

The Governor's Message

The message of Gov. Johnson was transmitted to the two Houses of the Legislature on Wednesday last. It is a document of considerable length; but the great number of subjects treated of, could scarcely have been condensed in less space. Many of the recommendations contained in the message will meet with the hearty approval of the people, and we doubt not of the Legislature.

As might have been expected, the Governor gives a concise history of the Vigilance movement in San Francisco, and of his own efforts to sustain the laws. The acts of that body have become history, and it is useless to recount them. There is one fact mentioned in connection with this affair which may not be generally known. It appears that when Gov. Johnson first went to San Francisco in compliance with the request of the Mayor, that he proceeded in company with several citizens, to the place where the Committee had assembled, and announced it as his purpose to communicate with them, or any person authorized to represent them. One of the Committee, who was afterwards President of that body presented himself, and during the interview distinctly stated that the object of the Committee was not to violate the law, or resist its legalized authorities, but rather to aid the officers in preventing the escape or rescue of the prisoner; and that they did not contemplate taking the law into their own hands. On the faith of these assurances, the Governor was thrown off his guard, and the committee allowed to get possession of the prisoner, whom they afterwards executed. Thus, to the other crimes which the leaders of that Committee have been guilty, must be added that of treachery.

The Indian difficulties are treated of at some length, and a concise account of the disturbances in Klamath, Siskiyou, and Tulare counties given. At the present time a state of peace and quietude exists with the various Indian tribes, but apprehensions are still entertained of a renewal of hostilities. The Governor says that the present policy of colonizing the Indians within the limits of the State, is a bad one, and suggests that the voice of the Legislature be addressed to the Federal authorities in determined remonstrance against this system.

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In regard to the financial affairs of our State, the Governor says that at no former period of our history has the time existed when the subject of State indebtedness attracted such universal attention as at the present moment, and a great degree of solicitude has been manifested in the public mind regarding the policy which the present Legislature will pursue in relation to this important matter. It is estimated that the total indebtedness of the State on the first of July next, including the bonds issued in 1851, 1853, 1855, and 1856, will be 3,564,649 97, which will have to be provided for.

"With these facts before us, and the known necessity of indicating the course to be pursued in relation to our indebtedness, the question now arises, What shall be adopted with reference to it? Answering as your Executive, and echoing the sentiments which I believe are entertained by those whom we alike represent, (the people of the State,) I would say, *Pay the Debt*, by those means the Constitution of the State prescribes. Pass an Act, at the present session of the Legislature, legalizing the outstanding bonded indebtedness, permitting Comptroller's warrants issued after the 1st day of January which may not be redeemed prior to 1st of July next, to be funded under the Act of 1856, alike with the warrants issued prior to January 1857; and a law embodying those features presented to the people for their ratification or rejection at the next General Election."

In order to increase the revenue of the State, the Governor recommends that Congress be petitioned for the power to tax land claims, and all improved public lands. He also recommends the levying of an income tax, and also a stamp tax.

Between the time of the treaty of peace between the United States and Mexico and our admission into the Union as one of the States, there was collected at the ports of California, the sum of \$2,968,748 40, to which the State is justly entitled. The Governor suggests that whatever can be obtained of this money, be pledged to the payment of the State debt, and that the Secretary of the Treasury be authorized to disburse it to the bond holders. The adoption of such a measure will do much to elevate our credit, and impress the world with the belief that we intend to pay our debts, and by thus making every bond holder personally interested in the success of the application to Congress, we should combine and strengthen influences which could scarcely fail to prove successful.

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~~"It is a matter of extreme regret," says the
 Governor, "that we should again have afforded
 an instance wherein the credit and honor of the
 State has suffered by the non-payment of inter-
 est. As will be shown by the letter of the State
 Treasurer, accompanying this, he made provis-
 ion for the payment of the July interest by en-
 trusting Messrs. Palmér, Cook & Co., with the
 necessary funds long before the interest ma-
 tured, but from some unexplained cause the
 payment was not met, and the credit of the
 State dishonored. Bonds were taken by the
 Treasurer as security for the payment of this
 interest which are believed to be sufficient to
 secure it, and I have caused suit to be instituted
 on them for the recovery of the amount due the
 State about \$75,000. It is hoped that a like
 calamity will not again occur."~~

~~The Commissioners appointed to settle the
 War Debt, have discharged their duties faith-
 fully. There remains of this debt \$218,020 97,
 of which but \$39,900 bears interest. Great
 confidence is entertained, that Congress will at
 the present session pass an act recognizing the
 remainder of the debt and providing for the pay-
 ment of the same. - If this is not done, the State
 must make provision for its payment, as an act
 of justice to the holders of those securities.~~

~~In regard to amending our Constitution, and
 the calling of a Convention for that purpose,
 the Governor says :~~

~~"The subject of a Convention for the revision
 of the entire Constitution of the State, is one
 which has at different periods of time agitated
 the public mind, and forcible arguments ad-
 duced in favor of a radical change in that in-
 strument. There can be no question but that
 in many of its essential features great advanta-
 ges would result to the people from the adop-
 tion of important changes which cannot be done
 by other means than the calling of a Conven-
 tion for the purpose. The circumstances which
 existed at the formation of the present Consti-
 tution, and the changes which have since oc-
 curred in the population of the State, render it
 exceedingly proper that the matter should be
 presented in such manner as at least to afford~~

an opportunity of discussing proposed amendments, and of determining by the public voice, whether they desire such changes in our organic law as will require a Convention. One of the most serious objections which in the past time has been offered against such a proposition, was the fears that were manifested in some quarters that a Convention might form a Constitution, and supersede the present one without submitting the same to the people for their approval. This objection has been removed by the adoption at the last election of an amendment to the existing Constitution which requires a submission to the people of such instrument, and the approval of a majority of the voters before the same can be effective. As a means of securing reforms in our State government, and those quite as desirable in the management of County and Municipal affairs, I do regard the proposition for a Convention for this purpose as one of great importance, and worthy of your serious consideration. No harm at least can inure from the passage of a law authorizing them to vote on the proposition, and I therefore sincerely trust that one of your legislative enactments will be the submission of this question to the voters of the State for their determination."

The State Library is in a flourishing condition, but there is a great scarcity of the Laws of 1850, 1851, 1852 and 1853, and the Governor suggests that measures be taken to supply the wants of the State in this respect.

The Governor recommends that a site be procured for another State Prison, more accessible to the counties which furnish the greater number of convicts, and where ultimately the services of the prisoners will be of the greatest value to the State, without endangering the interests of the mechanical and laboring population by creating a ruinous competition.

An examination into the subject of State printing is recommended, with a view of reducing the quantity ordered and the price paid. The delay in printing the laws has become a subject of unusual complaint.

The Governor recommends that the attachment law be amended; also, the insolvent law, the act in relation to sole traders, the homestead law, and the law of divorce; that a general incorporation law for towns and cities be passed; that the election law be amended; and suggests a registry law for towns and cities; that a State House of Refuge for youthful offenders should be established; that misdemeanors, where the punishment is severe, should be tried in the District Courts, and that provision should be made for the registry of deaths throughout the State.

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After urging upon the legislature the necessity of again appealing to the General Government, in behalf of the Pacific railroad, the Governor says in conclusion:

"I have thus, gentlemen, in obedience to the requirements of the Constitution, communicated to you the condition of the State, and recommend such matters as I deem expedient. Should these suggestions be carried into effect by your action, I entertain the firm conviction they will go far towards relieving the State from present financial embarrassment—perfecting our system of laws, and sustaining our character at home and abroad.

"If, however, you should differ with me in opinion in relation to the measures necessary to be adopted, or the policy to be pursued, I sincerely trust that in your wisdom you will be enabled to devise some efficient means of attaining the great end at which we all should aim—making ample provision for the liquidation of the State debt—the maintenance of our name untarnished, and the advancement of the general welfare, by wise and wholesome laws. That such may be the result of your labor, is my earnest prayer and most ardent hope. Holding myself in readiness to second all your constitutional efforts directed to these objects, I commend you and the interests of our common constituency to the superintending care of a wise and bountiful Providence."

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