

The Daily Astorian.
 ASTORIA, OREGON:
 FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 1887
 GOV. PENNOYER'S MESSAGE.

The certainty that Gov. Penoyer would say something remarkable tends to mitigate the surprise occasioned by some of his first official remarks to the legislature last Wednesday. It was a great occasion, and he made the most of it. His message resembles President Cleveland's in length, but is more special and deals in a more practical manner with the questions discussed than did that of the chief executive of the Nation. Gov. Penoyer evidently spells "Nation" with a little n.

Taking out all that part of the message suggested by party bias or personal prejudice, the document is an able one and worthy of commendation. The governor talks of business matters in a business way; he makes practical suggestions and lays down some good rules for state and legislative observance.

On the important question of swamp lands, he says it would be proper that the title to all the lands claimed prior to the passage of the law approved October 17, 1878, in regard to which a strict compliance with the act of October 26, 1870, had not been made, and upon which the twenty per centum had not been paid prior to the time that the law of 1878 took effect, and all lands subsequent to the passage of said law that are claimed contrary to the provisions of that law limiting the amount to be purchased by one individual who has filed thereon without any authority of law, and that all certificates of such filings subsequent to the time at which the law of 1878 took effect, should be cancelled and declared to be of no force or effect whatever. The state then should provide a proper officer empowered to act with the agent of the general government in determining what lands are swamp and overflowed lands, in order that the vexed matter may be speedily settled, the state secured of its rightful gift, and its lands secured, as now is provided by law, to actual settlers in quantities not exceeding 320 acres. This is a heroic but necessary measure.

Regarding river improvements he thinks that while the state is putting forth every effort to stimulate the federal government to do its bounden duty towards the undertaking and speedy completion of proper facilities for overcoming the obstruction of the upper portage of the Columbia, it would at the same time be a most judicious step, in view of the uncertainty of procuring favorable federal legislation where the people instead of corporations are concerned, for it to prepare itself to build a portage railroad between The Dalles and Celilo in case congress should turn a deaf ear to our petition or adopt a policy which should postpone its completion for an indefinite period. A 1 mill tax for the next two years would raise a sufficient sum, which could be on hand at the next session of the legislature, with which to commence the building of such railroad by the state if then deemed necessary. If then it was not imperative on the state to proceed with this work the fund could be conveyed into the treasury to the common school fund or to be used for the completion of the capitol. It is of more importance to have the Columbia river opened to free navigation than it is to have a dome upon the capitol.

This proposition admits of negative discussion, though the legislature seems to have jumped at the idea and will go to The Dalles this afternoon to have a look at the place. This is somewhat hasty, to say the least and does not appear specially needful till further along in the session. Concerning assessment and taxation the governor thinks that that

feature of the Vermont tax law should be added which requires that each person shall give, under oath, a full statement of his property, under the penalty of having his assessment made, as nearly as it can be, by the assessor, and then doubled. Our present law requires the property owner to make a statement under oath, but as there is no penalty for non-compliance, such provision is a dead letter. There could then be no evasion under such compulsion, on the part of any one, from bearing his just proportion of taxation, and as the volume of the taxable property would be largely increased under such a law, the rate would be correspondingly decreased. The honest taxpayer's burden by this plan would be very materially diminished, as the dishonest one could no longer evade the law. Provision should also be made for the taxation of foreign corporations doing large business in this state without much of either real or personal property within the state, and provision should also be made for the taxing of the stock of alien owners pastured during certain portions of the year within state limits, which have heretofore escaped taxation.

The governor appears to be badly mixed in his extensive discussion of the several branches of the state government, and their functions and relations, and while it is but just to concede sincerity to his opinions, they are none the less ridiculous when he attempts to assert that the state courts have no right to pass upon the constitutionality of laws enacted by the legislature.

A part of the message sounds as though it had been written in 1862, the dead ghost of the supremacy of state rights being temporarily resuscitated on these moist Pacific shores. In the light of recent history the resuscitation can elicit no other feeling than one of amusement, and satisfaction that that question was settled long ago.

In his conclusion Gov. Penoyer displays a better and sounder appreciation of existing circumstances in the following admirable close: "In conclusion, gentlemen of the legislative assembly, allow me to express the confident hope that your deliberation during the coming session will be conducive only to the public good. Fortunately, you have no questions of a party character to distract your attention. Let then party feelings, interests and ambitions be all forgotten and let men of both parties vie with each other as to which will render best service to the state. When you enter these halls you no longer represent parties, you are the representatives of the people. Here, in your official action, let your only motive be, to advance the welfare of the state at large; to guard with watchful care the interest of all classes; to make no expenditure but what is general in its benefactions; to adjust the burdens of state taxation so that wealth and dishonesty cannot shirk their just share; to be liberal in expenditures of a public character, while withholding any aid whatever from schemes of a purely local or private nature, to secure as far as possible the unsettled portions of the state domain to actual settlers in small quantities; to uncover and punish frauds, if any, upon the state; to avoid all class legislation, and, in short, to set, in your official position, an example worthy of all emulation, of managing the entire affairs of the state with honesty, economy and fidelity. Then you will win the approval both of your own conscience and of the people of this commonwealth."

Every human being who is not born to a fortune has a labor problem of his own to solve, and the time will probably never come when a very large number of men will not keep trying to make somebody else solve it for them. The greatest need of our age seems to be the bucking down of each man to his own labor problem.

Every man should try to help his neighbor to bear his burdens, but every neighbor should refrain from trying to unload on him.

A MERCHANT of Allegan, Mich., keeps what he calls his "thief account." In it he records everything missed, and the first person discovered stealing goods is required to pay the entire bill to escape prosecution. Recently a woman was caught stealing a 50-cent pair of leggins, and she was called on to square the account, which amounted to \$5.

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