

GOVERNOR WEST'S BIENNIAL MESSAGE

Declares State Finances Good --- Recommends Legislation on Moral Lines.

To the Honorable, the Members of the Legislature of the State of Oregon: Gentlemen: In accordance with the usual custom, and the command of the Constitution, it again becomes my pleasant duty to present for your information a brief statement of the condition of our public affairs and offer for your kindly consideration a few suggestions which, it appears to me, would make for the greater development of the State and the increased prosperity of her people.

Important questions will be presented for your consideration at this session, among them: A compensation act, a revision of our judicial system, an insurance code and the Jefferson Street Levee and the Columbia Southern irrigation matters. These have been brought to your attention and quite fully discussed through special reports which have been mailed you from time to time.

There is, therefore, no need of my taking your time, or trying your patience, with a detailed discussion of these several questions. Suffice it to say that the reports have been prepared by men who have given the subjects most painstaking investigation and study and whose recommendations merit your earnest consideration.

The State's finances are in a splendid condition. We have no debts, bonded or otherwise, to worry us and there are ample funds on hand to meet all current expenses. Unexpended appropriations and accumulated receipts from license fees and other sources in excess of a million dollars will be available for expenditure during the ensuing year and make necessary a State tax levy of but \$1,000,000 as against \$3,000,000 last year.

The State Institutions. You were promised two years ago that the maintenance appropriations made by you for the support of our State institutions would answer the purpose and that you would not be called upon to make deficiencies good. I am pleased to advise you that this promise has been kept.

Our state penal and eleemosynary institutions have an approximate population of 2,700 inmates. Their care has necessitated the hire of 370 employees and an average annual expenditure during the past two years of about \$1,000,000. This is a vast sum of money for the taxpayers of the state to be called upon to pay each year, yet is it a condition which has to be met. These institutions are a product of the times and present day society and until we consent to study these causes we may expect to be called upon to meet, not only the present demands, but greatly increased burdens in the future.

Too often these institutions have been used as political foot-balls so that their affairs and needs have many times failed to receive at the hands of the legislature the sober, sincere and unbiased consideration which they merited.

The last legislature treated the institutions with a fair liberality, and the board, through close attention to their affairs and the hearty co-operation of officers and employees, offers them today for your inspection in a far superior condition than has ever before existed. Should their needs receive the consideration which they merit at your hands, and I am sure they will, the board can promise you two years hence a group of institutions ranking among the best, if not the best, in the United States, and this notwithstanding that many of the buildings are old and out of date.

The State Purchasing Board The Purchasing Board has proved its usefulness not only in simplifying the purchase of supplies for state institutions and at most satisfactory prices, but in pointing out the advantages which would accrue to the state from a further consolidation in the management of all state institutions.

All state penal and eleemosynary institutions should be placed under a single board of control and to avoid creating new officials and expense the said board should consist of the governor, secretary of state and state treasurer. The state purchasing board should be merged with this board. By this arrangement the management of our state institutions can be greatly simplified and the cost reduced.

Insane Hospitals The overcrowded conditions which

have prevailed at the Oregon state insane asylum at Salem during the past few years have been relieved to a certain extent by the occupancy of the new receiving hospital and will be further relieved by the transfer within the next few days of a large number of patients to the new hospital at Pendleton. This transfer would have been made upon the first of the year had it not been for an unfortunate delay in supplying certain hardware needed for the final completion of the institution.

The present needs of our insane therefore are well cared for but their future requirements must not be overlooked.

The institution for feeble-minded has been unable to meet the demands for admission made upon it. The last legislature, owing to the crowded condition, appropriated funds for the erection of a building to relieve the situation, but made no provision for the maintenance of an increased population. In view of this no particular haste was made by the board in the matter of erecting the new dormitory. It is now completed, however, and will be ready for occupancy at any time or as soon as the legislature makes provision to cover the necessary additional maintenance cost.

The tuberculosis sanatorium was established to serve a worthy purpose, but for some reason, either because it is improperly located, its advantages not thoroughly understood, or because it is ahead of the times, is not proving the success its friends anticipated. The board having supervision of the institution's affairs is made up of a number of public spirited citizens who have unselfishly devoted much time and effort in an endeavor to make it a success. Most of these gentlemen contend that the institution should be continued and believe that it will eventually prove its worth. I am unable to take this view of the situation, however.

The institution is top-heavy. We are spending much money to heat and maintain a large structure which is of but little use to the inmates. This unnecessary burden and the small population produce an unusually high per capita cost. It seems to me that until the demands of the state justify the maintenance of such an institution, that all indigent sufferers from tuberculosis should be permitted to patronize such private sanitariums as may be licensed by the state through the state board of health and that a reasonable per capita charge be paid to cover the expense of keeping them.

Should the institution be abolished the buildings could be used for a home for the aged or a home for wayward girls.

The School for the Deaf This school is well located and such buildings as have been erected are well adapted to the needs of the institution. Some additional outbuildings and equipment are still needed as will be shown by the report of the superintendent.

The buildings at the school for the blind are not only veritable wooden fire traps, but are so located that a railroad track, a mill race and a creek, which at times in the winter is a raging torrent, must be crossed by the blind children in going to or from the school or city.

Fire proof buildings should be provided or the school closed. Otherwise it is only a question of time until we will be called upon to shudder at an awful holocaust. I am opposed to any further appropriation for the maintenance of this school unless it comes coupled with provision for better fire protection. Should fire proof buildings be provided for the school, the matter of securing a more suitable location for the same should be given consideration.

The State Training School

This institution is being used as a dumping ground for boys who should be living in better homes. Many parents cause, or permit, their children to be committed here for no other reason than that they may be relieved of the burden of their maintenance. This should not be tolerated. Parents should not be permitted to cast a lifelong stigma upon a child in order that they may be relieved of a duty which they owe to it and to society.

On the other hand there are incorrigibles committed here who are too vicious to be associated with boys whose reformation would otherwise be possible. These should be sent to another institution—a reformatory, a halfway station between the training school and the penitentiary, a place where those whose age or records make them out of place at either institution, could be confined.

The institution's daily average population appears to have been one hundred and the monthly per capita cost

\$23.25, to say nothing of the expenditures for betterments and improvements. Of this monthly per capita cost about \$10 went for salaries of officers and employees. This is an amount nearly twice that of similar expenditure at the penitentiary. These figures go to show that the institution is, and will be for years to come, top-heavy, and that it is placing unnecessary burdens upon the taxpayers.

I would, therefore, recommend that the institution no longer be used for the purpose to which it is now devoted. I would further recommend the simple cottages and other necessary buildings be erected upon the land owned by the state at Union, Oregon; and that after about one-half of the boys now at the school have been returned to their parents or placed in suitable homes, the remainder be transferred to said farm at Union there to receive all necessary training and education.

The Oregon State Penitentiary

This institution had its birth about forty years ago. Added years and population brought it added filth and added rubbish. For two whole years we have shoveled and scraped and scraped and shoveled in an endeavor to make the institution and grounds clean and sanitary. We have made much progress, but still have far to go. However, this coming year will see such work pretty well taken care of and the institution and properties take on an appearance which will compare favorably with the best of similar institutions in other states.

The superintendent's report presents in detail much information in regard to the affairs of the institution and merits your careful consideration. The institution's problem is what to do with its surplus labor. This question must be met. During the past year we have been able, in spite of unjust criticism, misrepresentation, and many obstacles, to keep the men all busily engaged and at occupations which were of profit to the public.

Upon taking office I found scores of idle men in the institution and their ranks were suddenly swelled by the cancellation of the stove foundry contract. Notwithstanding the dilapidated structures and the filth and rubbish sadly in need of removal, many of these idle men were locked in their cells or permitted to loaf around the prison yard.

To relieve the situation, those whom it was thought could be trusted were sent out to work on the roads and at various state institutions. The balance were kept busy in and about the prison premises cleaning and repairing the building and in clearing and reclaiming waste and unproductive lands.

The people of this state at our recent election by a large vote endorsed the policy of working convicts on county roads and at state institutions. It can therefore be taken as a settled policy and one which will take care of about one-third of our prison population. A similar number can be utilized in the ordinary upkeep of the prison and prison properties. This leaves one-third of the population not provided for. These men cannot and must not be left in idleness. The institution can work out its own salvation if the management is given the right and authority to conduct it on business principles and use institutional earnings to cover operating expense, install additional industries and take care of needed improvements.

What Oregon's prison policy shall be in the future rests largely with you. We have put forth our best efforts in an endeavor to solve the prison labor problem and feel that we have made much progress—in fact far more than was thought possible in the beginning.

With the installation of industries and the manufacture of articles for state institutions only, the prison can within a few years be made self-supporting. Industries can be gradually installed and paid for out of the institution's earnings if such a course is authorized, but if not authorized then an appropriation of at least \$25,000 should be made for the use of the management in procuring needed machinery.

Our institutions of higher education are either needed or are not needed. If needed they should receive liberal support; otherwise they should be abolished. Provision should be made at this time for placing them on a millage tax basis in order that they may be relieved of the necessity of coming begging to the legislature each session.

Other Proposed Institutions

Our jails and state institutions are crowded with victims of the drink habit. These unfortunates are a continual expense to the taxpayers. A meritorious compensation act which makes each industry provide for the families of its killed and injured is being proposed at this session. In

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view of this, I can see no reason why the burden of providing for down and out "booze fighters" or their families should not be borne by the liquor traffic. These individuals being the product of the saloon should be cared for by that institution.

Some day, and in the no distant future, this state must have a reformatory where the better class of prisoners may be placed and thus avoid their being thrown in contact with the confirmed criminals at the penitentiary. Should the recommendation made as to the state training school be followed that institution could be used as a reformatory to accommodate the said better class and overflow from the prison. The lands surrounding the institution could be farmed through the aid of this labor and the products distributed to such institutions as might be in need of them.

Figures obtained for the year 1911 show \$226,272.23 to have been spent by the several counties in this state in the support of their poor. It is estimated that there are about 600 of these unfortunates now being cared for by the counties. This number could be cared for at a state institution for about one-half the said cost and receive much better treatment than many of them are now receiving. ed to the several counties upon the basis of the number of inmates charged against each.

There is a crying need for a home for wayward girls and a request which will be made at this session for the establishment of such an institution merits your earnest consideration.

All charitable institutions receiving state aid and all private sanitariums devoted to the care of the insane should be under state supervision and regulation.

Good Roads

We still need good roads legislation. The people indicated through their votes at the last election that they were opposed to any but conservative action along these lines. We have made some headway during the past two years, and the way is open for further progress through the passage of legislation not inconsistent with the vote of the people at the said election.

Appropriation Bills

The practice of the past of submitting for your consideration blanket appropriation bills should be avoided. These bills should be reduced to the smallest practical units in order that the members may have a better opportunity for considering the merits of each.

Our constitution should be amended so as to permit the governor to veto any item in an appropriation bill. As the matter now stands useless appropriations are allowed to slip through for the reason that they are included in a bill carrying appropriations of merit.

Taxation

Three tax amendments approved by the legislature were submitted to the people at the last election. Of these two were defeated and by a very small vote. Their defeat was not due to any particular opposition, but because

Increased Cost of Living.

The increased cost of living cause has for many months vexed statesmen, politicians, newspaper writers, and thence down to the consumer, and no end of explanation has been

spread broadcast, but it has remained for New York to have elucidated the problem that has vexed millions. An alderman in the big metropolis has eaten nine and one half pounds of steak at one sitting.



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