ANNUAL MESSAGE

of

LEONARD J. FARWELL,

GOVERNOR OF THE

STATE OF WISCONSIN.

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GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.

To the Senate and Assembly,

Gentlemen:

Since your last annual session, nothing has transpired, of extraordinary importance in the civil affairs of the State. During the past season, our citizens have enjoyed unusual prosperity, in the ample products and remuneration of their industry and enterprise. Abundant harvests, and high markets, an increase in monied circulation and the downward tendency of the rates of interest; a prevailing confidence among business men, and in business enterprises, continued accession to our population by emigration, the energetic prosecution of internal improvements under the skillful management of companies, the extension of permanent agricultural improvements and the rapid growth of our cities and villages, are among the encouraging indications of the present, and give cheering promise of the future.

We have sufficient reason for congratulation in the condition and prospects of our State.

In respect to many advantages, she occupies a highly favorable position that cannot well be overlooked, either by the emigrant seeking a home in the West, or by those wishing to make safe and profitable investments of capital.

It appears by the returns of the last general census, that the ratio of increase in population has been greater, and the health of the people better, in Wisconsin, than in any other State in the Union. And in soil, climate, mineral resources and commercial position, she may justly claim to be equal, and in many respects superior, to the other Western States.

With a large area of territory, and comparatively a very small
part unsuited to cultivation, and all of it favorably situated in respect to wood and water, she offers superior inducements to the agriculturalist, and is destined ere long, to become one of the richest States in the Union, in the production of the soil.

The Western portion of our State, while the soil is of the best quality for agriculture, also contains exhaustless beds of mineral, which are only awaiting the application of capital and labor, to enrich those whose attention and enterprise they may enlist. And it is somewhat remarkable, that while it is known that so much wealth lies hidden only a few feet below the surface, in this mineral region, as is sufficiently attested by successful experiments already made, and the very able report of the Hon. David D. Owen, United States’ Geologist, that comparatively so little has yet been done to measure its resources, and make them available to the urgent demands of trade and commerce.

It is reported, however, that during the past season, this important interest has been receiving more attention, and is attracting to this portion of the State, a more just share of emigration and capital.

Our lumber interest is by no means unimportant. From the best means we have to ascertain its extent, the amount of lumber manufactured in the State annually, cannot be less than one hundred and fifty million feet. And when railroad facilities of carriage are brought to the vicinity of this immense lumber region, we may reasonably expect a vast increase in the product.

It is estimated that there is within this State, over twenty million acres of Congress lands; embracing about two-thirds of the entire State, a great portion of which is now surveyed and in market.

This immense tract of country is generally of excellent soil, and many portions of it, richly charged with silver, copper, lead, iron, and other valuable minerals.

It is certainly a question of momentous importance to us, what disposition ought to be made, by the Congress of the United States, of this two-thirds portion of our State.
Various propositions are now pending before Congress, respecting the unsold government lands in the different States. And whatever may finally be the prevailing measure of the General Government on this subject, it must necessarily, greatly affect us, favorably or otherwise, however insensibly it may be felt elsewhere. It must be conceded, that our State, at least, is deeply interested in having these lands brought into actual occupancy and cultivation, as speedily as possible. If, therefore, their donation to actual settlers, and in limited quantities, will, by the encouragement of emigration, be most likely to produce this result, then it follows, that the proposition embracing this principle, is the one to receive our countenance and support.

But if this principle cannot be adopted, then, better for us, by far, will it be, if these lands are kept constantly in market, at the present Congress price, than that any measure should obtain, that will have the effect to keep them out of market, or to increase their cost to the settler; which would be detrimental in the highest degree, to the State, and her future advancement in wealth and population.

To the fact that Congress lands of excellent quality and favorable location, can be obtained in this State, at the present price, we are, and have been, very much indebted for the emigration we have already received, and are still receiving: and these lands, if continued in market, even at the present price, being the nearest and most convenient to the Eastern sea-board, of any other in the Western States, will remain a great inducement for its continuance.

This subject is earnestly commended to your attention, at the present Session, that you may express to the Congress of the United States, by memorial or otherwise, the sentiment of this State, upon the important propositions there pending, upon a subject of so much concern to the State.

By the construction of the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad thus far, and the surveys and estimates of the routes of other roads, it has been made apparent, that Railroads can be constructed in this State, at an average cost, of from ten to eighteen thou-
and dollars per mile. This, considered in connection with the act, that these roads when completed in almost any direction, will pass through a rich agricultural country, and accommodate all the leading interests of our people, must induce their early completion, and very soon secure to us, abundant facilities of this method of carriage and communication.

It may be safely assumed, that capital employed in Railroads within this State, will yield a higher per cent. of profit upon the investment, than can be realized from similar investments at the East, where the average cost of construction, is fully three times as great; even though it be admitted, that our roads may do less business.

Upon the principle, that capital is most likely to be employed, where it will return the largest profit, we may be encouraged to hope, that the means will not long be wanting, to build our roads already projected, if they can be regarded as at all feasible, with respect to location and points of termination.

To the farmer, next in importance to receiving a full return at the harvest, for his labor and his toil, is the facility with which the products of his husbandry can reach the best and the most ready market. And it requires no argument to show, that to the farmers of this State, this facility is greatly needed.

Our lands are very productive, with but little cost or labor; and when the freight upon the transportation of our products, to an Eastern market, shall become reduced by the increasing patronage and competition of the various railroads and other means of carriage, they will be nearly, if not fully equal, at least in actual value to the producer, to the lands of New York and New England, although their price in market, may be much less.

It may therefore, well be expected, that our citizens will feel a deep interest in the railroad enterprises of the State, that promise so much for the common benefit.

An indication highly favorable to our future prosperity, consists, in the great and increasing interest taken by our people in agriculture. Much has already been done, yet still more remains to be
done by us, in testing the qualities of our soil, and its adaptation
to the different variety of crops, and various modes of tillage. Too
much information and interchange of experience, in relation to
this, to us, most important brance of industry, cannot well be cir-
culated. As a leading means of improvement, State and County
Agricultural Societies have been formed, and thus far, have been
followed by encouraging results.

The two State Fairs, the first held at Janesville, and the last at
Milwaukee, were successful and gratifying experiments, and an
earnest of the future usefulness of the parent Society.

The General Banking Law passed at your last Session, and sub-
mited to a vote of the people, at the recent general election, has
been ratified by a very large majority, and is, therefore, now in full
force and effect.

Although, not entirely free from imperfections, it is believed to
be a good and safe law; and will if reasonably construed, and pro-
perly carried into effect, fully answer the purposes designed.

It cannot be disguised, however, that no law, authorizing and
regulating the business of banking, with the most stringent safe-
guards and restrictions, can be entirely proof against those abuses,
which are prompted by that inordinate love of gain, that would
seek to take more than was intended to be given, construe a favora-
ble franchise, into a licensed wrong, and abuse a generous privilege
by the practice of a fraud. It was intended by this law, to have
the entire circulation of the banks, that might be organized under
it, secured by, and based upon actual deposited capital. And if
this wise intention can be carried into effect, it will doubtless bring
large amounts of foreign capital into the State, and give us the
benefit of its circulation, without risk or hazard.

But if this law is to be so perverted from its legitimate object and
obvious design, as to be the means, through the banks, of its crea-
tion, to throw broad-cast over the State, a doubtful or irresponsible
currency, of indefinite amount, under the seeming guize of a faith-
ful adherance to its provisions, then, indeed, will that, we fain hoped
would be a benefit, surely prove our ruin.
It is not, however, by any means to be presumed, that either many, or indeed any, banking associations of this character, or doing this violence to the law, will be organized. But it is the part of wisdom to foresee the evil and guard against it, rather than it should come upon us by surprise. One thing is certain: We shall never have a good and responsible currency in this State, until that which is irresponsible, and based upon no tangible security, is discountenanced and driven away. Actual capital cannot very well compete against unlimited credit, nor will prudent men deposit valuable and ample securities, to procure a circulation of an equal amount, while other men may reap the profits of a circulation a hundred-fold greater, without depositing or even exhibiting any securities at all.

To guard against the possibility of any such evil, a general law should be passed, at as early a day as practicable, prohibiting under severe penalties, the receiving, paying out or passing as money, in this State, circulating paper, of any form whatever, in the similitude of bank paper, by any person or body corporate, that is not, at the time, of such receiving, paying out or passing, authorized by some express law of the United States, or of one of the United States, or of Canada; and declaring all contracts, the consideration of which, in whole or in part, consists of such circulating paper, absolutely null and void, for any purpose whatever.

The Executive authority has been exerted to its fullest extent, during the past year, to suppress the practice of illegal banking in the State, by causing the same to be brought before the proper judicial tribunal, but so far without effect.

This shows the necessity of some more stringent Legislation upon this subject than now exists, to protect the people of this State, from an unlimited, unsecured, and wholly irresponsible currency, which if longer permitted to continue, or increase, will utterly defeat the purposes of the general Banking Law, and work a lasting injury to the finances, business, and credit of our State.

The report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, will give
full information respecting the operations of the School System, and the condition of the fund.

Whole number of Scholars for 1852, 144,783
Whole number of Scholars attended School, 90,000
Whole amount of money received, $127,718 43
Due on lands sold, 681,931 71
" loans for 1852, 132,491 64
In Treasurer's hands, 4,777 15

Your attention is especially invited to the recommendations of the Superintendent, relating to School Libraries, Norman Schools, and School Journal.

The labors of Gen. Smith, in collecting the materials for a documentary History of Wisconsin, have been so far highly encouraging, and leave no doubt, that the work when completed, will be of great value to the State, as of well deserved credit to the distinguished Author. A communication from him, upon the subject, will be submitted to you during the Session, and will merit your consideration.

The Reports of the Secretary of State and State Treasurer, exhibit the financial condition of the State, as sound and creditable. The General Fund in the Treasury, has been sufficient to meet all demands upon it, during the past fiscal year, both as the current liabilities of the year, and the unpaid indebtedness of the year 1851, within the small sum of $940 71

General fund received from 31st December, 1851, to 31st December, 1852, $133,652 62
Amount disbursed in 1852, 134,593 33
Over paid out of this fund, 940 71

Of the above disbursements during the year 1852, there has been paid on liabilities incurred during the year, 88,393 33

On liabilities incurred previously to 1852, and which remained unpaid, December 31st, 1851, 46,200 00

The Reports show, that, had the full amount of the State tax,
due from the different counties, for the year 1852, been paid into the Treasury, there would have been a surplus, over the disbursements, and that the assessments were more than sufficient, to meet the current expenses and liabilities of the year.

The suggestions of the Secretary of State, in relation to the unequal assessments in the different counties, will require your attention.

The Report of the Board of Public Works, has not yet been made; but when received, will be laid before you, accompanied by a special communication on the subject of the Fox and Wisconsin River Improvement.

The Reports of the State Prison Commissioner, and the Regents of the University, will command from you due consideration.

In the month of May last, a Commissioner of Emigration was appointed for this State, who soon, thereafter, entered upon his duties in the city of New York, in carrying out the objects of the law upon this subject, passed by the last Legislature. His first annual Report, which will be submitted to you, will show with what success he has so far administered his agency, as also the feasibility and present and prospective usefulness of the system. The great interest so generally and so justly felt, in this State, in the cause of foreign emigration, to which our rapid growth in population and wealth, thus far, has been so much attributable; and the results already attained, by the labors of the Commissioner, will commend this subject to your favorable regard.

As the immediate representatives of the people, in all parts of the State, you are presumed to understand their wants and interests; which, together with the public welfare, you will no doubt wisely consult by your legislation; and in so doing, you may be assured of having the best wishes and full concurrence of the Executive Department.

Madison, January 1st, 1853.

LEONARD J. FARWELL.