IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALABAMA.

Regular Session, 1915.

LEGISLATIVE DOCUMENT NO. 4.

MESSAGE OF
CHARLES HENDERSON
GOVERNOR
TO THE
LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA

2,000 copies ordered printed by Senate.
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GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

It has been your fortune to assemble at a great history-making epoch, at a period when all the great nations of the world, excepting our own, are at war. In the midst of such gigantic conflict, our material interests have greatly suffered, and it is natural that our people look to their Representatives with hopes. To what extent, or whether at all any such hopes can be fulfilled through you, depends largely upon circumstances that at present seem to transcend the abilities and the mere acts of men. But whether you succeed or not, your constituents have the faith in your desire to be of service. They have given you this confidence and trust in your election, and in the desire to merit this confidence, we must all unite to bring into action the best there is in us to accomplish our aim.

Among all the great problems that face us at present, none equals in importance, the widespread distress brought upon our people by the war. The assertion is generally made, that in this depression our people had no share in the cause, and they were made the innocent victims of the passions of a far-off war. Are we really to be held entirely blameless for our distress? For over ten years the South has been producing bountiful crops which have been selling at remunerative prices. The prosperity of this section had become the boast of the entire nation, and the world looked with envy upon us, for the wealth we were reputed to be accumulating and rapidly storing up. And when the storm broke loose our wealth was gone, and we look upon ourselves as the
poorest of the poor. For being bare of means after ten long years of prosperity, we cannot be blameless. If we have been so improvident as not to forestall the probable days of distress by economizing, by laying by and providing, the punishment is not uninvited. But the lesson must be applied, and must be heeded henceforth. The history of civilization teaches that misfortunes are the best task masters of humanity. Nations decay and degenerate from continuous prosperity. The best lessons given us from these days of adversity, is, that greatness rises from defeat. We must draw from within ourselves the ability to relinquish desires, to struggle and to improve our habits, to manage and to encourage and to run our farms, as if they were mines and laboratories, wherein the smallest things are made to produce, and every particle is weighed and measured.

But turning from economics to political consideration, it is well we take cognizance of the feeling of distrust in the efficiency of our government, which existed at the time even when you were elected. This feeling, if anything, has been aggravated by the economic distress to which I have referred in the foregoing. We are, therefore, before the people on trial, and will have to take under consideration many measures. In a subsequent message, I shall discuss with you, more particularly, measures relating to our present economic condition.

But, broadly speaking, we have been only too prone to enact legislation under the stress of emotions, while in periods of calm, we have been inactive, when we should have been shaping and preparing for the storms. It is, therefore, my desire, to discuss today our habits, and if we could succeed in changing them to produce well balanced results, we have advanced considerably towards the accomplishment of good government.
In your office as Legislators, you possess a wide scope of power. Within the limit of the Constitution, your field of action is as broad as the ever changing requirements and conditions demand. You are not even fettered by instructions from your electors, who have imparted to you the only mission, to work for our State and to promote the interest of its people.

Much negligence of good has been committed in the past, by concentrating our minds just upon such legislation that had become the great issues of election campaigns. It resolved itself into nothing more than a scrap as to who could win, and a mere quarrel over issues that overshadowed others of great importance which failed of attention.

The principles of Government are sufficient to meet the needs of every condition as it arises. If any weakness become apparent they can be straightly charged to the inefficiency of those whose duty it is to execute the law correctly. But in the evolution of time, nothing remains at rest. The constant change of conditions brings on new problems, all of which, however, you will find no difficulty in adjusting by care and diligence, and by a due regard for the spirit of our fundamental law, which at all times should be kept alive.

The hard times of the present have placed us in days of sobriety and self-examination. We feel the sting of past extravagance, and are paying the penalties of the wastes we have committed. And you are called upon to apply the remedy and repair the waste.

There can be only two remedies from which to choose. Either to increase revenue or to cut expenses. But in weighing our present condition in the scales, it will be impossible to increase revenues. As an example I wish to point to one department which alone in 1914 produced
also on stiff clay soil. It is especially valuable, because it yields the elements of which they are found to be deficient, for the abundant production of crops.' I would also join him in recommending to the farmers a more general use of this excellent fertilizer.

SOUTHERN ALABAMA.

This region extends from the Gulf of Mexico, Northward, for a distance of ninety miles. The general characteristics extend across the entire State from the Western border of Georgia to the Eastern boundary of Mississippi. Some portions, of course, have advanced in improvements beyond other portions. The larger part of this section abounds in forests of long leaf Yellow Pine. The trees attain a gigantic size and height. They make excellent and durable timber for all purposes. They also yield tar, pitch and turpentine. The principal portion of this region is sparsely inhabited, and hence it offers favorable inducements for immigrant settlers. Land can be purchased at low rates, and the country is very healthy. This entire section is intersected with rivers and large creeks which afford ample facilities for transportation. Along the valleys and creeks and rivers we find a great variety of timber, such as Oak, Hickory, Cypress, and in some localities Red Cedar.

This section is highly favorable for the raising of stock. Owing to the mildness of the climate there is no necessity for protection by farm shelters. The winter season being short, there is good pasturage for the entire year.

WATER POWER.

The undeveloped water power of this State deserves more attention than has hitherto been bestowed upon it. In many of our streams there are falls which would prove of great value for propelling machinery. Special mention may be made of the Tallapoosa river. That stream enters the State, from Georgia, in Cleburne county. It descends for a distance of one hundred miles, through the counties of Cleburne, Randolph, Tallapoosa and Elmore, forming a junction with the Coosa midway between
Wetumpka and the city of Montgomery. The river and many of its tributaries afford ample and advantageous water power for milling and manufacturing purposes. There are also fine sites for mills and factories on numerous streams in the counties of Shelby, Talladega and St. Clair. In Winston county, at what is known as Clear Creek Fall, there is an admirable site for any kind of manufacturing. There is also superior water power in Lauderdale county. It has already been developed to some extent. On Cypress and Shoal creeks cotton factories have been erected and operated with complete success. The success might be amplified to almost an indefinite extent.

On the Coosa river there are numerous falls from Greensport to Wetumpka, a distance of 130 miles. Each of these falls is a favorable site for a factory, or indeed, for numerous factories. The opening of this portion of the Coosa by a system of slack water navigation is a subject to which some attention has been given. Such an improvement would result in the immediate development of the latent resources of an immense mineral region. Incidentally the dams and locks erected to secure a slack water navigation would afford water power sufficient to drive any amount of manufacturing and mineral machinery that could be desired.

There is good water power in other localities. But what is mentioned shows conclusively that Alabama offers the most favorable inducements to capitalists seeking investments in manufacturing enterprises. In the manufacture of cotton, especially, our State has advantages which cannot be surpassed. We produce the raw material, and machinery may be run through the entire year. Our winters are so mild that there is not the slightest interruption from freezes. In the business of manufacturing cotton in Alabama, a profit of at least twenty-five per cent. may be safely depended upon.

TANNING.

The useful and lucrative business of tanning is not
financial status of the State and giving to you the benefits of his own knowledge, gained from four years study and application to the affairs of the State. He has given you a complete history during this period. A review, by me, will necessarily contain many duplications of facts, but as each one of you draws his own deductions, varying with each presentation, the purpose of the constitutional requirement is accomplished by keeping these conditions constantly before you.

FINANCIAL.

The tendency with us is to depreciate the things that are old, and to neglect needful repairs to the things we have, in our longing for methods that are new. The system for handling the State's revenues as originally adopted and handed down to us, was ample for the requirements at the time, and is good today, if we will only adhere to the outline and develop it to meet the needs of the enlarged business. But as new sources of income have been developed, we have permitted the system to become a patchwork, with too much laxity, and with two small an accountability, from those who handle the public monies. The greater the volume of business, the greater care in the supervision is necessary, and instead of abandoning the system, adherence to it should be the more exacting.

The treasurer is the custodian of our finances, and the auditor does the accounting. Various departments of the State collect the revenues incident to the general conduct of their official duties, and appropriations are made to different departments for contingent expenses, without proper restrictions. It should be required of every one who has to do with the collection, or the handling of public money, to file an adequate bond and make
daily settlements with the treasurer, with a corresponding report to the auditor. The use of the contingent fund by every department, should be subject to the approval of the Governor.

The auditor's reports are expected to reveal the financial condition of the State, but the law has failed to define what his annual report shall contain. Besides the receipts and disbursements, it should set out which of the appropriations that are payable during the last three months of the calendar year, are liabilities against the collections of the expiring fiscal year, and the auditor's balance arrived at and presented accordingly. This may seem superfluous, but how many are there among you who can agree as to what the financial condition of the State was at the close of any fiscal year?

The report of the auditor for October 1st, 1914, the first day of the current fiscal year, shows that there were $130,299.15 in the State treasury. It further shows that the outstanding warrants amounted to $950,202.01, with a temporary loan of $100,000.00. The apparent deficit is $919,902.86. This, of itself, does not, in my opinion, represent the true condition of the State's finances. We must know the amount of the obligations, or appropriations that were intended to have been paid during the current calendar year, out of the collections made during the fiscal year previously closed. As to what was the true condition of the State's finances at the end of any fiscal year, has been a mooted question with each succeeding administration. In search of this information, different methods have been used by the various administrations, and the ideas adopted have been as varied and numerous as the individual effort along this direction. We, sometimes, find the method used by the same administration to be different when retiring, from those
presented by him on his accession to office. These matters are not stated by way of criticism, but to emphasize the fact that you yourself should make careful study of the conditions, and satisfy your own minds, as to what is the financial status of the State, before insisting on any action whatever, that may effect the State's revenues.

The lack of this information, doubtless has been responsible for many of the liberal appropriations through which the present indebtedness was created. Let us look into and see what are the conditions of the State's finances.

On the 1st day of October, 1914, the outstanding warrants, less the amount in the treasury, were $919,902.86. The appropriations for which warrants were issued during October, November and December were $2,455,149.46. The entire receipts during this time were $1,316,650.63. How were these appropriations which were due in October, November, and December intended to be paid? Surely not out of taxes that were not collectable until after December 31st, following. The constitution never anticipated there would be a deficit in the finances of the State greater than $300,000.00, and for this they made provision. The Legislature only made provision for a loan of $100,000.00. It looks reasonable, that if the law-making bodies of the State had intended these appropriations which are payable during the last three months of the calendar year, to be paid from the receipts of the current fiscal year, they would have made some provision by which loans could be made to meet them, and would not have depended upon its citizens anticipating the payment of great sums, before they were collectable. To meet the payments to the schools, to the pensioners, and to provide for other necessary expenses.
during the last three months of the past several years, the State has relied upon the larger property owners paying their taxes before the law required.

The constitution provides for a three mill tax for education, and the Legislature levied one mill for the veterans. These are trust funds and were treated as such, until extravagance necessitated a commingling of all the funds of the State, to tide its finances through the calendar year. The educational special tax was intended to be disbursed throughout the same calendar year in which it was collected. The pension fund was originally made payable to the beneficiaries on the first day of October, at which time, it had all been collected, but this was afterwards changed to quarterly payments. The effect of that action was, to extend the period for the distribution of this fund still further beyond the time of its collection. The same conditions apply to the three mill constitutional tax for education. The first requisite towards improving your financial condition is knowledge of your present status, and to have this, you must know what your obligations are, when they are due, and from what funds they are to be paid. It is neither the time nor the occasion to juggle with figures, and you should define and settle at the beginning of your labors, the method by which we shall arrive at the exact status of the State’s finances. It is well not only for the sake of comparison, but absolutely for intelligent guidance and action.

For the purpose of reaching some conclusion and as a basis for calculation, let us accept as true that at least the pro-rata of the trust funds due the school, and the pension fund, for the last three months of the calendar year, were intended to be paid from collections made during the fiscal year ending September 30th, and that the balance of the expenses were to be paid from collec-
tions of the current fiscal year. This is certainly the most liberal construction to be placed upon the acts of our law makers, and is a low estimate of the needs of revenue to meet expenses for these three months, under normal conditions.

On October 1st, 1906, during the Jelks administration, there were $1,826,326.09 in the treasury, with no past due obligations. Was this all surplus? Not by any means, because there were $828,275.00 appropriations due in October, November and December, for the payment of which, the taxes had already been collected. Of these unpaid appropriations $375,111.00 belonged to the school fund and $471,164.00 to the special tax pension fund. Deducing this would leave a surplus of $998,051.00.

On the 1st day of October, 1910, the auditor’s statement shows there were $370,739.34 in the treasury. The disbursements for October alone were $571,634.70, while the receipts for the same period were only $159,070.77. This shows the fallacy of accepting the amount in the treasury at the end of the fiscal year, without taking into consideration any appropriations, as representing the financial status of the State.

Applying the formula heretofore presented, according to the auditor’s statement, will produce the following results for October 1st, 1910. Balance in the treasury $370,739.00. One-third of education fund $656,343.00. One-fourth soldier’s fund $248,728.00. Deficit October 1st, 1910, $656,343.00.

For 1914 the results would be as follows: Balance in the treasury $130,299.00. Unpaid warrants and money borrowed $1,050,202.00. One-third of educational fund $754,500.00. One-fourth of pension fund $253,845.00, leaving a deficit in 1914 $1,928,248.00.
The receipts for the four years, of the two preceding administrations, from all sources, were respectively as follows: From September 30th, 1906 to October 1st, 1910, $18,712,746.20, and for 1910 to 1914, $24,620,796.56, while the disbursements were for 1906 to 1910, $20,233,854.53 and for 1910 to 1914 $25,978,926.00, showing expenses in excess of the receipts during the eight years to have been $2,879,338.00, which amount is increased to over $3,000,000.00 by the release since October, of appropriations which had been held in suspense. This explains how the great deficit in the State's finances was brought about. We were prosperous and had accumulated a splendid surplus, then the prodigal spirit took possession of us, and we not only spent what we had saved, but what we expected to save during continued prosperity. Daily we have surrendered to our desires, until the habit of the spendthrift has become chronic with the State, and the never-failing result is our portion. This is a vast sum, and even that, does not take into consideration any warrants that may have been issued subsequent to the report of the auditor, for any appropriations which had been held in suspense. It exceeds 30% of the entire revenues of the State collected in 1914, which were the greatest in its history. It is equal to 8% of the entire revenues for the four years of the last administration. The deficit during the last year alone was $466,023.94, which exceeds 7% of the income of the State during 1914.

If the assessed values and income from other sources, should remain the same during the next four years as they were in 1914, to curtail the appropriations only 7% would leave the accumulated deficit untouched. To reduce appropriations below the revenues sufficiently to liquidate the whole deficit during the next four years, assuming the revenue will remain the same as in 1914,
would require a reduction in appropriations of $948,085.00 annually below what they were in 1914. A greater sum than the combined salaries of all the officers of the State. To absorb this deficit would require a reduction of a little over 13% per year in our appropriations, for the next four years. You must bear in mind these sums are based on revenues of 1914, and if they should be decreased, it would demand a corresponding decrease in your appropriations.

In addition to the appropriations which have been paid, or taken into account, in this presentation, there are a large number which are being held in suspense. These I am informed will amount to nearly $1,000,000.00, possibly more. The question that instantly presents itself to your minds, and to my own also, is how can this intricate proposition be handled without impairing the efficiency of the State government? To make horizontal cuts in appropriations to such an extent, that the deficit will be liquidated in four years, and leave the heads of the different departments to work out their own system of existence, would result in confusion worse confounded. You could not expect to secure satisfactory results in this way. Dissatisfaction would only be increased. Let us apply ourselves to the proposition, and strive to improve on the efficiency of the government, with less expense to the taxpayer. If we should succeed in this, our reward shall be the self-consciousness of a duty well performed.

Suppose, first, you repeal every suspended or conditional appropriation. They are commonly designated as having strings tied to them. The strings are liable to break at any time, and are a standing menace to the treasury.

With these out of the way, pass your revenue bill and we can then make a fairly correct estimate of what the
revenues will be for your disposal. The proper way it appears to me to handle this deficit, especially in view of the financial condition of the country, is to make provision for temporary loans to the full amount of the constitutional provision, and fund the balance of the deficit. This is the practical view to take of the situation, and of the conditions, as we have found them. I don't think these bonds should extend over a long period, but absorbed out of current funds during the next ten years. Such securities cannot be sold to the same advantage as long term bonds, but as this indebtedness was created through extravagance, we should practice self-denial, that we may not soon forget the way of the transgressor. With the proposed constitutional amendment authorizing the bonds, there should be another submitted as a companion, one that will act as a stay against the subsequent Legislatures making appropriations beyond the probable revenues of the State, and at the same time provide for more mature thought and consideration to the needs of the different interests in the State. This amendment should provide for the appointment of a commission, which shall meet at least six months before the assembling of the Legislature, to suggest revenue measures and to make up a budget for legislative consideration, to be published for at least three months before the assembling of the Legislature. The Legislature to have authority only to approve, disapprove, or decrease the appropriations submitted in the budget, as presented by the commission. This would give the opportunity for mature study of the conditions over the State, and we would then have more intelligent and business-like action than is possible to have under the present system. It would prove a strong guarantee against any repetition of the conditions which you now
face, and it’s value to the State, would be greater than the amount of the present deficit.

Having ascertained the financial condition of our affairs and made provision for the deficit, we should now give our attention to the different departments, and re-organize them on a thoroughly efficient basis.

TAX SYSTEM.

Taxation being the channel through which the State derives its revenue, you should be careful to adhere to a well defined system avoiding division of the same class of work between officers whose principal duties are of an entirely different nature. The collection of revenue for the State is really a part of the financial system and must be treated with the same exactness.

The amount of contributions to the cause of government, national, State, county and municipal is estimated to be around $130.00 for an average family with an income of $850.00 per annum. This is a heavy cost for government and a large percentage of the income of the individuals who make up the government. This not only emphasizes the necessity of economizing, but for the equal distribution of the burdens also.

The amount paid for the support of the national government is little considered by the average mind, as it is largely collected through indirect sources. This is an easy method to secure revenue, but the State discarded this relic of autocratic days, because of its tendency to encourage profligacy against which, the framers of our constitution attempted to safeguard the interest of the people, by restricting the taxing authorities. But there seems always to be some way in which to circumvent the spirit of that instrument if the desire exists, and the necessity of conditions seems to justify such action. The
continual increase in our expenditures have required a corresponding increase of revenues, and to keep pace with the demand for more money new sources of taxation have been developed, until the people have become vexed and impatient at the periodical demand for a still larger share of their earnings.

It is not only the increase in tax which has to be paid, but the uncertainty of liability and the manner in which it is secured. Fee officers, with their attending cost, often greater than the addition to the State's revenue, causes friction and creates a feeling of distrust. It is contended by some that we should have a change in our constitution to settle our tax problem, but we are working under the present law and it is for us to improve on what we have.

We do want a more settled condition and a definite understanding of what is expected of the tax payer. We know that revenue is necessary, and few object to paying their just proportion of governmental dues. But they want to be satisfied that the affairs of the State are being efficiency administered and that the sources of taxation are so defined that, they will not be called upon to pay a double tax on the same property. In my opinion, we have too many ways of collecting taxes from the same subject. Public utilities are assessed by various boards with conflicting ideas of valuation. If this work can be consolidated so as to include every species of value into one assessment, it would result in less labor, and a decrease of friction. All values of these properties whether from franchise, grants or investment, are reflected in their income, provided all of their properties are used in operation. This income can be capitalized, which should approximate true values.

The question of assessments on solvent credits has recently become a disturbing factor. The taxing of this
species of property was supposed to have been obsolete, until recently resurrected. Solvent credits are, and should be classed as property as other values, but the cases are rare that individuals, or institutions, should be required to pay on the face value of their holdings at any given period, although they may all be solvent.

For a long number of years, solvent credits were regularly assessed with some qualifications, but later was thought to have been supplanted by a privilege tax on recorded evidences of debt. This privilege tax was small, only 15c per hundred dollars or a fractional part thereof, but the revenues derived from this tax were greater than that before received from the tax on solvent credits. It appears to me that we should extend this principle by requiring a similar tax upon all written contracts for the payment of money. The burden would be light, and the uncertainties of valuation in this species of property would be removed. This is the practical plan of securing revenue from invisible property of this nature. This would have to be collected through the sale of stamps, and in that particular, would be a radical departure from our usual custom. We have levied certain charges against the banks to cover the cost of this supervision, and the same principle is used to sustain the agricultural department. In fact, this method of making supervision self-sustaining has become a fixed practice, and applies to practically every species of industry where supervision is required, with the exception of mining. We should have the most approved mining laws and strict supervision and enforcement of same. This is now costing the State a considerable sum annually, and I can see no good reason for making an exception to the general practice, in this particular line of industry. The special tax should not be greater in the aggregate amount, than is necessary to pay the expense of the
supervision. This would be a light charge upon the output of the mines and it appears to me a just exaction.

We also have fallen into the habit of exempting certain lines of industries from taxation for stated periods. This discrimination in taxation was instituted for the purpose of encouraging the investment of capital in favored industries but, I doubt if it has ever been the means of inducing the investment of any capital whatever, within the State. All property should be required to pay its just share of the burdens of government and to recognize a contrary principle is simply to invite practices in the effort to secure favorable legislation, that are insidious in their nature and tendencies.

The back tax commissioner has served his usefulness. Like all fee systems, it will at times be abused. With the elimination of this office, we must revise our methods and change the relation of the county assessor by effecting a complete coordination between his office and that of the State tax commission. We can never have a fair and proper equalization of values unless we place the whole assessment machinery under the control and supervision of one board. The State tax commission should be the head, with the county assessors as deputies, working in co-operation and to the same end.

In addition to his other duties the county assessor should be required to make up a list of every individual, or corporation subject to a license or privilege tax, with the amount due in each case, and for what purpose, and deliver the same to the tax collector, who should be required to collect all licenses as other taxes. A duplicate of the list given to the collector should be transmitted to the auditor. This would provide for the collection of the automobile, and other license taxes, that are at present collected through various fee officers. The tax collector should also be required to make daily
settlem ents with the auditor and treasurer. The idea is, you have provided for a line of officers to perform a particular branch of service, then why scatter this work by placing a part of it with other officers whose main duties are of an entirely different nature and with different purposes in view. There should be a fitness of things to secure the highest efficiency.

FEE SYSTEM.

This is one of the systems that has been handed down to use from the time of the formation of our government. It was intended as an incentive to official action. The districts were then thinly populated, and the State and counties could not afford to attach sufficient salary to every position to make it inviting for those who were competent to fill the office. Conditions have changed and, to a great extent, we have outgrown the necessities for continuing this method of enforcing our laws and collecting our revenues.

From the great number of arrests that are made, with the large percentage of dismissals without trials and failures to convict, it would seem that the fee system is used not only to the embarrassment of those who become unjustly meshed within its folds, but also to the detriment of the State in general. The practice of instituting frivolous prosecutions in misdemeanor cases, is a growing evil, and a menace to labor conditions both at the industrial centers and in the rural sections of the State. It may be that many of these practices can be abolished without the discontinuance of the system, as applied to some sections of the State, but there are some offices in which it should be discontinued altogether, especially where used as a reward for official action. I commend this to your careful investigation and consideration.
COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.

Our county and municipal governments suffer from the same ills that afflict the State government. Those who are chosen to legislate, are voted for by an electorate of only a portion of those whom they are expected to serve. This seems to contract the views of the elected officer, because he feels himself under obligations to his immediate supporters. In matters relating to improvements or appropriations, he will often permit the rivalry of such local interest, to obscure his broader outlook for the welfare of the entire unit.

I am sure the electorate of municipal politics needs purification. A vote that could not be assailed for venality, and self-seeking would greatly aid the character of municipal government, and it would purify it and place it on a higher plane.

The theory is maintained that State legislators, boards of revenue and councilmen represent the particular interest of the respective units that elect them. That the officers therefore because of the servant of such smaller interest must subserve its interest to the exclusion of the larger unit. If this be the true principle, representative government would be an absurdity. To overcome this defect in representative government and make it practicable and sensible, it becomes necessary to concentrate the authority and fix responsibilities for official action.

The last Legislature created a general law for a commission form of government, applicable to municipalities, though its adoption by the towns has by no means become general. Our municipal code should be amended so as to require the electorate of the entire towns and cities to elect the councilmen from each ward. The mayor should be required to make up and present a budget in
writing to the council. This budget should specify all contracts involving the expenditure of money, or appropriations for any purpose. The authority of the council should be restricted to the adopting, the reducing, or the disapproval of such recommendations. This will place in the hands of the executive officer of the cities and towns the absolute control of the finances, with the council acting only as a balance wheel. The mayor then will be responsible for the financial condition of his town and a greater efficiency in administration, greater economy and greater purity in politics will be the result.

No change has been attempted in the form of our county governments and the present system has been handed down to us from colonial days.

The county permeates our political, legislative and administrative machinery. It is the unit of law enforcement, for all legislation and party political organization. It has been slow in taking up any of the reforms applied to other divisions of government. No models have been presented, and it is difficult to improve with no examples to copy. Yet, the financial condition of many of the counties of the State and of their affairs in general would indicate a change should be made. If concentration of authority and responsibility bring better results in the administration of the affairs of our towns and cities, why will it not produce similar results for counties. County commissioners should be elected from their respective districts as required at present, but by the county at large. In this way you will secure familiarity with local conditions existing in the various sections of the counties, and will more nearly obtain action by them in behalf of the interest of the whole county as a unit. There should also be a fixed limit to the amount received in the way of salaries, during any one year.
The judge of probate should be the executive officer of the county with the capacity of chairman of the board of commissioners, with the assistance and co-ordination with the other officers of the county. He should be paid by the county a fixed salary, and the fees of his office should be turned into the county treasury. He should be required to present to the commissioners in writing every contract involving the expenditure of money and other appropriations, and the authority of the board of commissioners should be limited in the same manner as that suggested for councilmen of cities. Under our present system no one is accountable for the financial condition of the counties, and their indebtedness is limited only by their ability to procure loans. The system of accounting should be uniform and all stationery used by its officers should be of a certain prescribed form, purchased from such dealers as may be designated by the State auditor, after prices have been determined through competitive bids, arranged and agreed upon by the proper board. These changes would result in material benefit, both to the State and counties, in various ways.

It would be of benefit to enact some legislation making it imperative upon any bonded officer to be bonded by an approved surety company, instead of permitting bonds by private parties. There should be an economy enforced by abolishing unnecessary petty courts as well as unnecessary officials. The county commissioners should be authorized to fix the salaries of the county treasurers, but with maximum limitation.

EDUCATIONAL.

This is the greatest and one of the most important departments, of the State government, and the one on which your most skilled constructors should be engaged.
The appropriations by the State to the cause of education have increased rapidly, in fact, they have more than kept pace with the general expense.

If, however, the State should continue indefinitely the method which has been in vogue, that of creating new schools and establishing parts of new systems, without separate and distinct control, and the appropriations to them independent of any well-defined system, we will awaken some day, to the fact, that the State has more of a political system for training the children, than an educational system. It would be on the basis of self-interest and self-advancement which is the most persistent and insidious of all politics. Your investigation into this department should be with the view of eliminating such dangers and bringing about a complete co-ordination of the schools of the system with appropriations relatively fixed.

The amount expended during 1914 by the State for educational purposes was $3,344,131.20. This was more than one-half the total revenue of the State for that year. Yet the demand is always for more funds, under the plea that Alabama stands near the bottom of all the States, in the scale of illiteracy. Some one must be at fault. Perhaps it may be in our system, or the lack of system. The amount expended by the State, for educational purposes during the year of 1906, was $1,113,989.26, or less than one-third of that paid in 1914. The total revenues collected by the State in 1906, were $3,776,546.94, while in 1914 they were $6,607,001.12.

These comparisons are made simply as a matter of information to show the ratio of growth in appropriations for educational purposes.

The total amount contributed to the educational system of the State for 1914, was $4,475,059.00. Of this amount $531,937.00 was appropriated by the cities, and
by the counties $559,991.00 through their local one mill tax, and by the State $3,344,131.20. In addition to the above, private and denominational schools enrolled 17,820 pupils in 1914, the expense, of which we have no record, but should be added to the above, to ascertain the total amount paid for the cause of education in 1914.

There are in Alabama 432,551 white children of school age and 342,475 negro children. The enrollment of the former in the public schools was 74% and of the latter 43% of the total number. This was an increase in the enrollment of each over the previous year of 9%, while the enrollment to private schools increased during the same period 13%. More than one-half of the enrollment to the white private schools were in the elementary grades. Our school term for 1914 was 135 days, an increase of two days over 1913.

COMMON SCHOOLS.

In discussing our educational system, to determine what improvement can be made, we should first agree upon what is to be the purpose in educating the children of the State at the public expense. I believe you will join me in the opinion that our prime object, should be, to enable the child to maintain itself honestly, and to add to the wealth of the world. The State should not be satisfied with any system that does not accomplish this end. This must come through the common schools, if at all, as only a small per cent of the children of the State attend any other institutions. Of the money devoted by the State to education in 1914 $2,273,436.47 was for the common schools and in addition thereto $112,000.00 was paid for the maintenance of the normal schools of the State, which was a part of the common school system.
Competent teachers are the first requisite towards obtaining satisfactory instruction. There are 10,038 teachers in our public schools, 7,522 white and 2,516 negroes. Of the white teachers 1,930 held life and first grade certificates, and 2,468 second grade and 2,578 third grade. The negro teachers grade as follows: Life and first grade 146, second grade 510 and third grade 1,754. This indicates that our teaching force on an average is deficient in education and training.

For the purpose of training teachers the State has established six white normal training schools and one for negro teachers, besides contributing to two other normal schools for negroes. The total enrollment in the white normal schools for the past two years, has been 4,417, an average of 2,208 annually. Of this total number attending during the two years only 256 received the full course. There was an enrollment of 3,317 in the negro normal schools for 1914, and of them 248 received the full course. This indicates that either a small percentage of those attending the normal schools intend to adopt teaching as a profession, or they are content with slight preparation. As to the training these students receive from such a short attendance, I suppose the course of study will disclose. It is evident, however, to my mind, considering the grading of the teachers of our elementary schools, and from the small proportion receiving the full course in the normal schools, that these schools are not fulfilling their mission. The reason for this should be sought by you.

The trouble may have been largely with the law making power. Each Legislature creates an additional normal school with a small stipend, insufficient to properly conduct a high school, and the following session slightly increases the appropriation, provided the school can show a good enrollment. As a result, they are filled with
students doing high school work instead of devoting their energies to teacher training, and the real purpose of the creation and maintenance of normal schools, to a large extent, is ignored. There has been more normal schools created than the State can support decently. The number should be reduced and those retained should receive such support from the State as their demands require and conditions will justify. There has been too great an indifference on the part of the law makers as to the results obtained from these institutions. The system is the correct one and in my opinion, should be retained as a part of the common school system.

For years the cry has been for better supervision of the public schools. If we had thoroughly equipped teachers this would not be so important, but it will always be advisable. Under present conditions, every educator, and those charged with the supervision of the school system, will tell you that this is the greatest need of the elementary schools. Instead, however, of working to obtain this much needed reform, it is being continuously pushed further away. Regardless of the competency of county superintendents, it would be impracticable for them to undertake to give proper supervision, with the present number of schools, in their respective counties. There are 4,727 rural schools for whites and 2,026 schools for negroes. The first question then for us to consider it seems, is one of consolidation and concentration. Our thoughts should be devoted towards bringing this about gradually, and in such a way as to prevent friction. The aid to school buildings, as distributed at present, is erecting a barrier to what is claimed to be a necessary requisite to an efficient school system. The application of this appropriation can be changed, so as to aid in bringing about the results so much desired. Such appropriations as may be made from the general
fund should also be used as an incentive to the same end. I am simply calling your attention to some of the inconsistencies of our educational system, that you may know how deep you must dig in relaying the foundation, before you can give thought to the superstructure. This foundation needs the work, and there is where your best talent should be devoted. Alabama is devoting a larger per cent of her gross revenue to education, than any other State, and has reached the limit for a time. Only 24% of the school fund is supplied by the localities, and the State pays 76%. There should be at least an equal distribution of the expense between the State and the units served.

High schools were created by the Legislature in 1907, and the appropriations for their maintenance were increased during the session of 1911. High schools are a valuable adjunct to an educational system, but are always considered local institutions, and the districts in which they are located should have been required to pay one-half the cost of maintenance. They are intended to be in the reach of those that they are expected to serve, and their enrollment will show this number to be very limited. Their establishment was premature, but we have them, and they should be continued as part of the system in such way that they may produce the greatest possible benefit to the cause of education. The locations for these schools were naturally fixed in towns or villages, where children were thickly congregated and where systems probably extending to the 10th, or 12th grades were already in existence. The effect has been, in many instances, to weaken the elementary schools that exist in their respective localities, by lessening their supervision and decreasing the course of instruction. It appears to me that their usefulness would be increased, by consolidating them with the elementary
schools of the same localities, and placing them under a common supervision. I am sure, it would be to the advantage of those whom they serve. In counties in which no high school has been located, if there be such, I would suggest that the present system, of establishing the high schools, be suspended, and in their stead, the amount of the appropriation made to each county, be used to develop consolidated schools, and to extend the curriculum of such schools to ten grades. Here is the opportunity and place for the department to test the virtues of consolidation.

AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGES

AND

DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL SCHOOLS.

If you have observed closely, you have discovered that the trend of my thoughts in outlining a system for the State's affairs, is an arrangement according to the fitness of things.

The natural resources of Alabama are unlimited, and we have made rapid strides in increasing our wealth. Unto whom much has been given, of him much shall be required. Our responsibilities are as great as our resources, and to discharge these duties commensurate with the demands upon us, calls for the development of the youthful mind into one of the self-reliance and independence, with a devotion to the highest principles of life. Some of these schools are doing good individual work, while others are merely existing, but the usefulness of the better one can be greatly increased by a coordination with the common-school system of the State. If this cannot be brought about satisfactorily to you, then you should pursue a different line of action. Make a common cause between all the institutions of learn-
ing, and create in each of them a desire to accomplish the particular purposes for which they were established as a component unit in a greater system.

MONTEVALLO SCHOOL.

The school for training girls at Montevallo has a place of its own, near the heart of every Alabamian. It was designated to prepare young women to make their own way in the world, and is doing a splendid work.

THE UNIVERSITY.

We have great pride in our University. It has been growing at a rapid rate, and it's influence is shown in manifold ways in every section of the State. It is the duty of the State to maintain this great institution on a liberal scale, that facilities may be afforded to those who desire and seek advantages.

You should enquire into and ascertain the manner of disposal and the results obtained from the increased appropriations for maintenance which have been made during the past several years, to the various educational institutions. The State has been liberal towards it's higher institutions of learning beyond its ability to maintain, and for the time being, they should be permitted to fully assimilate what has been extended to them that there be no waste.

JUDICIARY.

The judiciary system is costing the State $259,447.28, representing an increase of $146,131.54 in eight years, or more than 135%, and yet we seem no nearer the solution of our trouble with the courts than before the
increase in expense was incurred. The right spot has evidently not been touched.

The bar is responsible for the administration of the law, but they have been slow to agree on any measure of reform. It has been a subject of frequent discussion among the members of the bar, but the only results reached, are the expressions of its individual members.

Many courts have been created with the officers incident to their existence under the plea that they are needed to prevent undue delay in the administration of justice. The information has been given out, that some branches of the service have cleared their dockets for the first time in many years.

From reading many opinions and decisions rendered by the courts, it would seem that our endeavors have been directed more towards perpetuating a system to avoid justice, rather than to see it prevail. This prolongs hearings and encourages litigation. If our legal procedure was changed, so that the merits of each case, rather than some technicality, engaged the skill of the attorneys it seems to me there would be fewer cases to be heard, and less labor devolving upon the courts.

Every one charged with crime, or having a grievance against another, is entitled to a prompt hearing, but to secure this, it is not necessary to maintain the numerous courts we have established. Many of them have but little to do, while others are burdened with work. Those of us who are not a part of the system, and have little personal knowledge of the details, are necessarily dependent upon the advice and information to be gained from others. This should not cause us to defer the matter, however, or shrink from our duties, because we all feel sure that reform is needed.
It appears to me that a great injustice accrues from affording litigants in matters of nominal value, appeals beyond the circuit court. The increase in the expense of the judicial department, is spread from the highest to the lowest courts, and your attention is directed to the system as a whole. Since those who are accountable for the administration of the law, having failed to point the way, it is our duty to take the matter in hand, and institute such reforms in our methods of procedure, as well as in the organization of the courts, gathering our information from those who are well informed, as will justify decisive action. We should not hesitate or delay in bringing to the people the relief demanded. It would not be wise to rely upon the repeal of any particular courts. That would possibly bring relief in some instances, while in others the burden might be increased. Your action should contemplate the forming of a well rounded and equally proportioned system. To do this your action should contemplate a revision of the judiciary system as a whole, including every county and city court.

AGRICULTURE.

No interest that we have, directly affects so large a number of our citizens as agriculture. It is not only those who are engaged in this particular occupation, who feel the pulsating influence of the harvest, but those in every avocation and walk in life within our boundaries. There has been a great advance in our methods during the past few years, but there is still much greater room for advancement.

The National Government is doing a good work in developing the intensive system of farming, and dissem-
inating valuable information regarding improved methods of agriculture, in all its branches.

The State, however, has been rather backward in the movement and has given little aid that tends to the increase in the productive power of the soil. It is true we have our agricultural department, but under the compelling influence of the times, it has been looked upon as being of greater value on account of the large revenue it produces, than for its direct benefit to those engaged in agriculture. The receipts of this department for 1914, were $193,692.14. This is the largest amount collected by it during its history. Present conditions would indicate that the revenues of this department for 1915 will likely be reduced one-half. This revenue is derived from a tax of thirty cents per ton on fertilizers, every dollar of which should be returned to the source from which it is derived, in teaching better methods, securing improved varieties of farm products, in locating the best markets, and in many other ways that would result to the direct benefit of those paying the tax. To use this money otherwise, makes class taxation, and has no place in our government with its declaration of equal benefits and advantages.

It seems to me that much of these funds have been wasted in the past. Being an indirect tax it is easily collected and the department has been the omnibus to care for appropriations that the Legislature would not pay from the general fund. Let us not be satisfied with a department because it may have reached efficiency along other lines that are foreign to the purpose for which it was instituted, but insist that perfection can only be attained by each department maintaining the highest efficiency in its own sphere of the government.
CONVICT SYSTEM.

The question of handling our annual army of convicts is a complex one. We are here dealing with human units that occupy a place distinct in our social structure.

There are almost as many different theories to deal with the convict problem as there are varieties of crime. But in the practical handling of a large number of human beings, however kindly disposed and philanthropic we may endeavor to be, we cannot pay heed to impracticable, or visionary plans.

It is not so long since, when State Convicts were all confined within walls constructed for that purpose at one point. Here they were employed on adjacent farms, or assigned to such work as could be provided for them. The expense of the up-keep, however, exceeded the revenue derived from the labor, and the whole convict system of the period, developed into a serious drain upon the finances of the State.

From this system there has gradually been evolved the present system, which is a combination of contract work with the old and original system. It has proven to be a great improvement, both in the care of the convicts and in its financial results. The State employs a large number on its farms and in its cotton mills at Speigner, and though the farms have never proven to be profitable, it is well that a certain number of convicts should be continued at this work.

The average number of convicts in 1914 was 2,500, with an average maintenance cost for each of $338.36, per annum, or $28.19 per month. The receipts from the convict department for the past fiscal year were $1,162,493.18, the largest in the history of the department, while the expenses were $845,909.75, leaving a net rev-
enue to the State of $316,583.43. This has been quite an item towards supplying funds to the ever increasing demand from appropriations. As with the State, so it is with the individual. Whenever success crowns your efforts with a balance on the right side of the ledger, it requires almost as much effort to protect the outcome of your success from the insistent demand of the public, as was required in its creation.

The propaganda has been spread that the State's exploiting its convicts for the purpose of profit, and in the heat of discussion, it has been charged that the result of the management was blood money, drawn from the toil of suffering and hopeless humanity. It has been demanded that our convicts should be employed in the construction of our highways by which the State would be benefited and the condition of the convict improved. It has also been demanded that the convicts should not be employed in any branch that would place them in competition with free labor, and that also is used as an argument that the proper employment of convicts is road building. I fully believe that it should not be the sole purpose of the State to employ its convicts for profit. But the practical side of administering the convict system must not be lost sight of. To be sure the safety and physical comforts of the prisoner must be provided for. Sanitary laws must be observed, and the future of the convict after he leaves his prison, due regard must be paid. But if we are to apply humanitarian principles to criminals, the same principles must be applied to law abiding society at large against whom the criminal has offended. The criminal has been consigned to the care of the State to serve in punishment of violation of its laws. Thus a part of the expiation of his crime, is the labor and the servitude
that is demanded of him, in such manner as will inculcate steady and industrious habits, at the same time, while the servitude is brought home to the law-breaker as his due reward. This must be accomplished within the best ability of the administration, without producing the least drain upon the finances of the State, for the protection and maintenance of its institutions. This can best be done, where conditions are such that the expense for guards will not be excessive.

To prevent our convicts from competing with free labor, is a difficult proposition. They will strike at free labor no matter in what they may engage. It is claimed that certain road work may not be done unless it is performed by convicts, but that holds good with other branches of labor as well.

In performing contract work, the unit price should not be so low as to depress the wage scale of free labor. If any of the counties should desire the convicts for road work, they can be accommodated on liberal terms under State supervision. It is a fact, however, that but few counties work their own convicts on public roads.

While we are grappling with a problem difficult of solution, we must cherish and aim at an ideal that finally may accomplish our hopes. An ideal convict system, worthy to strive for, would be one that makes every provision for the physical welfare of the unfortunate convict. There he should be secluded from the outside world and provided with employment sufficiently remunerative, to pay all the expense incident to his sentence and servitude, and yet leave sufficient as an aid fund for the relief of his dependents and to provide for his maintenance for a reasonable length of time after his release. This would aid him in securing employment,
to become self-sustaining with the promise of becoming a better citizen. Let us hope that such conditions be attained and that our endeavors in this department may be crowned with success.

PUBLIC ROADS.

More than 85% of our internal traffic must be conveyed at some stage of its distribution over our wagon roads. Nothing can be said that will give greater emphasis to the importance of improving our public roads.

Every phase of our social and business life is so closely allied with the progress of road construction, that we can no longer treat with indifference the condition of our thoroughfares.

The Legislature of 1911 created a highway commission, and made an appropriation of $134,000.00 per annum to be distributed equally among the 67 counties of the State, on condition that the counties appropriate a like amount. This has proven a great incentive to road building. Scarcely a county in the State that has not availed itself of this opportunity to improve its highways. The result of this work can be seen in every section of the State, in the general improvement of the farms adjoining these improved highways.

The maintenance of many of the roads which have been constructed at considerable cost, are seriously neglected. No road can be permanent, unless it has constant care, and the system must be applicable to the particular materials of which it is constructed, and the topography of the country through which it extends. Provision should be made for their preservation in as good condition as when completed, or there should be less expended on the original work. Unless we make provision for the care of the roads, we may awake to
find ourselves with thousands of miles of improved roadways, and no funds for their maintenance. Maintenance should mean an improved condition with each year, or else we are losing part of the original investment. By the adoption of a proper system for maintenance, the poorer dirt-road, in the course of time, can be converted into one of splendid condition. Entertaining this view, I would recommend that the State suspend construction and work out a system of maintenance and ascertain the cost, and that such appropriation as may be made for the next four years, except possibly for the maintenance of the department, be confined to the amount received from the automobile license tax, and that it be used exclusively for maintenance.

INSURANCE DEPARTMENT.

There are other things that we should expect from this department besides the collection of revenues. The office to which this department has been consigned, was created for duties entirely foreign from those we expect from an insurance commissioner, and it is impossible to obtain from this dual position, the results secured elsewhere. There was nothing to be saved from such an arrangement and much to be lost in efficiency. Our insurance laws are not what they should be. Those who pay the premium for insurance, pay the license taxes, and there should be some legislation and machinery through which resulting benefits may accrue to them in return.

LEGAL DEPARTMENT.

The legal department of the State is looked after by the attorney general and two assistants. In addition
to the natural increase in the expense of this department by the addition of two assistants, there has been paid out of the treasury large sums annually for the hire of attorneys.

If the present arrangement does not secure suitable talent to represent the State in important cases, we should change to some other method.

There is no profession in which special training shows to a better advantage than in the practice of the law. The State is entitled to the best in everything. Instead of two assistants, if we had only one, designated as States council and whose engagement was dependent upon good behavior, we then could have an attorney trained in the service and ready to represent the State on any occasion. To secure the best talent, this should be one of the main purposes sought, the salary would have to be commensurate, but it would not be necessary for it to approach the sum paid out by the State during any one of the past eight years.

PUBLIC UTILITIES.

Our laws are ample for the supervision and control of the railroads. But as all public utilities are of necessity monopolistic, there must be some restraining agency to protect the public against the possibility of oppression and extortion. If this regulation is to be of practical service, however, it must be just to the public utility company as well, for it should not in its terms become tyrannical so that it would destroy and strangle private enterprise. There are some who harbor extreme views and they desire that regulation should be carried to the full extent of the limit, regardless that such policy would make it impossible to procure private capital and to enlist enterprise for con-
struction, the operation and the maintenance of public utilities.

In order that a proper solution of the problem be accomplished, it is necessary to confer upon regulating authority the power to prevent such abuses as utility companies are apt to practice, when left to absolute freedom. There is a vast field open for development of our State which needs must remain dormant, without the necessary capital. The welfare of the public and the successful regulation of any law depends altogether upon the ability and the discretion of the commission in charge of the duties to administer the law. The most liberal laws can be made oppressive so as to arrest development of our resources and produce utter stagnation. Thus greater evils may be brought to trouble us than any that could have existed under a system without control. The framers of the law cannot provide against such contingencies and must rely on the good sense of the public in selecting men of experience in affairs, of good judgment and high character for the administration of such laws as are enacted.

The additional duties created by such legislation should be placed on the railroad commission. Within this legislation, there should be included the authority to control the stock and bond issues of utility corporations. Such regulations would be of two-fold value. It would confer protection to the investing public against excessive and worthless issues in one instance, and in the other, it would be reflected finally in better equipments, better accommodations and in moderate rates for service charged. It is my belief, that it will be good for the State, and it will bring about the more rapid development of its resources, if all proposed issues of stocks and securities of corporations within the State of whatever nature, be required to submit their plans
to some commission for its approval, before they are authorized to issue such securities. Nor should the stock of corporations formed in other states, be permitted to be offered for sale within the State, until it has been approved by the State Commission.

The purpose is not to restrict too much the issuance of securities of merit, but to protect the public from worthless stocks and at the same time to protect the corporations from themselves. One disastrous scheme with its stocks in possession among a wide circle of people throughout the State, can do more to prevent the promotion of worthy enterprises, than the success of five good institutions. Instead of directing capital of our small investors to foreign securities, we should aim to present an inviting field for investment to our own people, within the borders of our own State.

**INDUSTRY, LABOR AND CAPITAL.**

That government is best which promotes the welfare and happiness of its people. It is therefore necessary that those interested with the government should be familiar with every walk of human life. Without such knowledge, it would be difficult to attempt to reconcile the differing interest by which we must undertake to place the State in the front rank of commercial activity.

Society is composed of elements of which each have its own cares and interest. Each of these elements have its claims which often conflict with those of others, and yet the composition of society is such that one element depends upon the other. Within society there are therefore conflicting aims and when legislation is called in to enforce its arbitrament, it is difficult to say whether it will provide success on one side or contentment on the other. Questions that involve the welfare
of society cannot be solved offhand. They have to be approached with care and weighed well at the time, until we have attained that condition where differences will be minimized and all friction adjusted by impartial bodies.

The present system of dealing with those injured in pursuit of their daily labors is not only wasteful and uncertain, but productive of antagonism between the workman and employer. An equitable compensation law would not only bring about improved relations between employer and employee, but would promote the safety of the workman. But of greater importance than compensation, is really the accomplishment of safety to the workmen. If this aim is kept in view, such conditions as are liable to produce injury will pass away and experts will be employed to minimize danger, by the introduction of safety appliances and preventives of accidents. The safety of the employees should form a part of the fixed charges on the product of industry, whereby the cost is divided between the employer, the employee and the consumer, and so minimized that it practically does not make itself felt.

Perhaps with the industrial advancement of our State we may be permitted to build the hope of the eventual introduction of compulsory accident insurance in our factories, when the premium is graduated and adjusted between the employer and the employee and added to the cost of the product. The amount paid under our present system by the employer consequent to injuries, no doubt exceeds in the aggregate the claims that would accrue under an equitable compensation act, but of the amount paid, only a small percentage reaches the injured or his dependents.

Our State is rapidly becoming an industrial country and it devolves upon your action whether the courts
shall be filled with damage suits, resulting in great economic waste to those engaged in industrial pursuits. I would recommend that you enact an equitable compensation law that the benefits which is to be derived from such legislation may ensue.

Many of our working people from necessity have to resort to the "Loan Shark" to tide them over a short period before their regular pay day. Instead of continuing legislation against the loan company, it appears to me, the object of such legislation can be more certainly obtained by shortening the regular time in which the pay envelope is given the laborer, to two weeks instead of four.

**CHILD LABOR.**

The factory inspector who is charged with the duty of enforcing the child labor laws, of the State, in his report for 1912, in reference to these laws, says, "The laws pertaining to the employment of children in Alabama are conspicuous by their ambiguity, inefficiency, inexplicitness and inadequacy." We have regulated the railroads and public utility corporations, to protect the public from unreasonable exactions and abuses, and to husband the resources of these enterprises. We have also laws for the protection and perpetuation of our game, and laws to conserve our natural resources, but at the time, we are neglecting those for whose benefit these great properties are supposed to be in waiting. Human conservation should be the first consideration of those charged with making the laws. We may hoard our millions, our factories may supply the great markets of the world with their wares, and our navy may rule the seas, but the trend of our civilization depends upon the policies which the men with such authority
as you possess, put into execution, for the uplifting and protection of those upon whom we must depend to maintain and perpetuate our institutions. It is a question that should be dealt with in a way to secure uniformity of legislation by all the States. This cannot be done quickly, but we cannot afford to be indifferent, or inactive. I recommend that you enact such laws on this subject as will place Alabama fully abreast with the most advanced State, exposed to similar influences.

THE CONFEDERATE SOLDIER.

It has been half of a century since the Confederate soldier, after four years of bitter warfare in defense of principle, turned his face towards that which is dearest on earth, home; there to revive his fortunes, and start anew life's struggles. Many of them were maimed and diseased, and have proven unequal to the tasks. They have not many more years to be with us, and it is the duty of the State to extend its protecting hand, that their declining years may be passed in peace and comfort.

The amount paid for pensions by the State, in 1914, was $1,013,432.30 which was derived as follows. One mill tax $575,284.49 and the balance of $438,147.81 additional appropriation. In addition to the above there was appropriated and used at the Soldier's Home located at Mountain Creek $19,322.58. I would suggest that it be required of the judges of probate, to have the pension warrants delivered direct to the beneficiaries. The R. F. D. Carriers can be constituted notary publics for the purpose of attesting the signatures of the payee, when the warrants are sent by post.
PRIMARY ELECTION LAW.

Our primary laws were instituted for the purpose of affording each individual citizen an equal opportunity to designate his choice, in the selection of candidates to represent the political party with which he might be allied.

As to whether this has been accomplished our primary election laws, is a subject of frequent discussion. Primary elections for nominating candidates, has won its way into public favor, and has come to stay. It may have objectionable features, and by degrees, we may be able to eradicate them, but, I confess I see at this time, no satisfactory remedy.

I commend to you a careful study of our primary election law for such action as you may determine will improve the system, but unless some definite remedy appears to you clearly will bring the needed relief, it would be wiser to leave it alone, that longer experience may suggest the proper course to be pursued.

VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND DEPARTMENTS.

The eleemosynary institutions of the State should receive your careful consideration. You cannot afford to be parsimonious in their management but you should ascertain facts as to their conduct, and grant what is needed.

The law creating the banking department has had a most wholesome effect in the State, and the condition of our banks and trust companies have greatly improved under the wise provisions of this law, and the enforcement thereof. Many new banks have been organized, deposits have greatly increased and public confidence in State banks much improved. This branch of State
government, therefore, has become one of the most important that you will have to consider. Depositors in banks are entitled to be protected to the fullest extent, and the wisdom of the Legislature of 1911 in passing this law, is best evidenced by the fact that few banks have failed and depositors therein have lost but little since the banking department was created.

The fish and game law was intended as one for the conservation of the birds and other game. This law became necessary in this day of improved fire arms and the destructive tendencies of man. Instead of being regarded as a department for revenue it should be required to use its funds to produce and propagate more game.

The authority given the department of jail and factory inspector is too liberal. The State has virtually lost all control and has subjected itself to unlimited demands for maintenance. There is no greater reason why this condition should continue with this department than there would be to apply the same principle generally, and make them applicable to every department of the State government. This same principle in the operation of our health department to a certain extent, extends to the counties and burdens are frequently created with no corresponding benefits. The paymaster should be permitted to exercise some restraining hand, to prevent the dissipation of the funds and to secure a full measure of service in return for the expense.

It is your duty and privilege to scrutinize every department of the State, that you may act with intelligence in putting into effect the economies demanded by the people. There are some departments that stand out prominently as being of doubtful benefit and such should be discontinued.
Of these I will mention the cotton statistician. This work if performed, would be a duplication of that done by the National Government, and could be of no value to us.

There is some demand for the retention of the immigration Bureau under the claim that this will be an opportune time to secure desirable immigrants. This department to be of value would require a much larger amount for its disposal than it commands at present, but as the State cannot at this time devote a greater sum to this cause, it would be advisable to withdraw from it the support heretofore given.

There are many other questions affecting the State's welfare that should be discussed, but as this privilege extends to the executive throughout your session, I will reserve the right for future occasions.

In conclusion let us offer up our spirit in the service of the State. Let us pledge our steadfast desire to help and serve the people of our great State. I would like to help and serve the people of our great State. I would like to share our responsibilities with all the people of Alabama, and therefore invite their co-operation, their voice, their help, and their advice, to give the State the service for which we have solemnly dedicated our time and our abilities.

CHAS. HENDERSON,
Governor.