GOV. FIFER'S MESSAGE.

THE PRAIRIE STATE EXECUTIVE TO THE LEGISLATURE.

Illinois' Flattering Progress, Material and Otherwise, in the Last Two Years—Liberal Support for State Charities—Needed Amendments in the School Law—The State and the Railroads—Indorsement of the World's Fair.

Gov. Fifer's message has been presented to the State Legislature, now in session, and reads as follows:

Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives:

In compliance with the Constitution I have the honor to submit for your consideration my biennial message. I shall not in this communication attempt to discuss in detail every question likely to become the subject of legislation at the present session, nor shall I protract unduly what I have to say by a reference to facts falling peculiarly within your own knowledge or that can be readily ascertained by an examination of the reports made to me in obedience to law by the State officers and those in charge of the various institutions of the State, which reports, for your convenience and information, have been printed and will in due time be laid before you. I shall refer to such facts and make such suggestions only as seem of most importance and as are calculated to aid you in the discharge of the responsible duties of the session now opening.

THE PENITENTIARIES.

One of the most important questions to which I invite your attention and which will demand your most serious consideration, in view of the recent constitutional amendment forbidding contract labor, is the disposition that is to be made of the prisoners confined in the penal institutions of the State at the expiration of the contracts under which they are now employed. These institutions are being conducted with prudence, wisdom, and economy. They were never in better condition and the management will bear the most rigid scrutiny. During the last year the Northern Illinois Penitentiary has been self-sustaining and the one at Chester nearly so.

I shall speak of these institutions separately, beginning with the Illinois State Penitentiary located at Joliet. There were on the 1st day of October, 1890, 1,365 convicts confined in this institution, contracts for the labor of 305 of whom

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expired Aug. 1, 1889, and July 1, 1890, other contracts expired for the labor of 125 additional convicts, making the total number of convicts released from contract labor up to this time 430. Of the contracts yet in force seven will expire Oct. 1, 1892, releasing 472 convicts, and the remaining contracts, seven in number, will expire Oct. 1 and Nov. 1, 1894, releasing 269 more. These 741 prisoners are now employed under existing contracts, and each is earning on an average about 60 cents per day.

THE SOUTHERN PRISON.

October, 1890, there were confined in the Southern Illinois Penitentiary 667 convicts, 125 of whom are working under contract, and this, the only remaining contract, will expire on the 30th day of June, 1894. Two contracts have already expired, one on the 1st day of July and the other on the 1st day of August of 1890, releasing in all 250 convicts. And I will add that by the expiration of these contracts the earning capacity of the prison has been reduced in the sum of $35,000 annually. The convicts not working under unexpired contracts are employed in building the Institution for Insane Criminals provided for by the last General Assembly, in making brick, cultivating the farm, and in and about the Warden's house and other departments of the institution. For a detailed statement of the condition and present needs of this institution I refer you to the Warden's report and that of the Commissioners, and commend to your favorable consideration the wise suggestions which they contain. I especially urge that the capacity for the manufacture of brick be at least doubled, as by this means from fifty to seventy-five additional convicts can be, with a small expense, profitably employed. Much time and money have been spent by the State in building up and expanding this industry, and now, after the lapse of many years, it has been brought to a high degree of perfection and the trade largely extended. It is believed that it affords one of the best means for the employment of convicts in the future. The appropriations asked for by the Commissioners of both these institutions seem reasonable, and I recommend that they be allowed.

PRISON REFORM.

I have thus discussed the condition of the Illinois prisons so far as concerns their fiscal and industrial relations. I cannot, however, turn from this most important topic without reminding you that there is another and far higher phase of this subject of prison management, which should claim your most humane consideration. To this higher phase of the question I will now, in very general terms, invite your attention.

I am exceedingly unwilling that the proud Commonwealth of Illinois should in any of its departments rest content with a showing of progress that is merely material, or which can be fully expressed and tabulated in the report of the assessor and the census taker. Proud as we have a right to be of our material growth we should never forget that all our tabulated wealth and material potencies constitute no more than a broad foundation on which to organize and securely found higher and better forms of progress. Nor should we forget that opportunities for honorable achievement in the moral world when unimproved become the badges of failure and disgrace.

In no department of State regulation and police activity do the humanities, in my judgment, find a wider field for intelligent exercise than in the great movement toward prison reform which now engages the attention of many of the first philanthropists of the age. The character of the reforms inaugurated and the results of the work accomplished in some sister States of the Union are doubtless well known to most of you and need not here be recited at length. The fundamental error, which a true prison reform must correct, is that which treats with indiscriminate rigor all who violate the criminal code, and which, in the promiscuity of a common degradation, drives every prisoner of State into a forced and life-long war against society. It is the bane of our police regulations that they know but two classes—those who break and those who observe the cold letter of the law. Of past opportunities, of moral capacity, of the palliations of environment, of degrees of moral turpitude, our system takes no account whatever. We deliberately draw a dead line, and he who crosses over, if detected, falls at once into a gulf as black and bottomless as death. We refuse to recognize, in a legal way, the patent fact that in many cases those who step across this line are not morally worse than many others who dally along its edge and barely miss taking the one fatal step, or who, taking that step, have the good fortune to do so when the police are not on guard. We forget, too, that many of the most dangerous enemies of society utter long prayers in the distant and secure citadel of legal favor, and have learned to avoid overt acts of recognized criminality.

But I am convinced that sentences of imprisonment should be indeterminate as to the time of punishment. The question for the trial court should simply be guilty or not guilty of the crime charged in the indictment, and the judgment of the court should record the result of a fair trial upon that question.

It is to me a source of regret that our State is now, as regards prison management, in a state of transition, made necessary by the recent constitutional amendment which may delay the trial of a system which, properly administered, would, I believe, prove salutary, and in the end be a benefit to the State in a financial as well as a moral way. I could not, however, forgive myself, holding the views I do, if I failed in this first communication by message to the General Assembly to direct attention to this subject, compared with which I hold no other of greater importance. And I do this in the desire that whatever may be your opinion as to the practicability of an immediate departure in the direction pointed out you may at least do nothing which will in the future prove inconsistent with an early adoption of salutary reforms.

If reforms are not undertaken by the present General Assembly, I recommend for immediate action the good policy of so changing the law as to invest the court instead of the jury with the power to fix punishments in all cases. I am also convinced that the statute making the compensation of State's Attorneys depend upon the number of convictions they are able to secure is not wise, and should be modified so as to give the public prosecutors a liberal fixed salary, thus placing them more nearly in a judicial attitude in the discharge of their important duties. I submit it is not fair to a State's Attorney himself thus to make his pay contingent on the securing of numerous convictions. He should be made to feel as free to discharge a prisoner the justice of whose conviction is not apparent as to convict one known to be guilty. While our State's Attorneys are, as a class, of high character and would not, I am glad to believe, weigh grains of silver against ounces of blood, yet there is, it seems to me, something unworthy of the policy of a great State thus to seek to put before a prosecutor any motive, however small, other than the desire to faithfully discharge a public duty.

CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.

I commend to your most favorable consideration and liberal support the charitable institutions of the State. For a full and complete exhibit of what the State is doing in this direction and the cost of this humane and beneficent work, I refer you to the exhaustive and luminous report of the State Board of Charities, together with the reports of the trustees of the several charitable institutions, copies of which reports I will cause to be laid before you at an early date.

For the year ending June 30, 1890, the average attendance at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home was 789; at the Soldiers' Orphans' Home, 313; at the four hospitals for the insane, 3,701; at the Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb, 364; at the Institution for the Education of the Blind, 121; at the Asylum for the Feeble-minded, 410; at the Eye and Ear Infirmary, 139, and at the Reform School, 359. Some of these institutions are overcrowded, and there are many outside to whom admission is refused for want of room. The management of our State charities will bear the closest scrutiny and most critical inspection, and it is a pleasure to assert that the institutions devoted to the care of the unfortunate are of such a character as to merit the approval of all our people. Each in its sphere is accomplishing a good work and achieving the most gratifying results. Their efficiency should not be impaired by insufficient appropriations, for they are, in a measure, alleviating the wants of a large class of our fellow-beings, whose helpless condition appeals to us for our sympathy and charity. While extravagance in all departments should be carefully guarded against, nevertheless it would be false economy to cripple or enfeeble any part of the public service by failure to provide sufficiently for all reasonable demands.

I have received from the United States for the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home the sum of $131,608.87, and the same has been turned over to the State Treasurer. This money has been transmitted by drafts, payable to my order as Governor, and I suggest that some action be taken whereby the money appropriated by the Federal Government toward the maintenance of the inmates at the Home may be received directly by the State Treasurer.

STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

Illinois has greater natural resources and is capable of supporting a denser population than any other State in the American Union. The fertility of its soil is unsurpassed by any in the world and furnishes boundless resources for agriculture, which industry constitutes the real basis of our great wealth and prosperity. Realizing these facts, and with an earnest desire to promote the interests of the farmer, the stock-raiser and the horticulturist the General Assembly wisely enacted a law for the organization of the State Board of Agriculture, which board has for its object the development of these departments of our industrial structure. The law was amended in 1877, and it is now sufficient, it is believed, to enable the board to effectually discharge its responsible duties respecting these great industries.

At each session of the General Assembly, for a number of years past, a small appropriation has been made to the Board for the purpose of defraying necessary expenses. The State fairs, fat stock shows, and Farmers' Institute meetings in the Congressional districts of the State are all held under the auspices of this Board. The gathering, compiling, and publishing of information concerning the condition and yield of the principal crops raised in the State during the growing seasons and immediately after the harvest are also the work of this Board. It may be said that in every instance the appropriation has been small when compared with the importance and magnitude of the work involved and the great good accomplished through the well-directed energy and prudence of the gentlemen comprising the board. In no instance, I believe, has the annual appropriation exceeded $14,800, and $100 to each Congressional district, this latter sum being for the purpose of defraying the expenses of Farmers' Institute meetings. This money, I am satisfied, has been wisely and judiciously expended. The board has fully met the expectations of the people; and the interests of agriculture, horticulture, manufactures, and domestic arts have been greatly promoted by its intelligent action and ardent zeal in carrying out the purpose and objects of the law.

Since the organization of the board in 1853 it has disbursed $1,013,889, the greater portion of which sum is the proceeds from State fairs, fat-stock shows and other like sources. This large sum has been wisely, and, it is believed, profitably expended, and in consequence agriculture and all kindred pursuits have been largely benefited. I recommend that reasonable appropriations be made to enable the board to continue the good work in which it is now engaged.

LIVE STOCK COMMISSION.

The live stock interest of Illinois is greater, perhaps, than that of any other State, and well merits the enactment of wise laws for its protection and encouragement. The returns for the year 1890 show that the assessed valuation of the domestic animals of the State aggregate in round numbers $47,000,000, which is one-third of the assessed valuation of the entire personal property of the State. A realization of the vastness of this interest, coupled with the fact that the geographical position of our State is such that it is made the natural gateway for the live-stock traffic of the great grazing districts of the West, whereby our own domestic animals are greatly exposed to infectious and contagious diseases, induced the Thirty-fifth General Assembly to establish a Board of Live-Stock Commissioners. This law was amended by the Thirty-sixth General Assembly and its provisions are now ample, it is thought, to enable the board to protect this great and rapidly developing industry.

For years the much dreaded Texas-fever, of which but little is known save that native cattle exposed to the fresh trail of Southern cattle are condemned to almost certain death, has annually depleted the herds of this State. As a result of investigations and experiments made by the board, rules and regulations have been by them formulated and adopted for the safe conduct of the immense traffic in Texas and Southern cattle into or through this State during the seasons of the year when danger is to be apprehended, which rules the Thirty-sixth General Assembly enacted into law. A rigid and successful enforcement of these rules during the last year has kept the State practically free from the ravages of this disease. The board has protected our herds from other contagious diseases, and it is believed also that the health of the people has in many instances been preserved by them. Within two years this board has condemned, slaughtered and destroyed for human food no less than 2,548 head of cattle infected with actinomycosis, or lumpy jaw, a contagious disease which is capable of being communicated to other animals and to man.

I can not enter into a full discussion of the work that has been and is now being done by this board. For a full history of its proceedings during the last two years I respectfully refer you to its report, which will be in due time laid before you. The effective work accomplished by the board in protecting the great live-stock interest of the State fully justifies the wisdom of the General Assembly in the passage of the laws now upon the statute books and in making the liberal appropriations that have heretofore been placed at the disposal of the board, which appropriations, I am convinced, have been applied in the most economical manner consistent with an efficient discharge of its important duties.

It will be seen from the report referred to what appropriations are required at the hands of the present General Assembly. The amounts asked for seem reasonable, and will be needed, I am convinced, if the efficiency and usefulness of the Board is to be continued, and I therefore recommend that they be allowed.

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS.

This is an era of official inquiry and investigation, and it is made so by the demand from every side for trustworthy information on which to base both legislation and intelligent opinion. It has thus happened that within recent years all the more progressive States, as well as the Federal Government in its wider sphere, have established bureaus of statistics, and as the great problem of the day is the industrial one these bureaus are especially commissioned to procure and publish statistical information on the condition of labor in the various States and the country at large. Illinois has not been behind other States in recognizing the value of impartial investigations in this field, and the bureau of Illinois is undoubtedly making contributions of material value to the statistics of the State and the country.

The report to be submitted to the present Legislature consists of an extended statistical presentation of the individual earnings of the coal miners of the State as shown by the payrolls of the principal companies. This affords a broad basis of fact on which to formulate correct opinions and such legislation as the welfare of these industrious and worthy citizens may demand.

In the second division of this report will be found statistics relating to the private indebtedness of the people as given by the court records of judgments rendered and of mortgages foreclosed. This feature is supplemental to the statistics of mortgages compiled for the last report of the bureau. And, in connection with the indebtedness thus shown as resting upon the land of the State, statistics have for the first time been prepared showing the actual value of the land as found in the records of deeds made in the several counties.

This bureau also publishes annually a compendium of the reports of the State Inspectors of Coal Mines, containing very full information concerning the mineral resources of the State, the number, distribution, and condition of mines, the prices of coal, the wages of miners, and the conditions upon which they work.

The organization and maintenance of this bureau of economic information is entirely creditable to the State, and, I doubt not, the members of both houses will recognize the wisdom of making liberal provisions for its future usefulness.

I call attention to what I said to the Thirty-sixth General Assembly on the question of labor, and again urge that suitable legislation be had so as to secure to labor its just awards.

ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD.

The strength of the Illinois National Guard is nearly 4,000, which is the limit allowed by law. The force is organized into two brigades, each brigade comprising three infantry regiments of twelve companies each and a battery of light artillery. At the close of the last encampment, which occurred in the summer of 1889, it had reached a high state of discipline, and its general condition was perhaps never better than it was at that time. The Thirty-sixth General Assembly—very unwisely, it seems to me—greatly reduced the appropriation from what it had formerly been, and for this reason it was found impossible to hold the regular annual encampment for the year 1890.

Without any disparagement to this fine military organization, or the officers or men composing it, I am sure that those who are in a position to know will agree with me when I say that the failure to hold an encampment for that year has had a discouraging and disorganizing effect upon both officers and men, and that the interest, discipline, and general condition of the troops are not what they would have been had the regular encampment been held and the men given the usual instruction and drill. I wish to say plainly, but with much earnestness, that if the general efficiency of the Illinois National Guard is to be maintained provision must be made for holding annual encampments, where the different organizations composing it can be instructed and drilled, and where they will receive a military discipline that will prepare them to meet all emergencies and to act with promptness and decision when called upon to aid the civil authorities in the execution of the laws and the preservation of the public peace. Unless provision is made for these annual encampments officers and men alike will lose all interest in the National Guard, enlistments will cease, and disintegration and disorganization will soon follow. I submit is it wise, is it safe in the highest, best sense; is it economical to allow this to happen?

It is proper that the people should demand that the laws in times of peace be executed by the civil authorities, and this is exactly what the statutes of Illinois provide shall be done. When the local authorities, the civil officers elected by the people, find themselves unable to execute the laws and preserve the peace, they are authorized to call upon the Executive, and he in turn calls to their aid the military, which is required to act in strict subordination to the civil authorities. So far as I am aware there is no complaint among the people against this mode of preserving the peace. There are but few who are willing to resist the execution of the law when it is made apparent that resistance would be useless. Therefore the moral effect produced by the presence, or even the existence, of the military is generally sufficient to enable the civil authorities to preserve the peace without any resort to force.

The able and exhaustive report of the Adjutant General will give you full particulars as to the condition and wants of this organization. The appropriations asked for in the report seem reasonable and I recommend that they be allowed. The report also contains many wise suggestions looking to the future efficiency and usefulness of the guard, which suggestions I commend to your most favorable consideration.

FISH COMMISSION.

The Thirty-fifth General Assembly wisely enacted a law enlarging the scope and power of the Fish Commission and repealing all other laws in conflict with the same. This law has greatly aided the commission in the prosecution of its work. It has had the effect to encourage the propagation and cultivation of fish in all the waters of the State, and has also greatly aided in their protection. With proper encouragement on the part of the General Assembly in the way of reasonable appropriations the fish supply of the State can be largely increased, thus furnishing the masses of the people a healthful and most excellent food.

PHARMACY AND DENTAL BOARDS.

The Boards of Pharmacy and Dental Examiners are both self-sustaining, and, therefore, do not require any appropriation at the hands of the General Assembly. The laws creating these boards and under which each is discharging its proper functions, have for their object the public good, and rest on both reason and experience. These boards are necessary agencies in the preservation of the public health. Each in its own way is accomplishing much good, and deserves the continued encouragement of the of the General Assembly.

The present condition of these boards and the work accomplished by each since the last session of the General Assembly can readily be found by an examination of their last biennial reports

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

The estimated value of school property in the State at the present time is, in round numbers, $27,000,000. The total expenditures for maintaining the schools of the State from July, 1889, to July, 1890, amounted to $12,030,000. This latter sum was expended in the purchase of furniture and apparatus, in paying teachers, building school-houses, making improvements, and in the purchase of books for poor children, and for district libraries.

It is well understood that a large share of this large sum is taken by the State from the pockets of those who have no children of their own to be educated, and it is justified only on the ground that all are, politically at least, interested in the intellectual and moral development of each. If it is the duty of the taxpayer to bear this heavy burden, then there is a corresponding duty resting upon the State to see to it that the money is wisely and judicially expended. How then can this duty be discharged unless the power to regulate the schools and to compel the attendance of children is exercised by the State? Unless the State has this power it seems clear it has no moral or political right to levy taxes for school purposes at all. It must be manifest to all that if any considerable number of children are permitted to remain out of school and grow up in vice and ignorance through the neglect or indifference of those having control over them, then the State is not discharging its duty to the taxpayer by making the best possible use of the money it compels him to pay. With an earnest desire to remedy any defects that might exist in the school laws of the State respecting these matters the General Assembly passed what is known as the compulsory education law, whereby children between the ages of 7 and 14 years are required to attend some public or private school for at least sixteen weeks in each school year. Experience has shown that this law has been of great benefit not only to the public schools but likewise to the private and parochial schools of the State. In 1888 there were 1,118,472 children in the State of a school-going age, only 751,349 of whom were enrolled in the public schools and 100,465 in the private schools, leaving 236,658 children who did not attend schools of any kind during that period. From general statistics at hand I am convinced that at least one-half of the last named, or 133,329 children, were between the ages of 7 and 14 years and should have attended school but did not.

Taking the statistics for the year ending June, 1890, there was a gain in the enrollment of the preceding year of 16,454. In view of the character of last winter, the bad roads and the prevalence of epidemics, this is certainly a very satisfactory showing. The increase in the attendance of pupils in the public schools during the last year is 20 per cent. of all the increase during the last ten years. That is, the increase for the last year is just double the average increase.

The private and parochial schools have been benefited by the law as well as the public schools. According to the available statistics the number of pupils attending private and parochial schools for the year 1888 to the year 1889 had diminished. But from the year 1889 to the year 1890 there was an increase of such attendance of 6,729.

This large increase in the attendance upon our schools must be very gratifying to the friends of education throughout the State. And it must be apparent to all from what I have said that this desirable result is mainly, if not entirely, due to the compulsory education law. There was no design on the part of the friends of this law to deal harshly or unjustly with the private or parochial schools, but rather to advance the cause of education by benefiting all of the schools of the State.

It is conceded, however, by all that the law needs to be amended, since by its enforcement injustice, it is thought, has been caused in some instances. The law, being a new one, perfection was scarcely to be expected, and that it should need amendment ought to occasion no surprise. Perfection in laws comes only after long trial and experience. It is not claimed that the law is perfect, and nobody is more willing to amend it than its friends.

I conclude, therefore, that the general effect of the law has been good, and that in its essential features it should be maintained; but it should be amended so as to remove all just causes of complaint on the part of any of the citizens of the State.

The standard of excellence respecting our public schools is doubtless better than at any former period in the history of our State, and this result is largely due to the ability and efficiency of our present Superintendent of Public Instruction. This fact must be very gratifying indeed to the friends of popular education. The University of Illinois, located at Champaign, and the two normal schools are in a thriving and prosperous condition, and they have, by the good work accomplished, fully vindicated the wisdom of the State in their establishment and support.

Closely connected with the educational institutions of the State stands the Historical Library, provided for by act of the last General Assembly. The Library Board, which has been appointed, is now fully organized and has already accomplished considerable in the way of establishing a library, such as is contemplated by the law. I recommend that further assistance be granted so as to enable the board to continue its work. The report of the board contains much valuable and interesting information and will furnish facts sufficient for intelligent action on the part of the General Assembly.

REPORTS OF STATE OFFICERS.

The reports of the Secretary of State, Attorney General, Auditor of Public Accounts, Treasurer, and Superintendent of Public Instruction contain much valuable information, and from them you will be advised respecting the condition of their offices. The respective terms for which the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Treasurer were elected having expired, my official relations with them are closed. I cannot, however, allow myself to separate from them without testifying to the faithful, efficient and fearless manner with which they have discharged every public duty.

Various and responsible duties have from time to time been cast by law upon the Auditor of Public Accounts; duties that do not, it would seem, properly belong to his office. In addition to his ordinary duties as Auditor, this officer is required to look after that large and ever increasing insurance business of the State, also the inspection of banks incorporated under our statute. Thus three offices have, in effect, been combined in one. That a proper discharge of the duties of Bank Inspector and Commissioner of Insurance requires some special training or qualifications will be conceded by all who are in any way familiar with these subjects. Many of the States have separated these offices, and I recommend that a similar law be enacted by the present General Assembly, providing for the election and appointment of a Commissioner of Insurance and Bank Inspector, and that such officer be required to perform all the duties that are now required of the Auditor respecting the insurance business of the State and the inspection of banks. I think it will be found that the fees earned by the office will make it self-sustaining, not only defraying the ordinary expenses for conducting the office, but will also pay the salary of the incumbent. Recent developments in the State prove the necessity for such an officer. The office for the transaction of the business should be located either at Springfield or in the principal city of the State, where the bulk of the insurance and banking business is transacted. The State of Missouri has, I am informed, located the office of Commissioner of Insurance at the city of St. Louis.

Proper vouchers for all money paid out by the Governor from funds subject to his order will be found on file in the office of the Auditor of Public Accounts.

I submit for your consideration the following estimates of appropriations for the years 1891 and 1892:

Legislative Department	$280,000
The Executive Department, composed of the offices of Governor, Secretary of State, Auditor, Treasurer, Attorney General, salaries and expenses; also salaries and expenses of the several State Boards, including Railroad and Warehouse, Canal, Labor, Live Stock, and Fish Commissions; State Board of Agriculture, State Board of Equalization, State Board of Charities, and State Board of Health; State Entomologist, Mine Inspector, and State Agents at Stock Yards	520,000
Judicial Department, salaries of Judges, State's Attorneys, Commission of Claims, and expenses	623,000
Carrying convicts to and from penitentiaries	40,000
Carrying convicts to and from Reform School	10,000
Arresting and returning fugitive from justice	33,000
Public printing for State purposes	40,000
Paper and stationery for the same	25,000
Binding	25,000
Illinois National Guard	240,000
Illinois State Penitentiary	100,000
Southern Illinois Penitentiary, for ordinary expenses	200,000
Southern Illinois Penitentiary, for special purposes	48,000
Live Stock Commission, ordinary expenses	20,000
Southern Normal University, ordinary expenses	52,400
Illinois State Normal University, for current expenses, including one-half interest in the college and seminary fund	55,000
University of Illinois, ordinary expenses and salaries	61,200
Ordinary expenses and maintenance of inmates of four State Hospitals for the Insane, Deaf, Dumb, and Blind, and Feeble-Minded Asylums, the Soldiers Orphans' Home, the Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary, State Reform School, and Soldiers and Sailors' Home	1,950,000
School purposes	2,000,000
Estimates for contingent appropriations for Illinois and Michigan Canal	40,000
State Board of Health contingent fund	10,000
Live Stock Commission, contingent fund	100,000
Awards of Claims Commission	8,682

THE CLAIMS COMMISSION.

The Thirty-sixth General Assembly provided by law for the appointment by the Governor of a commission to hear and determine those claims against the State which formerly found no other tribunal than the Legislature itself, where the opportunity for their impartial consideration was not, it is believed, so good as would be enjoyed by a court established for that purpose. In this step our State but imitated the prudence of the General Government and many of our sister States, which have long had commissions of this character; and the experience of the last two years, I think, justified the wisdom which prompted the General Assembly to provide for this tribunal. The evidence in support of claims which have been heard by the able Board of Commissioners appointed has been undoubtedly more carefully examined and more thoroughly sifted than a busy General Assembly could possibly have found time to do in the bustle and heat of a session, and the ends reached are more in harmony with justice. A class of speculative claims which could hope for no status before a tribunal thus organized and proceeding according to legal forms are by such a regulation placed where they will cease to annoy the General Assembly, to the expedition of legitimate legislative business.

The Claims Commission has since its organization allowed an aggregate of claims amounting to $8,682, which sum I recommend be appropriated for the payment of the several adjudicated claims embraced in this amount.

RAILROAD AND WAREHOUSE BOARD.

The able report of the Railroad and Warehouse Commission will be found to contain much information of a practical character which can but prove of great interest to the people of the State, and particularly instructive to those who make the laws. The limits of this communication do not permit me to comment in detail upon the important matters and wise suggestions contained in this report. I cannot, however, refrain from expressing my hearty indorsement of those suggestions and recommendations which call for the passage of such laws as will insure greater safety to employes in the operation of railway trains, and also increased security to the traveling public. Particularly am I impressed with what is said in this report upon the necessity of providing by statute for some way in which the great number of grade crossings in Illinois may be guarded by late and appropriate appliances, thus reducing the liability of accidents by collision of trains at such points to the lowest possible minimum. I mention this particular subject, which will be found ably discussed in the report in question, because it bears so directly upon the public welfare, and appeals to us all on the side of humanity. The entire report will be read by you, and its minor suggestions will, no doubt, receive from you the consideration their importance deserves, without a separate mention of each in this message, which is not practicable.

THE ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD.

The Illinois Central Railroad sustains such special relations to the State Government of Illinois, in addition to those important relations it shares in common with all other roads of the State, that its affairs may properly be made the subject of special mention in this message.

Under the wise provision which retained to the State, in consideration of the franchise, and valuable lands granted to this company, an interest to the extent of 7 per cent. of the gross earnings of the road, to be paid annually into the State Treasury, there has been paid to the State, all told, for the years from 1855 to 1890, inclusive, the sum of $12,365,618. Upon the $40,000,000 of capital stock of the company paid in there was paid as dividends in the same period the sum of $64,782,357, showing that an amount slightly exceeding 19 per cent. of the total paid as dividends on such $40,000,000 of paid-in stock has been turned into the State Treasury; or a sum equal to 16.03 per cent. of the whole sum paid both to the State and upon stock. The last year the State's 7 per cent. of gross earnings paid amounted to $486,281, and on said $40,000,000 of stock were distributed as dividends $2,400,000, the State's portion being nearly 17 per cent of the whole amount so paid. The showing for the last six months ending Oct. 31, 1890, gives the State as its 7 per cent of earnings $257,219, or at a rate which would make the income of the State from this source over half a million per year, exceeding in amount any other half year in the history of the road. The last year as a whole has yielded the State a larger revenue than any other year except 1865, which, coming in a period of war prices and inflation, hardly constitute a fair comparison. On the whole, I think the rapid increase in the State's revenues from this source in the late years, rising as they have from $367,798.92 in 1885 to $486,281.03 in 1890, presents an encouraging prospect, and speaks well for the efficiency of the present management of the company, under which, if continued, we may reasonably expect the annual revenues of the State from this source will not hereafter fall below a half million dollars. The further building of new competing lines of railroad such as have of late years greatly reduced the gross earnings of the road below what they otherwise would have been, having entirely ceased, there seems cause to hope for a gradual and healthy growth in the revenue of the lines in which the State will share with the owners of the stock.

THE ILLINOIS AND MICHIGAN CANAL.

The report of the Commissioners, soon to be printed and laid before you, will furnish full and explicit information concerning the operation and present condition of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. The earnings for the last two years amount to $185,654.17. The total expenses for the same period amount to $170,116.27. The first day of December, 1890, there was on hand $76,333.03, out of which sum there have been paid the monthly expenses for November of that year, amounting to $7,200, which sum, together with the debts now being incurred for rebuilding aqueducts, will reduce the sum on hand to about $60,000. Unless the contingent fund of $20,000 per annum is appropriated, it is believed by the Commissioners that it would be unwise to reduce the amount in the treasury much below what it now is. It has been the policy of former General Assemblies to keep on hand a large contingent fund so as to enable the Commissioners successfully to meet railroad competition and other contingencies likely to arise. It may be here stated, however, that in no instance has it been found necessary, I believe, to use any portion of this contingent fund, and the same has uniformly lapsed.

The net earnings of the canal for the last two years amount to $5,807.90. This sum would have been much larger had it not been for the fact that expensive and much needed improvements have been recently made. It may be remarked that these improvements are of a substantial and permanent character.

The Commissioners in their report represent that the lock gates at Henry and those at Copperas Creek are in bad condition and will have to be replaced with new ones and that a new miter-sill is very much needed at the latter place. Special appropriations are thought necessary for these improvements unless the annual contingent fund is provided for.

This canal, in connection with the Illinois River, constitutes a system of water communication through our State and largely reduces freight rates along its line. The affairs of this great public highway have been for the last two years wisely and economically managed, and it is well worth the support and encouragement it receives at the hands of the State.

I will cause the report of the Commissioners to be printed and in due time placed before you.

STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.

The State Board of Health has proved an efficient agency in the preservation of the public health. The able and prudent manner in which affairs have been conducted during the last two years entitle it to the renewed confidence of the people and the continued support of the General Assembly. In recent years much time has been devoted by the board to an examination of the water supply of the State and the pollution of its streams. A thorough study of the Illinois River basin has been made with a view to sanitary engineering, and the pollution of that stream by Chicago sewage has been the subject of continued investigation and consideration.

With the exception of the influenza, to a study of which disease the board has devoted much time and thought, the health of the State has been unusually good. Diphtheria, scarlet fever, and typhoid fever have prevailed at times in certain localities of the State, but were generally brought under control when the instructions of the board were obeyed. In many cases the advice of the board was wholly disregarded, and as a result a spread of the disease usually followed. The law should be amended so as to make it obligatory upon the local authorities to report promptly all diseases of this character to the Board of Health. A law of this kind would enable the board to act promptly and efficiently in checking the spread of contagious diseases.

In addition to its other duties, this board has given considerable of its time and attention to the work of elevating the standard of the medical profession in the State, and as a result the interests of the afflicted have been conserved by driving from active practice many who were not qualified to belong to this highly useful and honorable profession.

The able reports made by the board from time to time contain valuable facts and statistics, and to these I respectfully refer you for more exact and complete information touching this very interesting and important subject.

The contingent fund appropriated by the last General Assembly has remained untouched, which proves that the board has conducted its affairs with prudence and economy. The usual appropriation is asked for at the hands of the present General Assembly, and I do not see how it can be reduced without impairing the efficiency of the board.

WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION.

I invite your attention to the legislation which may be necessary to provide that Illinois may be represented in an appropriate exhibit at the great World's Columbian Exposition which will be held in the city of Chicago in 1893. Though the next succeeding session of the General Assembly would in regular Constitutional course be sitting some time before the opening of the fair, it would not be wise to leave any portion of the work required to that body. All needed preparations must be made long before it would be practicable to secure legislation from the General Assembly which will meet in January, 1893. I think it would be wise, perhaps, to raise a committee in each house charged with the work of framing and reporting such legislation as may be deemed necessary touching this subject.

Illinois' exhibit at this exposition should be a miniature of the State itself. It should show what we have done, what we now are, and what we have resources yet to accomplish in all departments of laudable human activity. Through the medium of such an exhibit we shall become known to all the world, and better known to ourselves, and the influence can but prove salutary and lasting upon our industries, our commerce, and the intellectual and moral development of our people.

I have noted with mingled pride and satisfaction the measures which have been wisely adopted to bring into the joint management of this Exposition a large and representative body of American women, who are expected to give especial attention to whatever appertains to the part and work of their own sex in the activities and civilization of the world. There is in this a peculiar propriety. If America enjoys one distinction more creditable to her than any of the other numerous points of her departure from old world ideas that distinction is found in the universal respect here paid to the character of woman and the liberal share here accorded her in snapping the thought, the morals and the institutions of our republic. It is only necessary to add that every such broadening of woman's activity has been thrice justified by results.

To the needs of the woman's department of the Exposition, which is in wise hands, I invite your attention not less earnestly than to the rest; and, without advocating specific measures or particular appropriations for any purpose, the available facts not being sufficient to enable me to do so intelligently at this time, I advise you to hear fully such committees as may be intrusted by the different boards of management to present before you matters of detail out of which you will be able to evolve suitable legislation to secure the great object in view.

REFORM OF THE BALLOT.

There seems to be a well-grounded belief prevailing among the people that votes are bought and sold at the polls, and that other frauds are committed against the ballot whereby the will of the majority is sometimes defeated. It is believed also that these crimes are frequently connived at by those claiming a large share of the public confidence—not infrequently by the beneficiaries of the wrongs committed. The consequences of ordinary crimes are necessarily confined to a few victims, while he who by whatever means commits a fraud upon the ballot corrupts and poisons political power in its very sources and strikes a blow at the foundation of our free institutions. Severe penalties should be denounced against all such and they should be brought to speedy punishment.

CONCLUSION.

Having measurably complied with the requirements of the Constitution, in conclusion I express the belief that your deliberations will be guided by wisdom, moderation and patriotism, and that the benefits to result from your wise councils will raise our beloved commonwealth to a far higher standard of industrial and moral excellence.

Upon your labors I invoke the considerate judgment of your fellow citizens and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

JOSEPH W. FIFER.

To Dr. Johnson belongs "A good hater," and to MacIntosh, in 1701, the phrase, often attributed to John Randolph, "Wise and masterly inactivity."

ILLINOIS LAW-MAKERS.

The Thirty-seventh General Assembly opened at Springfield in due form at high noon on the 7th. Lieutenant Governor Ray, in the Senate Chamber, and Secretary of State Pearson, in the Representative hall, initiated the proceedings in accordance with the constitutional provision. The attendance of members was large, and the galleries and lobbies were crowded. The session was opened with prayer by the Rev. Francis Springer, after which the roll was called. The members arose and answered as their names were called, and it was shown that every one of the 153 members of the House was present. Upon a motion that the House proceed to the election of a temporary Speaker, Mr. Brooks of Chicago, nominated Q. J. Chott, Republican; Mr. Craig of Coles County, placed Rufus N. Ramsey, Democrat, in nomination, and Dr. H. H. Moore presented the name of Representative Cockrell on behalf of the F. M. B. A. members. The result of the roll-call was, Ramsey 77, Chott 73, Cockrell 3. It was moved that the Democratic caucus nominees, except that of Speaker, be made temporary officers of the House. This motion prevailed, as did a like one from the Republican side. The House then proceeded to the election of a permanent Speaker. Representative Reed presented the name of Clayton E. Crafts; D. P. Keller, of Macon, presented the name David Hunter, and Representative Cockrell nominated Dr. H. H. Moore. A roll-call was at once ordered on the election of permanent Speaker and the vote resulted as follows:

C. E. Crafts	77
David Hunter	73
Dr. H. H. Moore	3
Total	153

Mr. Crafts was at once conducted to the Speaker's chair, and amid the applause that followed proceeded to thank his friends for the honor, and in a brief but comprehensive speech outlined the work before the body. The Senate on the same date was called to order by President Ray. A committee of three awaited upon the Justices of the Supreme Court informing them that the Senators-elect were ready to take the oath of office, and shortly afterward Chief Justice Schofield administered the oath to the twenty-six new members. Senators McDonald and Mathews were placed in nomination for Speaker pro tem., resulting in the election of the latter.

On the 8th, but little business was done in the House. Notice of contest was filed in the cases of Wallace vs. May, of Chicago; Butzow vs. Hamilton, of Kankakee; Fletcher vs. Dawkins; Silvas vs. Collins, of Rock Island; Cornwell vs. Giber; Adcock vs. Chandler; Adcock vs. Graham; Cleveland vs. McCrone; and Coe vs. Merritt. Mr. Jones' resolution directing the House and Senate to take the first separate ballot on United States Senator on Monday, Jan. 20, and the first joint ballot on the succeeding day, was passed. In the Senate, the President announced that contests had been filed with the Secretary of State by Harris against Noonan, Savage against Arnold, Adock and others against Anderson, and Moore against Caldwell. No action was taken on this communication. The Governor notified the Senate that he had appointed James A. Rose, of Pope, Chester Penitentiary Commissioner in place of Isaac Clements, resigned; also Homer Green, of McLean, to the State Board of Pharmacy to succeed Charles W. Day, of Sangamon, resigned; referred to executive session. Mr. Evans offered a resolution, which was adopted, providing for an elections committee, to be composed of Messrs. Matthews (Chairman), Crawford of Cook, Bass, Bacon, MacMillan, Kerrick, Lehman, Chapman, Humphreys, Republicans; and Shumway, Coppinger, Mahoney, O'Connor, Farmer and Karraker, Democrats. The Senate then adjourned to ten o'clock in the morning.

After the journal was read in the Senate on the 9th, a resolution was adopted providing that the Senate adjourn after that day until the evening of the 12th. A few minor bills were introduced, and the resolution went into effect. When the House assembled on the morning of the 9th, Speaker Crafts announced the appointment of the following Committee on Elections: Green, of Alexander, Chairman; Dixon, of Lee; Laughlin, of Shelby; Springer, of Morgan; Parsons, of Gallatin; O'Donnell, of Cook; Dowdy, of Bond; Wilson, of Ogle; Merritt, of Sangamon; Prince, of Knox; Paddock, of Kankakee; Callahan, of Crawford; Kirby, of Morgan; Berry, of Carroll; and Kellar, of Macon. The first nine members are Democrats, the last six Republicans. The Governor's message was read and 5,000 copies ordered printed. The House then adjourned until the 12th.

California's Raisin Crop.

During the last year thousands of acres have been planted to raisin vines in all sections of the State of California, where soil, climate and temperature are conducive to the successful culture of the fruit. In Fresno county alone 50,000 acres are devoted to raisin grapes, all of which will be in full bearing in about four years. As a rule the crop from an acre is valued at $200, so that in 1895 the product from one county will be worth $10,000,000. This is a conservative estimate, as instances are known where under favorable circumstances and by careful cultivation one acre of Muscat vines has yielded as much as $450. The reputation of California raisins is rapidly becoming established all over the world, as is testified to by the fact that the shipments to Australia and Canada are increasing from year to year, and that a market has been found for the goods even in London.

Longevity of Man and Animals.

Civilization, with its ameliorating and benign influences, has not only increased the longevity of man but has caused him to be merciful and kind to domestic animals, thus extending their usefulness and the period of their lives. The mean term of human life has gradually increased in the last fifty years from thirty-four to forty-two years. Of those who have attained the age of sixty-six, forty-three were theologians, forty farmers, thirty-five office-holders, thirty-two military, thirty-two clerks, twenty-nine lawyers, twenty-eight artists, twenty-seven professors, and twenty-four doctors in one thousand. It will thus be seen that making bad men good and feeding the hungry are the most healthful vocations. If we would live we must work. The laborer has his reward.—*American Agriculturist.*

Cruel Manhood.

Mrs. Chidwidler—Here's a person mentions "a blind man's repeater." What is a repeater, Charley?

Mr. C.—You're a repeater. Now let me read my paper.—*Jewelers' Circular.*

IT is asserted by men of high professional ability that, when the system needs a stimulant nothing equals a cup of fresh coffee. Those who desire to rescue the dipsomaniac from his cups will find no better substitute for spirits than strong, newly made coffee without milk or sugar.

PHILANTHROPIST—You asked me for a nickel to get something to eat with. I gave it to you, and here you are drinking a glass of beer. Tramp—Yes, but wait till you see me get at the lunch counter.