner of agriculture without necessary funds establish a bureau in Boston or New York through which our farmers without middlemen can reach their market? How can the commissioner of agriculture help the farmer by bringing immigrant labor into the State, unless the State furnish him the means to establish a bureau for that purpose? In other words, how can he materially advance the interests of the State, from a business standpoint, without the necessary resources?

Second. To the policy of the State relative to conservation of forests, water power and other natural resources. The policy adopted by the last Legislature should be maintained. Any further attempt to exploit the State's credit in such a manner as to result largely in the ultimate benefit of certain private or corporate interests, such as that outlined in the plan of 1912 to bond the State for construction of reservoirs, should be absolutely defeated. Such a scheme should have no part in our general State policy. I recommend to you the adoption of such legislation as will compel corporations organized under the laws of other States to agree, before being allowed to do business in the State of Vermont, to comply with all the laws of the State of Vermont and be subject to the public service commission control. Within the last two years, or since the adoption of the general policy I have referred to, you have seen transmission lines for high pressure connected up all through the State to different plants, upon the general theory, so far as the public understood it, of betterment of conditions; but the legislation I suggest is to control those better conditions so that we do not awake to find ourselves in the hands of corporations organized under the laws of the State of Massachusetts, Maine and other States, and the interest of interstate commerce presenting itself, we will have perhaps if we are not careful that proposition of whether we have any control whatever over our natural resources. This subject is worthy of your serious attention.

Third. To the bond of the State treasurer which is now \$100,000; it should be increased to \$200,000. The present bond is wholly inadequate for the purpose.

Fourth. To the department of insurance. There should be created an insurance department with a distinct head appointed by the Governor and responsible to him. There should be no division of authority as now exists under the present law which provides for two insurance commissioners, one the State treasurer, a constitutional officer, and the other the secretary of State, also a constitutional officer, each holding two offices, the one constitutional and other statutory. The State should so legislate as to prevent either the existence, or the suspicion of existence, of an insurance ring. Now and for all times an end should be put to the possibility of such conditions again arising as recently surrounded the State treasurer's bond, which make it possible for a State treasurer to pass upon the condition of an insurance company whose bond he may later present to the Governor as surety for the faithful performance of the duties of his office. The State is, and should be, entitled at all times to a good and sufficient bond. This subject ought not to be even debatable. It has been truthfully said that it is in the stagnation and procrastination of commissioners, and divided authority, that evils and abuses are generated. It may be asked: What were the conditions that surrounded this subject at the time the last State treasurer's bond was given? The bond was in a company that at that time had a capital stock of \$750,000. It now has a capital stock somewhere between \$300,000 and \$400,000, and the rest of that sum of

gross capitalization has been charged out. And since then at the request in part of the State of New York, that company has been required to pay into its treasury \$150,000 in addition.

Now at the time that bond was presented to the executive by the State treasurer, and as well insurance commissioner, one of two things was true: either he knew what the condition of that company was, or he did not. If he did he should have made it clear to the Governor just what the condition of that company was. If he did not know what its condition was, then what sort of regulation was that company getting at the hands of the insurance commissioners of Vermont? One thing I think follows perfectly clear and true; that no sane man with a real knowledge of the facts that surrounded that company ever would have accepted that bond. Shortly after the adjournment of the Legislature perhaps three months, my attention was called to the condition of that company by a distinguished gentleman of this town, and he told me he thought certain things should be done, and I called those commissioners' attention to what he had said. Shortly after it developed and came to my knowledge for the first time, that prior to the presentation of that bond to me, there had been an agreement between the States of New York, Vermont and Massachusetts, that that company should declare no more dividends without the consent of the commissioners of those various States. That fact was kept entirely from the executive at the time that bond was presented. Gentlemen, there are other conditions that surround this, but my time is too short. It is for you to determine whether or not that is the kind of an insurance department the State of Vermont should have. You hold, in a final analysis, your executive responsible for the conditions that exist during his administration. Is it fair and right to hold him responsible if you do not give him power to control those conditions? You want in Vermont a condition where it is not necessary for any other State to come in and tell you how you shall regulate your companies. They should be so regulated that they are a credit to the State of Vermont.

Fifth. To certain cases of legal injustice. In certain instances, cases are appealed to the United States courts, purely for the purpose of taking unfair advantage to the end that the weaker party cannot face the expenditure involved. This is a condition that ought not to exist. I therefore recommend the adoption of a law empowering the executive to employ counsel to defend such individuals. If it were a known quality that the State would protect such cases, then fewer unfair appeals would be taken because no unfair advantage would accrue. I recognize that it is the duty of counsel to protect their various clients to the full extent of their power, and I should hope that the bar of this State, in their own interests, would welcome such a change.

Sixth. I recommend that the present State law relative to the control of the State library be repealed, and that the State library be placed entirely within the jurisdiction and control of the supreme court of the State. It is operated now under a law dating back to 1825, a law which creates a trust *per se* in the first instance and provides for sole perpetuity and therefore no direct control of any executive power or authority. It provides that three citizens from the City of Montpelier, and three citizens from the State at large and several State officers. The result is it is controlled entirely and absolutely by the three or four here in Montpelier. An investigation will show you that there is a meeting once in two years of the board of directors. The last meeting was purely and entirely for the purpose of increasing the salaries; and the chief justice of the supreme court of the State and the executive, ex-officio members of that board, were voted down on that subject—that is of increasing salaries. Now one-third of that library are law books; another third are books of legislative reference; so that, in fact, it is really a law library. It is here for the use of the bar of the State and the supreme court, and the supreme court have much to do with that library and are supposed to be here quite often, and are the proper board of control for that library, and they should have exclusive jurisdiction and control over it.

Seventh. To education. An education commission was created by authority of the last Legislature, primarily for the purpose of determining whether or no duplication of effort was going on as the resultant of money appropriated by this State to the three institutions of higher learning. I was satisfied at the time the commission was created that such duplication did exist, and I am now more thoroughly convinced than ever of that fact and that it should be stopped. That commission's findings have been published and should receive your earnest consideration. I call your attention to certain salient facts therein: First, that the State appropriates for education, biennially, nearly \$900,000; second, that about \$700,000 of this goes to the common schools, and about \$200,000 of it to the three institutions of higher education, and that about 95 per cent. of the people of the State receive benefit from the \$700,000 and only about five per cent. from the \$200,000. The State of Vermont

appropriates for the purpose of higher education nearly 1.7 times the per cent. appropriated by Maine, nearly three times the per cent. appropriated by New Hampshire, more than eight times the per cent. appropriated by Massachusetts, more than nine times the per cent. appropriated by Rhode Island, and more than 34 times the per cent. appropriated by New York in 1912-1913. It is for you to determine whether the cardinal principal of State policy of this State should be to legislate for the many or for the few. I am impressed with the fact that the first duty of the State is to her common schools, and that that duty is a paramount one. But if you should find the State has sufficient means to go beyond the common schools, and you desire that it should do so, then I believe the duplication of effort by State subsidy to various institutions should cease. If you are prepared to accept the University of Vermont as a State institution, it then becomes your duty to the university, as well as to the State, to stop the duplication. Should this be your conclusion, I desire to repeat all that I said two years ago on this subject relative to the agricultural department of that institution. The spirit of the University of Vermont, manifested by its recent action in defining its position upon the subject of education within this State, should commend itself to all good citizens as the essence of good citizenship. I recommend that all moneys that the State may see fit to appropriate for education, shall be subject to the absolute control of the State board of education.

I direct your attention to the Macdonough commission that was created by the last Legislature for the purpose of erecting a monument to Macdonough. The Legislature appropriated the sum of \$4,000 dollars to erect such a monument. A commission was created, appointed by the Governor, and they finally went in with the State of New York and decided to try and have it a national affair, and they succeeded in getting an appropriation from the United States government of \$15,000 for a monument to Macdonough. They joined hands with the State of New York. Then conditions differed. It was up to the State of Vermont to make a creditable demonstration and to invite New York to come over and join hands with us. But this appropriation of \$4,000 was specially for the erection of a monument. A number of public-spirited citizens in the city of Vergennes, as well as all over the State of Vermont, joined and raised a fund—no one subscribed more than \$25 to it—in order that we might creditably invite our New York friends over here. I recommend to you that a sufficient sum from the original four thousand dollars be appropriated to reimburse those who rose to the occasion as a matter of State pride. The national appropriation of \$15,000 and the remaining portion of our State appropriation will thoroughly compass the situation.

I recommend to you that the law be abolished that provides that when the side judges cannot agree in determining who shall be the license commissioners in any particular community the Governor shall be called in to determine who shall be appointed. It should not be the province of the executive of Vermont to go into any community and determine who should drink whiskey and who should not. It is absolutely demoralizing and the executive of the State ought to be relieved of any such responsibility.

The last Legislature authorized the executive to appoint a commission for the purpose of bringing the statutory laws down to conform to the change in the organic law and to recommend what should be done and to present it in the form of a bill. That commission have performed their labors and they have presented me with a bill containing 227 pages for your consideration. Now that I take it to be an omnibus bill and such a bill should receive your serious consideration and ought not to pass either body until at least the session is well along, because there may be other phases and features that will develop in your deliberations, which should be embodied in that bill and possibly are not there now.

Eighth. The workmen's compensation and employers' liability. The commission which the last Legislature created to consider this subject will present a bill for your consideration. As a matter of State policy I believe the principle of workmen's compensation and employers' liability should be adopted by you.

Ninth. To direct the primary. The State is distinctly committed to a trial of the principle involved in direct primary, and the element of good faith should prevail.

Tenth. To the feeble-minded. It has been the policy of the State to the present time to send her feeble-minded children for education and control to the State institutions of other New England States. Vermont is now confronted by the fact that the other New England States find their institutions no longer able to receive our defective children; therefore, it is absolutely necessary for you to make provision for the erection of

buildings to house the feeble-minded upon the site provided for by the appropriation of the last Legislature. Otherwise it will be necessary to transfer these children to our insane asylums, which should not be done under any circumstances or conditions. I therefore recommend direct action on your part. The last Legislature appropriated the sum of \$25,000 as the initial step in this direction, and a commission was appointed that now has the whole matter in charge.

Eleventh. I recommend that the board for the feeble-minded, the board for the insane, and the penal board, and as well the office of sergeant-at-arms, be consolidated into one board, of which the purchasing agent and the Governor shall be ex-officio members. The requirements for memberships on these various boards being identical, there is no valid reason known to me why they should not be consolidated and there are many reasons why they should be. It has been suggested that a further consolidation might be made, by combining the public service commission with these boards. This is impractical and inexpedient because the qualifications for the public services commission are entirely dissimilar to those for the other boards. Such further consolidation would not accomplish the expediting of the State's business but would furnish an indirect way for removing from office one whose only crime was having too zealously guarded the interests of the people or a possible resumption of the stuffed club and cushion methods.

Next, I advocate and recommend to you the combination of the office of commissioner of agriculture and cattle commissioner. The same reasons apply identical in this case as in the other.

I recommend that you give particular attention to the proposed memorial for Ira Allen, for which a commission headed by the late Horace W. Bailey was appointed to consider during the last session. The Green Mountain boys declare that he was the chief founder of the State, and although he died in poverty and is buried in an unknown grave, the State has never yet established any token of remembrance. Close students of early history declare there would have been no Vermont had it not been for Ira Allen.

Twelfth. I direct your attention to the public service commission. During the last session of the Legislature, an attorney for the Telephone company and other corporate interests, importuned me to use my influence to obtain the repeal of the present public service commission law upon the ground that it was unconstitutional in some respects, without power in others, and altogether possessed of too many teeth. He submitted for my consideration and approval a perfectly toothless bill to take the place of the present law, which I declined to advocate. Further, I was advised by one then in office, that during the existence of the law no attempt had been made to regulate rates because of doubt of the commission's power to do so, which was an admission that the law had been more or less used as a cushion or stuffed club. I was further advised by those in whose disinterestedness I had confidence, that the law was constitutional and did provide for regulation, and therefore under the provision of the law the State attempted to regulate and litigation resulted. The principles involved is, first: The State's right to regulate; second: what constitutes a fair earning power for money invested. Any attempt to tamper with the present public service commission law, or to stop this litigation to establish the State's right to regulate rates, or any failure to appeal from adverse decision to a court of last resort, would be, in my opinion, an absolute betrayal of the best interests of the State. To those who favor regulation and not persecution, it should be said that no one can be or has been unfairly treated by an attempt at regulation, for no final action can be taken without the authority of the courts.

Thirteenth. To the office of attorney-general. This office was created in 1904. It is not a constitutional office, merely statutory, and therefore may be abolished at any time when desired by the Legislature. The advocates of the creation of this office claimed that it would save the State money, that it would expedite justice and advance the interests of the State generally. I voted for the creation of this office. I am now satisfied that a State of this size does not require such an office. I call your attention further to the fact that the expense of this office for the last biennial period has been in excess of \$75,000. The question involved here is not whether or no this office has been used for the purpose, so far as possible, of limiting and obstructing an executive in his exercise of his constitutional duties when such duties might conflict with the interests of certain people; not whether or not the office has been used as a roosting place for professional lobbyists who do not suffer from cutaneous hyperesthesia; not whether or no it has been used for the purpose of creating a political machine in the various counties in the State; not whether or no the present incumbent will better conserve the interests of the State than those of the past; my present opinion is he would—but the real question involved is: Has not

divided authority led to unnecessary expense and a lessening of responsibility and initiative in the offices of State's attorney? And, finally, is there any real necessity for the office? I recommend to you its abolishment with the consequent saving of substantially the sum named. Prior to the establishment of this office, and it is only six or eight years ago, the State's attorney of the various counties, the responsibility of litigation for the State was his. He could not share it with anyone, he prepared his own cases, and success or failure was his. If he needed additional counsel he either went to the judge of the county court or came to the Governor, who then had power to employ counsel if satisfied that it was needed, and has today as the law has never been repealed so far as the executive's power was concerned. But the moment this office was created there came a divided authority between the State's attorney and the attorney-general, and failure or success could be divided as to responsibility, and my personal opinion is that it led to divided authority, and to the employing of detectives to prepare the cases rather than the cases being prepared, so far as evidence was concerned, by the properly authorized officers of the State.

Fourteenth. In the cost of administration of justice. The expense of the biennial period of 1901 and 1902 was \$461,577.33; of 1913 and 1914 \$799,092.83, or an increase of materially over \$300,000, or over 73 percent in eleven years. In 1906 the State changed its system of courts and created a superior bench of judges. The advocates of this change held that it would expedite business, simplify justice, save the State large sums of money and do away with the then practice of referring questions to masters. In my judgment the new system has entirely failed to produce the results claimed. If it be true that we pay annually for administering justice \$800,000 and for education \$900,000, then our system of administering justice among ourselves costs us almost as much as our education. It follows there is something wrong. I believe the difficulty to be with the system. I recommend, therefore, that the State at once return to the system existing prior to the change, adding two or more judges to the supreme court and doing away entirely with the superior court. Superior court judges being statutory, and not constitutional, officers are subject to being abolished by the Legislature at any time. I further believe that the practice of maintaining our supreme court with active, live men, competent and capable of doing promptly the work required of them, should prevail. This principle is carried out by the laws of our sister states, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, which require the retirement of judges who have reached the age of seventy years.

I believe that our municipal courts should be given a wider jurisdiction and that no appeal should be allowed in cases under a certain sum except upon questions of law, thus saving to the State the sum of at least \$200,000 a biennial period. During the debate in the House of Representatives at the time the superior courts were established, the then representative from Manchester, Mr. Archibald, clearly and distinctly warned the House as to the conditions that would arise relative to expense if the change then urged should be adopted, and what he then said has absolutely come to pass. In this connection I think it proper for me to say to you that the last Legislature appropriated the sum of \$350,000 for the expense of the courts this year which terminates on the first of July next, our system being to appropriate two years in advance, and for the first half of that year the courts have cost us \$210,000 or a basis of \$60,000 above the appropriation of two years ago. It is for you to determine, gentlemen, whether or no this is a proper expenditure for this State.

Fifteenth. To taxation and ways and means. The revenues of the state and the expenditures of the state have doubled within the last ten years. Until two years ago the entire system of raising the revenue was that of indirect taxation. That system has been carried as far as it could be with safety. The last Legislature changed the laws relative to taxing public service corporations indirectly from percentage of gross revenue to direct valuation, or taxing them on the same principle as the individual. This became necessary by reason of conditions which had arisen leading to the ownership of our public service corporations by other corporations outside of the state. The change is right in principle and became an absolute necessity in fact, and under no conditions whatever would the principle involved be changed. It matters not, for example, what a corporation inside of this state earns as a public carrier if it be connected with a corporation outside of the State, if that corporation outside of the State owns a majority or all of the stock of the corporation inside. The old law was purely a legal invitation to the outside corporation to so run the corporation inside the State of Vermont that it need not necessarily make any money at all, the money being made by the corporation outside of the State. That is a principle, gentlemen, which once adopted by Vermont, the new principle never should be given up

under any pretext whatever. I know of no further means of increasing the State's revenue other than an increase of the present direct State tax. That can and should be avoided and the sum of nearly \$300,000 saved to the State, first, by the abolishment of the attorney-general's office; second, by a change in our court system, and third, by consolidation of a number of our commissioners in one commission in a way which recognizes that in the final analysis the executive is held responsible for the efficiency of the commissions and as he can only do the best that he can with the material that he has to do with the power should be his to enforce results. This involves no experience but simply putting into force good business management. I thoroughly realize that in such effort as you may make to reduce expense along the lines herein indicated you will be at once faced with a powerful lobby, the friend of those whose interests are directly involved, but to my mind your duty is plain and there is no escape from it. The suggestions that have thus far emanated from members of the bar and which on their face meant real economy and general betterment, have absolutely failed in their general effect and the State may now well say to these and to further propositions of the sort: "From all such things, good Lord, deliver us." We wish to go back to that which is within our means and adapted to the requirement of a State of this size from the money thus saved to the State a more liberal sum should be given to the agricultural department, provision should be made for the general growth of the other State departments for the creation of an institution for the feeble-minded and for a State orphanage where the homeless children of Vermont can be given a chance to grow up under decent conditions. It will cost some money, but it will be cheaper in the long run to educate them to be good citizens than to care for some of them later in other institutions as wards of the State.

Gentlemen of Vermont, there is in the breasts of every self-respecting man a sense of fairness. To that I shall speak for a few moments. During the last Legislature probably when it was one-third over the gentleman who then represented the city of St. Albans, Mr. Watson, and the then Senator from Orange County, they at that time being the reference commission or commission of the joint assembly came to my office and said "Governor we wish you to submit to the Supreme Court certain questions." Mr. Watson said, speaking relative to constitutional amendments then pending before the joint assembly. "Governor, it is my impression and belief as a lawyer that if these constitutional amendments are passed by the Legislature and are passed by the State you will be confronted and the State will be confronted with a condition where the executive will have to appoint, and he will have to appoint for the constitutional term and that condition will continue until the Constitution can be changed." The then Senator from Orange County did not wholly agree with the gentleman from St. Albans and therefore they wished this question presented to the Supreme Court in order that they might both vote and act intelligently. There was no one to present the matter to the Supreme Court but the executive and I complied with their requests; the court had that matter under consideration about three weeks and then the chief justice came to me with a pro forma opinion under the statute that I had the authority to ask for advice. He informed me the unanimous opinion of that court was exactly and squarely along the lines that Mr. Watson of St. Albans had taken and he submitted to me certain memorandum dealing upon certain New York decisions in handwriting of Judge Watson. Now I delivered that message to Mr. Watson of St. Albans and when that question came up here in the House of Representatives he told them exactly what would take place if they passed those constitutional amendments. There was no deception on his part or on the executive's part or on the part of anybody else so far as I know. What attitude the Senator from Orange County took in the Senate I know not. It cannot be said, gentlemen, that the State of Vermont had been deceived about this matter when its representative in the General Assembly were thoroughly advised and were told what would take place. Now this matter was discussed within the State last December and the Governor was faced with the proposition of what he could do. He had the advise of the Supreme Court, his statutory officer. Whose advise should he take?

There were other vacancies; the vacancy subject of the military appointments that the General Assembly had to make, the sergeant-at-arms, the vacancy of the office of attorney-general. The Governor sent his secretary who had to join with me in any commission prior to the first of December, to the present attorney-general and he told him it was intended to appoint him to fill the position after Mr. Brown had passed out and asked him what sort of a commission he wanted, what his theory of the law was and the present attorney-general told the Governor's secretary that he wanted a commission for two years. I intend to deal with facts so far as it is possible for me to do.

Now I am told through the press that the ex-chief justice who delivered this opinion to me which at the time he told me was the unanimous opinion of that court and it was the unanimous opinion of the court I am told that that gentleman since he has left the bench recently, within the last day or two, has changed his mind. I had nothing to do with his changing his mind, the responsibility of that and his keeping silent until now are questions for him to pass upon and not the executive. I have this to say that up to the time I made these appointments I had heard nothing whatever from ex-Chief Justice Rowell, not a single word.

Had he advised me of a change of heart it would have been an opinion not of the court, my legal adviser, but his opinion as an attorney, entitled by me to just as much consideration as the opinion of any other attorney of the bar of equal prominence in the State, and it would have been my duty to have taken his change of opinion to the Supreme Court and ask them to pass upon it and I certainly would have done it had he taken any such steps. He did not. If it had been presented to them and they did not agree with him what do you suppose the executive would have done? Would he have accepted the then opinion of the Supreme Court? He would have had to. They were his legal advisers.

Now gentlemen, I think it proper and possibly your due, and certainly my right under the circumstances to refer to a public statement by a Mr. Partridge, chairman of the commission of which I was a member, which prepared these legislation amendments. Now without any desire to reflect for a moment upon the motive which lead that distinguished gentleman to take the public into his confidence at the particular time that he did, I wish to say to you that I agree with him entirely in some of the statements that he makes. He says in fact, that it was the intent of that commission to do certain things, but they did not change or attempt to change the time of office for certain reasons. However, that may be, I have this to say, they had for him that respect and admiration that if he had seen fit to further amend by the very simple form of saying the time of office of these gentlemen the Supreme Court and others should continue until their successors were elected and qualified; they had that respect for him that they would not have undertaken to override his conclusion. Speaking as one member of that commission, if the commission are responsible I am perfectly willing to take my part of the responsibility and have no desire to place it upon any one else. None whatever. I do, however, say this, that the commission's report final and under the law went to the Senate. The initiative before any step could be taken by the State was in the Senate of 1910. The House of 1910 could do nothing with this matter and nothing could come before them unless it was first sent to them by the Senate of 1910. It was for them to suggest. There were many eminent lawyers in that Senate of 1910 and gentlemen, that Senate of 1910 had courage, had the strength of their convictions and they deliberately killed, to my mind, the most important one of all those legislation amendments and that was the time lock provision.

The Senate of 1910 who took the initiative in this matter so far as the State was concerned deliberately said to the State of Vermont, "we have not enough confidence in you to allow you to vote upon the question whether the time lock provision shall be taken or not"; now gentlemen, I have endeavored to place the facts before you and facts alone. The responsibility of this situation is with you and not with the executive. It is for you to determine whether you desire and whether it is for the best interests of the State to have two courts or whether it is not. In my actions I had before me the advice of the court that there was a vacancy that should be filled and that could only be filled one way and you know how that has been treated by me.

As to the personnel of the court I have this to say, it is absolutely true that the primary consideration in my mind was not necessarily to do that which absolutely met the wishes of the bar association. The bar association is made up of two hundred or more men, but I did have in view primarily as one who had been in this Legislature for ten years and who was in touch with conditions both as such and as executive. I did have in view primarily in the personnel of that court that which I thought best not for the bar association but for the 350,000 people in this State for whom I had taken the oath of office to do the best I could for those were the people I had in view when I took that action.

I would suggest that you can hear in the hall all sorts and kinds of rumors. Your Supreme Court is in session and among its number are to be found two gentlemen who joined in this opinion to the executive. It is possible for you to find out if you so desire whether there was any such opinion or not.

Speaking now for a moment relative to the superior court. There was one change made by the executive there and it was made by reason of the fact that certain conditions had arisen which in the mind of the executive made it absolutely impossible for him to do any other than that which he did. It is easy if you desire to get at the facts relative to that. It so happens that one of the members of this House, the gentleman from Rockingham, was present at the hearing with the Governor and heard all that was said about it. It is within your power to get any and all the facts relative to this matter.

Finally my experience leads me to the conclusion that the State would be benefited not so much by the passage of too many new laws but rather by the correction or the elimination of that we now have and by the honest forceful and fearless administration of those that we may retain.

I have made certain suggestions to you for your consideration feeling that your final conclusion relative to the same will be for the best interest of the State.

ALLEN M. FLETCHER,
Governor.

At 11:56 A.M., the Governor having concluded the reading of his message, withdrew, and the Joint Assembly dissolved.

GUY W. BAILEY,
Secretary of State, Clerk.