ANNUAL MESSAGE
of
JOHN G. RICHARDS
GOVERNOR

To the General Assembly
of South Carolina

Regular Session, Beginning January 10, 1928
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Gentlemen of the General Assembly:

It is my pleasure and privilege to submit for your consideration this, my annual message, that is required by the Constitution of the State.

While the year that has just closed has, in the Providence of God, brought us many blessings, still we have also suffered our disappointments, our bereavements, and our heart-aches. Several of those who labored with us at the last session have crossed the Great Divide, and have gone to their reward on the other side of the River. While we miss them, reverence their memories, and sympathize with their loved ones, let us with renewed determination, vigor and faith, press on for the attainment of those things they regarded, and that we regard as for the best interests of our State and people.

AGRICULTURE

The present year, 1927, has been another fraught with disaster for our farmers. While the early season was full of promise for average crops throughout the State, too much rain in some sections, and a lack of it in others, reduced production of staple crops in many instances far below that of 1926. In the Counties where cotton is not the sole money crop conditions are much better than where our farmers confined themselves to cotton. This is not only an argument for, but is conclusive proof of the wisdom of diversified farming. Not within my recollection has South Carolina had greater promise of an average yield of cotton than last year, and this condition of promise was ours until the boll-weevil got in its destructive work. Central and Southern South Carolina have been sorely stricken, while the destruction in the Northern section of the State has not been so great. Hundreds, yes, I may say thousands of farmers in our stricken districts have not made sufficient cotton, even with the better prices, to pay their fertilizer bills, to say nothing of their other numerous expenses, and are therefore in a deplorable condition.

Under normal conditions South Carolina should produce not less than one and a half million bales of cotton. The 1926 production was one million eight thousand and sixty-eight bales,
while the past year we only produced about seven hundred forty thousand bales, or just a little more than half of what we should produce under normal conditions. The increase in price, of course, has been beneficial, but even with the increase in price the total value of the crop is many millions less than normal.

While we are proud of our great record as an agricultural State, yet it is evident if we are to hold our position among the States as a great agricultural people, and meet the demands of a rapidly increasing, non-producing population, then we must not only change our methods, but our policies.

Cotton can no longer be grown profitably under boll-weevil conditions by old methods. Early planting, rapid cultivation, with proper fertilization, and the application of poison in the early stages of the growth of the plant is the hope of the cotton planter. To rely upon cotton as the only money crop was always a mistaken policy, and now it is fatal. South Carolina has nineteen million acres of land. Much of this land is very fertile, and adopted to the profitable production of all crops grown in the Temperate Zone, especially corn, cotton, tobacco, fruit, berries and all kinds of trucks. South Carolina has the great distinction of having produced the greatest yield for a given acre of cotton, oats and corn that has been produced in the United States. Besides, she has the honor of having produced in 1926, using the per acre value as the basis, the greatest amount of string beans, cabbage, tomatoes, potatoes, lettuce, strawberries, tobacco and cotton of any of her sister States. Despite our millions of fertile acres, unexcelled climate, favorable labor conditions, and the intelligence and progressiveness of our farmers, only about five and a half million acres are under cultivation, and hundreds of our farmers are quitting the farms annually, moving into the towns and cities, and engaging in other lines of industries.

Agriculture, throughout our past history, has been the prime factor in our commercial and industrial life, and the main source of the progress of our great State. Conditions are growing more and more alarming, and should receive the best and most serious thought of our Legislature and our people. Every effort should be made, and every inducement given, not only to our own people, but to those of other sections, to cause them to take advantage of the opportunities which our fertile soils offer, and turn the tide back to agriculture, and to the farm, and not away, as at present.
I urge, Gentlemen of the General Assembly, that you assure our farmers that not one dollar of additional tax shall be levied upon their farms, and that you will do what you can to lighten the burdens that already rest so heavily upon them. I urge that you adopt the same liberal policy, and offer like privileges to those who purchase lands and engage in farming that you so wisely granted the manufacturers at your last session, that of tax exemption for a period of not less than five years. Such a policy, I feel assured, would receive the approval of our entire people, and would do much to rehabilitate farming in our State.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

South Carolina already enjoys an enviable position in the industrial world, but in no period of her history has there been greater promise than is ours today. Eleven years ago, or in 1916, the invested capital in textile manufacturing was $83,772,079.00. In 1926 the amount has increased to $192,229,505.00. The annual product in 1916 was $109,462,693.00, while in 1926 the value of the annual product was $237,731,775.00, an increase of $128,269,082.00. Wages increased $29,137,048.00. Spindles increased 642,231. Looms increased 13,741. Village population increased 52,839, and employees increased 21,292.

South Carolina has the great distinction of ranking third in the Union, and second in the South, as to the extent and importance of her textile manufacturing industry. No State can offer greater advantages, or more ideal conditions as to climate, labor and laws governing industrial development than can South Carolina, and the immediate future is full of promise for not only new textile manufacturing enterprises, but a general industrial awakening and development throughout the State.

The Georgia and Florida Railroad has extended its lines to Greenwood, South Carolina. The Southern Railroad has just completed extensions and shops here in Columbia, at a cost of one million and a half dollars. The merger of the A. C. L., the L. & N., and the Clinchfield Railroad guarantees the expenditure of many millions of dollars within the State for extensions, betterments and enlargement of its plants, and if there is not an outrageous invasion of the rights of the State by the Interstate Commerce Commission there will be an expenditure of many millions of dollars in extending the lines of the Pied-
mont and Northern Railway throughout the Piedmont section of our State.

The Federal Power Commission is my authority for the statement that we are fifth today in hydro-electric development, New York, California, Alabama and Washington only out-ranking us. With the completion of the Barstow development upon the Saluda river, we have two hundred thousand additional horse-power guaranteed. Then our State takes third place, with only New York and California leading. Our streams offer millions of horse-power still undeveloped, giving us almost unlimited possibilities, and creating the natural hope and ambition that we may yet lead the Nation in this particular industry.

Gentlemen of the General Assembly, with our ideal climatic conditions for all year round activity and service, which must promote production and reduce cost, with labor that is native born, intelligent and thrifty, with the laws affecting the industrial life of our State, reasonable and just, with an abundance of power, reasonable in price, generated by the streams in our very midst, the spirit of our people, their friendly attitude of both mind and heart toward capital that comes to us for investment, their determination to protect the investments that have already been made, and a tax system that is just and stable—with these things to offer, gentlemen, South Carolina may confidently face the future, and feel assured that a full measure of industrial development is made certain.

I wish to heartily commend you for the passage of the Act at the last session exempting from taxation for a period of five years manufacturing enterprises that may be established in our midst. This legislation is not only wise and proper, but is expressive of the true spirit of our government and our people.

EDUCATION

I take great pleasure in commending the splendid work that is being done by the Colleges of our State. These institutions are training and equipping young men and women, not only for the responsibilities of citizenship, but upon their shoulders, in a large degree, must rest the future of our educational interests, the life, the greatness of the very system, itself.

Of course, the utmost care should be exercised by the responsible heads of these institutions, that only such things be taught,
and such doctrines inculcated, as will insure a continuation of the love, respect and admiration, not only of those whose fortune it is to patronize them, but also of those whose pride it is to assist in supporting them, and I feel assured that this will be done.

Eight-hundred and eighty-three students were graduated from our State Colleges last year, and there is every prospect for an even more splendid result this year. Matriculations have increased, and there is every evidence of increasing progress at each institution.

At Winthrop College two hundred and fifty-five students graduated in 1926, and in 1927 the number increased to three hundred fifty-five, an increase of thirty-nine and three tenths per cent.

At The Citadel forty-eight students graduated in 1926, and in 1927, sixty were graduated, an increase of twenty-five per cent.

Clemson College graduated one hundred twenty-three students in 1926, and one hundred fifty-eight in 1927, an increase of twenty-eight and five-tenths per cent.

At the University one hundred seventy-one students graduated in 1926, and in 1927 the number increased to one hundred eighty-five, a percentage increase of eighty-two one hundredths per cent.

These are records of achievement of which we are justly proud, and which guarantee at your hands that encouragement and support which will maintain these institutions at the highest standard of service and efficiency.

I respectfully submit, however, that the policy of permitting our Colleges to retain rents, tuition fees, and other incidentals, to be expended in permanent improvements, is unwise, and should not be longer continued. This new departure encourages extravagance, is altogether an unbusiness-like method of procedure, and is a positive surrender of prerogatives and duties that are distinctly imposed upon the Legislature by the Constitution of our State. Every dollar collected by these institutions, and other Departments of the State Government, should be turned into the treasury, and when improvements or enlargements are necessary these should be made through direct appropriations by the Legislature.
THE COMMON SCHOOLS

Common School education is the first and fundamental duty of the State to its citizens. Acting upon this established principle, and commonly accepted fact, South Carolina has provided, and offers to her children common-school advantages that are modern and comprehensive, and that measure up to the requirements of the highest standards of efficiency. In practically every community in the State, comfortable, commodious and attractive school buildings have been erected, and every demand has been supplied, from the child in the Kindergarten to the children in the High Schools, and all that is necessary for a well regulated system is to effect a few changes in operation.

The 6-0-1 Law makes certain a seven months school term, and places within reach of every community a term of nine months. While a wonderful reformation has been effected in our school system, the law should be amended so as to make every dollar appropriated effective, and, at the same time, prevent extravagance and waste.

There can be no question that there is great waste of money caused by the present methods of distribution, and this should be corrected at the present session of your honorable body. There can be no excuse for extravagance, not even in our laudable ambition and determination to provide our children with the very best educational advantages that are obtainable.

Today we are disbursing the school funds upon the basis of enrollment. This is not only unjust to the tax-payer, but it places a premium upon padded rolls. The only just distribution is that based upon average daily attendance. The State should not be forced to pay for children who are not in attendance upon the schools, or for services not performed. If you adopt the average attendance plan, gentlemen, you will not only save the tax-payer many thousands of dollars, but you will create a stronger incentive for greater effort on the part of our local school authorities, not only to see to it that all of the children are in school, but that they are kept there for the full term.

South Carolina, gentlemen, can boast that she is doing as much, or more, for the educational advancement of her citizens, in proportion to population, than any of her sister States, and I delight to congratulate you and the people of the State upon this fact.
Our expenditures for 1926-7 for all common school purposes, including teachers, were $16,594,760.28. $10,034,774.82 was spent for teachers' salaries, and the remaining $6,544,760.28 was expended for grounds, buildings, rents, repairs, transportation and other sums that may be referred to as incidentals.

Before closing this subject, I wish to refer, with pride, to the fact that the blight of illiteracy among our white people has been so greatly reduced that today it is less than three per cent of our white population. This is a great record, and does credit to our State and people. The failure to differentiate between the white people and the negroes in the matter of illiteracy is the cause for the injustice that has been done our State, and for the gross misrepresentations that have been hurled broad-cast over the country. South Carolina is doing a wonderful part by her negro population, and is providing splendid educational facilities for them. Illiteracy among the negroes has been greatly and steadily reduced, as the records plainly show. In 1900 the percentage was fifty-two and eight-tenths, while today, it is less than twenty per cent.

So, Gentlemen of the General Assembly, South Carolina’s common school record is one of the brightest pages in her most splendid history.

BIENNIAL SESSIONS

It grows more evident each year that the interests of the State would be subserved by biennial sessions of the Legislature. Twice, the people of this State have declared for this reformation in our Government, and, as often, their demands have been denied. I appeal to you, I urge you to pass the necessary legislation, re-submitting this question, so that the people may again have an opportunity to demand that which Legislatures that did not keep the faith have refused them in the past.

Annual sessions of the Legislature not only entail unnecessary expenditures of money, and impose useless burdens, but they retard progress, and are demoralizing to the business interests of the State. Many of the progressive States of America have seen wisdom in the change, and have adopted biennial sessions. Again I urge that you respect the rights of our people, and provide for the institution of this reform in our government.
LONG SESSIONS

The 1927 session of the General Assembly was one of the longest in the history of the State. I urge, in behalf of the people, that the present session be one of the shortest.

It is true that the last session was, in a large degree, composed of new men inexperienced in legislation, and that it was also the beginning of a new term, with committees to be organized, and a legislative policy to be defined and worked out. This necessarily required time and labor, but does not excuse the waste of time that was so evident, and that characterized your last session.

It is becoming more and more a practice of convening on Tuesdays and adjourning on Thursdays or Fridays, in other words, working from two to two and a half days a week. This practice is mainly responsible for the unnecessarily long sessions. It cannot be justified, and should not be excused. Legislative sessions should be convened on Mondays and recessed on Saturdays. If this practice is adopted and adhered to, then the necessary work of the session can be accomplished within the forty days provided by the Constitution of the State.

PENAL AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS

These institutions are all doing good work, each in its own line of endeavor. Superintendents of these Departments, and those associated with them, are faithful in the discharge of their duties, and are protecting the interests of the State as represented by them. I respectfully refer you to the reports that are submitted by these Departments, which reports set forth fully the activities of each.

The State Hospital, the Penitentiary, and the State Training School, have all been enlarged during the past year, the authority having been granted by your honorable bodies,—a new dormitory for the negro men at the State Hospital, a dormitory for the women at the Penitentiary, and a dormitory at the State Training School at Clinton. These additional facilities were very much needed, and will supply the immediate and necessary demands upon these institutions.

With the completion of the Woman's Building at the Penitentiary, some improvements to the Tuberculosis Hospital, and repairs on other buildings that have been made in the past few
months, this plant will be in first-class condition, and will meet the requirements there for years to come, and it is to be hoped, will put a stop to the unnecessary and unbusiness-like clamor for a new penitentiary.

CONSOLIDATION AND ABOLITION

Again, Gentlemen, I call your attention to the waste that is incident to the administration of our State Government, and again I renew my appeal to you in behalf of the people to put a stop to it.

There are Departments that should be abolished, and there are others whose activities should be consolidated. I have given a year of the most careful study to the operation of our State Government, and I am confirmed in my opinion that every recommendation I offered at your last session was in the interest of efficiency, and for the good of the State, and I renew each and every one of them, and urge their consideration and adoption by your honorable bodies during the present session.

In the schedule of consolidations which I urged you to adopt at your last session was that of the Tax Commission, with the offices of the State Treasurer and the Comptroller General. This consolidation would effect a wonderful reform, not only in the operation of our Government, but it would save not less than one hundred thousand dollars annually, and, at the same time, restore to the people the control of the tax machinery of their Government. Abolition of the Tax Commission, and the necessary enlargement of the powers and machinery of the offices of the Treasurer and the Comptroller General, is the righteous demand of the people of South Carolina.

The Tax Commission should never have been created, for it is an institution undemocratic to the core. With the growth of the State, and the extension of its tax requirements, the taxing departments created by the Constitution, and whose heads were elected by the people, should have been enlarged, but, instead, the Tax Commission was created, given powers never contemplated by the Constitution, and placed beyond the control of the people.

One of the arguments used by those who favor the Tax Commission is that the people are incapable of selecting proper men to assess and collect the taxes of our State, and that the Commission should be removed from politics by appointment. This is a direct attack, not only upon those who adopted our Con-
stitution, but it is a direct reflection upon the intelligence of the people, themselves, and upon popular government. I respectfully invite anyone holding such views to submit them to the people when seeking re-election, and behold the result. Besides, gentlemen, the Commission has not been removed from politics. On the contrary, the Tax Commission is one of the greatest political machines connected with our State Government today. This is a fact well known to those familiar with the Government, and can be easily demonstrated to those who are not.

I am urging this reform in the interest of efficiency and economy, and as a righteous demand of the people for a return to Constitutional Government.

STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

South Carolina has a record for highway construction and maintenance that cannot be surpassed, or even equalled, when measured by the population, area and wealth of our State. The past few years have been marvels of development, and today, our people point with pride to the fact that we have gotten out of the mud and sand of the past, and can travel the length and breadth of the State upon splendidly constructed bridges and standard highways, built either of hard surface or sand clay.

Our State has 3,898 miles of standard earth type highways, completed or under construction, 898 miles of hard surface, completed or under construction, and in addition, 292 miles of hard surfaced roads planned and financed for construction. If the rate of progress is continued that was made the past year, 1927, it is estimated that the entire hard surface program of the State Highway system will be completed in 1931.

Our State is to be congratulated upon the fact that our road building and maintenance is done on a cash or pay-as-you-go basis. The State does not owe a dollar for her roads. It is true that several of the Counties have bonded themselves for road building purposes, but these bonds will be retired upon maturity with State Highway funds, through the reimbursement plan. So, it may be said that our entire system of highway building is done upon a cash basis.

The State spends many millions of dollars annually in its program of road construction and maintenance, and its policy has been one of rapid construction. Both of these conditions
invite and afford the opportunity for extravagance and waste. Of course, the people of the State rightfully demand and expect that the utmost care shall be exercised, so that every dollar expended will bring a proper return, and that there be neither extravagance nor waste.

Careful investigation convinces me, gentlemen, that no matter what may have been the practice in the past, the present Commission is exercising great care and diligence to construct the very best roads, with the least possible cost, that they are earnestly endeavoring to discover the waste wherever it exists, and that they are cutting it out. As evidence of this, I call your attention to the fact that hard surface roads are being constructed today at a cost of around five thousand dollars per mile less than it cost a year ago. I wish to commend the present Highway Commission, and congratulate the State upon the splendid constructive service that is being rendered by that body.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

I promised the people of the State a non-partisan administration of the affairs of the Government, and a law enforcement program of even handed justice. These pledges, together with every promise I made to our people, I have striven, and shall continue to strive, to redeem.

Crime is not prevalent in South Carolina alone. It is the curse of the Nation. How to reduce it and create a greater respect for the majesty of the law is a subject that deserves and demands the profoundest thought, not only of Legislatures, but of all society. I cannot say with certainty whether there has been an increase or a decrease of crime in the State during the past year. I do declare that I have used every force at my command to enforce all law, and to bring all violators to the bar of justice. In my efforts to enforce the law, with few exceptions, I have had the cooperation of all law enforcing agencies, and especially is this true of the Sheriffs of the State. I have tried to impress the fact that there must be no discrimination as to the laws violated, or as to who the violators were, but an observance of strict and determined enforcement.

Of course, I cannot be expected at this time to enter into a lengthy discussion of the causes of crime, or the remedies that should be applied. I feel sure, however, that all will agree
that when the criminal class becomes convinced that strict and certain justice will be meted out by the Courts of the land, and that punishment commensurate with the crime will be inflicted, then there will be greater respect for the law.

There is too much delay in the operation of our Courts, and in many instances there is too much inequality in the sentences imposed for like offenses. Especially is this true in whiskey cases. To whiskey and the ever ready pistol can be charged most of our crime, and yet, violations of the law against bootlegging and the carrying of pistols are both treated as slight offenses.

I recommend, gentlemen, that you amend the laws as to these offenses, so as to make the punishment certain and severe. Violators of these laws should be given prison or Chain-gang sentences, and not allowed the alternative of fines. If this is done, distilling and boot-legging can be controlled, and there will be fewer pistol carriers, with a corresponding decrease of homicides and murders in the State.

I wish to impress another fact: if there were no purchasers there would be no boot-legging. If it is illegal to distill and sell intoxicating liquors, why isn't it wrong to purchase it? What is the difference? I urge, not only in the name of consistency, but righteousness, that both classes be punished alike. We have laws against stealing. The purchaser of stolen goods, when he knows they are stolen, commits a crime, and is punished upon conviction. Why not a law against the purchase of liquor, when the purchaser knows that the sale is illegal? A law of this kind, enforced, would reduce crime in South Carolina to a minimum, and do it speedily.

I again urge upon all our people, our Legislature, our Courts, and the law enforcement departments of our Government, both County and State, to unite with me in a determined crusade against crime in its every phase, that we may make of our State a leader in law enforcement, and that we may become the outstanding exponent of the majesty and supremacy of the law.

LYNCHING

Although sorely tried, and many times placed under the most harrowing circumstances, South Carolina is to be congratulated that her people "possessed their souls in patience" and did not resort to lynch law, but in every instance submitted their
grievances to the regularly constituted Courts of the land. Let our people determine that the record of 1927 shall be maintained, that never again shall a lynching blacken South Carolina's record, and that we will sustain and defend regularly constituted law under any and all circumstances, to the glory and honor of our State.

TAXATION

Gentlemen of the General Assembly, in approaching the subject of taxation, I do so, realizing its great importance, and how vitally it affects every interest of our State and people. A just and stable system of taxation,—a system that reaches all classes of citizens and property, and that distributes the burdens of government equitably,—while difficult of attainment, is the goal of all Legislatures, and all of those who are seeking the peace, happiness and prosperity of the people.

South Carolina has suffered, and is still suffering from the unrest created by the continued agitation of this question. There are those who would have us change our entire tax system, and enter the field of experimentation. There are others who would create a vast machine, at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars, for the purpose of revaluing the property of the State; and still, there are others, who, I believe constitute a vast majority of our people, who are opposed to radical changes, but who are anxious to better perfect the system under which we are living, their motto being "Better endure the ills we have than fly to those we know not of."

There was never a period of the State's history, gentlemen, in which there was greater promise in the development of her resources than at the present time. Millions of dollars are being invested in railroad construction, manufacturing plants and hydro-electric development. Our tax system and the sources of revenue for the support of the Government and the State's institutions are common knowledge, not only to our own people but those beyond our borders.

While the system is far from perfect, and should be improved, still it is that upon which our government has rested, and our great institutions have been constructed and maintained. It is a system under which millions of dollars have been invested in our State, and it is a system, which, if it does not especially invite capital, certainly does not deter its coming.
The manufacturing interests of New England and the North are seeking warmer climate, better labor conditions, the raw material and friendly atmosphere, and a tax system that is founded upon the principles of justice and of equality. All of this South Carolina has to offer, and upon this she rests with assurance of the development of her rich and unlimited resources.

In this period of transition, of change, that has so much of promise for our State, it would be extremely unwise to create doubt and uncertainty in the public mind by the adoption of a new and experimental tax policy. What South Carolina needs most to do is to equalize the burdens that must be imposed for the support of the Government and the State institutions. She needs to make operative the machinery already provided for the valuation and assessment of tangible property that is escaping taxation, and an amendment to the Constitution that will give to the Legislature power to assess and tax intangible property. Our people are demanding equalization. They are demanding that all property, both tangible and intangible, be made to share its just proportion of the burdens of government. This demand is just, it is reasonable, and it is the basic principle upon which South Carolina's tax system was founded.

Gentlemen of the General Assembly, let us give to South Carolina an administration of her affairs that shall be characterized by safe and sane economy, that will cut out the waste wherever it exists, and that will give a dollar's return for every dollar invested. Let us first determine what is necessary for the proper administration of the Government, and the protection of our worthy institutions, (institutions that have already been established) and levy the necessary taxes.

There must be no retrogression, but certainly, this is not a time for expansion. This administration inherited a deficit of more than two millions of dollars; and other contractual expenditures, that ran into and through 1927 and into 1928. I urge you to unite with me in my efforts to absorb this deficit, and to get the State back to a cash basis, without the issuance of bonds, or an increase of taxation. I promised the people that if possible I would reduce their tax burdens. This could, and would have been done but for this deficit inherited from another administration, of which I, and the people generally, knew nothing.
With the proper exercise of economy, with our present sources of revenue, with all property on the books for taxation, and with the natural increase of taxable values, the deficit can be wiped out, and the State restored to a cash basis. Then we can stand firm, or advance, adopting the only safe policy, that of paying as we go.

I urge, gentlemen, that you pass necessary legislation, submitting to the people the question of granting to the Legislature the power to classify property so that the escaping intangible values may be properly and justly assessed and taxed, and made to bear a just proportion of the burdens of government, and for the protection that the holders of these values enjoy under the government.

I also urge that the machinery for the valuation and assessment of tangible property be reorganized, and that the law be amended so as to reach and assess values in the local communities in the several Counties—with the County Boards equalizing as between communities, and a State Board here in Columbia to equalize as between Counties. That all the property of the State may be placed upon the records, and that it may be properly and justly assessed for taxation, among the very best men of each community should be employed. They should be men who are acquainted with the property of their communities, and its relative values, and men who can be relied upon to discharge their duty fearlessly.

I am proposing no new scheme of taxation. It is the principle upon which the State has been proceeding for years. The trouble lies in the fact that it has not been effective, and the reasons for the failure are that the men for these important positions have been carelessly selected; insufficient time has been given for the work, and the pay has been entirely inadequate. The power and the responsibility rests with you. The people are demanding relief, and there should be no further delay.

CONCLUSION

Gentlemen of the General Assembly, I feel that South Carolina will have your patriotic, earnest and devoted service, and that your deliberations will be characterized by wisdom, patience
and firm determination to serve the State, and to promote the interests of our people.

In your labors for the welfare of our State, I pledge my sympathy and hearty cooperation, and wish for you a most pleasant and prosperous session. And may the blessings of Almighty God rest and abide upon our State, and may all of her interests be precious in His sight.

JOHN G. RICHARDS,
Governor.

January 10, 1928.