

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

M. F. ANSEL,

Compliments of

Martin F. Ansel,

Governor.

General Assembly of South Carolina,

January 15th, 1907.

COLUMBIA, S. C.
GONZALES AND BRYAN, STATE PRINTERS.
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Gentlemen of the General Assembly and My Fellow Citizens :

In obedience to the will of the people of this State, as expressed at the ballot box, I am here today to take the Solemn oath of office as Governor of South Carolina, and to assume the duties of this high and responsible position.

I am deeply grateful to the people for this manifestation of their confidence, and when I survey the vast responsibilities and duties connected with the same, I realize deeply my inability to fully meet them. Feeling, however, that I shall have your full coöperation and support, and relying upon your help at all times, I assume these duties and responsibilities, promising to give to them my best judgment and talents and all the powers with which the great God has endowed me.

And, Gentlemen of the General Assembly, while the responsibilities assumed by me are great, yet the same will of the people has called you to the performance of duties equally important. To my mind, there is no greater honor than can be bestowed upon a citizen, than that of being a "law maker."

It has been wisely provided in our constitution that the government shall be divided into three departments: Legislative, Executive and Judicial. To you is committed the sacred power of making the laws under which all the people shall live and by which they shall be governed. How great, then, is your function and how careful should you be in enacting wise laws, beneficial alike to all our citizens!

Our industrial development has been commensurate with the progress of the age, and our educational interests have not lagged behind, yet there are great things to be done and great responsibilities to be met in the various duties that we owe to our State. Let us all, therefore, with courage and confidence, be true to our oaths of office and strive for all those things that will elevate and educate our citizenship, and give that peace and prosperity to our people that they are entitled to at our hands.

The annual message of Governor Heyward, made to you at this session of the Legislature, gives you full information of the condition of all our public affairs, and I desire to congratulate him and the State on the great measure of prosperity that has come to the

State during his wise administration. I feel it my duty, at this time and in this presence, to call to your attention certain legislation, which I think needful to be enacted at the present session of the Legislature.

It was my privilege, during the past summer, when making the campaign for the honorable office, which I this day assume, to discuss before the people certain measures, which I now desire to call to your attention.

EDUCATION.

Our State Constitution requires that we shall "provide a liberal system of free public schools for all children between the ages of six and twenty-one." When we consider the great power and influence of an educated people and that the strength and prosperity of a State depend ultimately upon the intelligence of the average citizen, we can realize the mind of the framers of this organic law. It, therefore, behoves us to enact such laws as will fully carry out this wise provision of the State Constitution.

The State institutions of higher learning are all well equipped and are doing a great work in the education of many of our girls and boys, but these fortunate ones are but a meagre ten per cent. of those within the school age; the other ninety per cent. are wholly dependent upon the common schools.

It is true that many of the graded schools are kept open for nine months in the year by the help of the special taxes voted upon themselves by the taxpayers of the particular school district, but many of the small schools in the rural districts are in session but for three or four months in the year. Realizing that most of the children, who attend these schools, are receiving from them all the school advantages that they will ever get, are we doing our full duty to them? Are we thus fitting them for all of the duties of an intelligent citizenship?

We are building for the future and we should see to it that we build strong and well. You have no more important matter that will come before you, and I recommend that liberal appropriations be made for the common schools.

I also ask your especial attention to and consideration of the establishment of high schools in connection with and as a part of the free school system of our State. Many children will be able to attend a high school who cannot attend a State college, and many others will be better prepared for college after having attended the

high school. It is a step in the direction of giving to the boys and girls better opportunities in their school life and for making them better citizens.

LIQUOR QUESTION.

One of the most important subjects that you have before you for consideration, Gentlemen of the General Assembly, is the liquor question.

The people of the State have spoken in no uncertain sound, and we cannot mistake their meaning, that the State dispensary system must be abolished, and that there must be enacted in its stead, a law providing for local county option, as between county prohibition and county dispensaries.

In making my campaign this past summer, one of the principal issues before the people was the question of State dispensary or local option, as between county prohibition and county dispensaries.

The plank in my platform upon that question is as follows:

"I am opposed to the system of a State dispensary. I am in favor of local county option, between county prohibition and county dispensaries. Let each county say for itself whether it desires that liquor shall be sold in that county, or that it shall not be sold therein. This system has been, and is now, the law in several of the States around and near us, and it is regarded with satisfaction, so far as I have been able to learn. You know what you had rather have in your county, and you should, therefore, have a right to say so, and not let other counties vote upon what your county should have. You manage your own county affairs in every thing else, why not in this matter?"

"I favor each county voting upon that question for themselves. If the vote is for liquor to be sold, then let a county dispensary be operated in that county under the restrictions now thrown around the sale of liquor with such other regulations as the legislature may deem best. Let the county board of control be appointed by the Governor and let the board so appointed have charge of the whole matter for that county, said board to report to the judge at each term of the circuit court for that county, of all its actings and doings, and then let the judge hand that report to the Grand Jury for their inspection and investigation, with such instructions as he may think proper. Whatever profit is made will go to the county. Let the dispensers be paid a salary and not a commission on what they sell. If the vote is for prohibition, then allow no liquor to be sold in such county, and pass a stringent law providing for the punishment of all

'blind tigers' and other violators of the law, and make it the duty of the county sheriffs, deputies, constables, marshals, policemen and other peace officers, to see to it that this law is enforced, and all violators are brought to justice and punishment.

"I would be glad if no liquors were sold as a beverage, but the conditions are such at this time, that I believe this to be the best way to deal with the question."

I stand upon that platform today, and I urge that you enact a law abolishing the State dispensary system, and give to the people of each county the right to vote upon the question of county prohibition or county dispensary.

The best way of controlling the sale of liquor has been agitating the minds of the people of this country for many years; the sale of it has been declared an evil by the highest court of the land, and the question for us now is, which is the best way of controlling it in this State?

The State dispensary system was adopted, and, after a trial of thirteen years, a great majority of the people of the State have said that they wish it abolished, and that each county shall be allowed the right to say whether they will have prohibition or county dispensaries.

The will of the people is supreme, and we should heed their demands. Many of you were elected upon the same platform, and the matter is now before you, Gentlemen. It is for you to say whether the will of the people shall be carried out or not. Let us do our duty without fear or favor.

BUCKET SHOPS.

Another matter that I desire to bring to your attention is the enactment of a law preventing the operation of what are known as "Bucket Shops," or cotton or stock exchanges. This is a species of speculation that is taking thousands of dollars from this State, is demoralizing our citizens, and is bringing many of them to poverty and ruin.

The States of North Carolina and Georgia have already prohibited them from doing business within their boundaries, and we owe it to ourselves and to the good name of the State, that we follow the example so worthily set us. We now have on our Statute book an Act declaring "unlawful, contracts for the sale of articles for future delivery, made under certain circumstances," etc.

Let us now follow this up with an Act prohibiting any bucket shop, or cotton or stock exchange, or any other exchange of like character, from doing business in this State.

ASSAULT, ETC.

I further wish to call to your attention another matter which I consider of grave importance at this particular time in our history, and that is the enactment of a law providing the death penalty to any male person making an assault upon a female with intent to ravish, granting the right to the jury trying the case to fix the punishment at life imprisonment in the State Penitentiary, if in their judgment the facts warrant a less punishment than death.

In this day, when we read of so many assaults of this character being made, it behooves us to wake up to the situation and make the penalty so severe that the women of this State may be protected from this heinous crime and the perpetrators punished so severely that all will be deterred from committing the same.

I further recommend that an Act be passed providing that in all cases of rape or assault, with intent to ravish, the female may be allowed to testify in private, before the Judge, in the presence of the counsel for the State and the defendant himself, and that the testimony so taken shall be read to the jury as the evidence of the said witness on the trial of the case. This is the law in at least one, if not more, of the States of the Union, and should be the law in this State.

In this connection, I think it important, also, to ask that you pass an Act making it a misdemeanor to post or display in any public place or on any street or highway, indecent pictures of females. It is an evil that has been growing in the last few years, and one that calls for action on our part. It is not necessary for me to call to your attention the reasons why this Act should be passed; it is obvious to the right thinking persons.

I respectfully recommend that a system of mounted police or patrol for the rural districts be established. This is no new idea, but one that is being carried out with great success in many countries. When there are so many vagrants and idlers roaming about, and there is so much work to be done on every side, the work of move-on system should be established, and that can be carried out better by such mounted patrol or police system, than by any other plan. Give them authority to arrest all violators of the Laws of

the State, and carry them before the nearest Magistrate for trial or commitment for trial to the Court of General Sessions.

RAILROADS.

When we hear so much complaint from so many sources of the neglect or omission of the railroad companies doing business in this State, of giving to the people proper passenger and freight accommodations and rates and accurate information of delayed trains, it is very evident to every thinking person that the Railroad Commissioners should have power to correct these things and to give relief where it is fair and just between the railroads and the people. The railroad corporations should be dealt with fairly and justly, but at the same time the people's rights should be provided for and respected.

I, therefore, recommend that such additional powers be given to the Railroad Commissioners as will enable them to compel the railroads to comply with such reasonable rules and orders as may be just and proper.

In this connection, I would recommend that the act now of force, requiring the salaries of the Railroad Commissioners to be paid by the railroads, be repealed. The office of Railroad Commissioner is a State office and the salary ought to be paid by the State.

CONFEDERATE VETERANS.

It is a duty that we owe to ourselves and to our State, that we provide liberal pensions for our needy Confederate veterans—those who, for lack of means, or who by reason of age or infirmity, are not able to provide for themselves. I, therefore, recommend that you make liberal appropriations for these veterans, to be paid to them under such rules and regulations as may be just and proper.

ROADS.

The road question is one of paramount importance and one that should have our most careful attention. Many of the counties of this State are now engaged in the laudable undertaking of building good roads and others are beginning to prepare for grading and macadamizing their principal roads. When we contemplate the great good that is done to the greatest number of our people by this work, and the benefits to be derived therefrom, it behooves us to encourage, in every way possible, our people to go forward with this

undertaking. I, therefore, recommend that you request our Senators and Members of Congress to urge the passage of such an Act as will give to our State a liberal appropriation in money for the carrying on of this work. This money, supplemented with our convict labor, would soon give us good roads in every county in the State.

SUPREME COURT.

I desire, Gentlemen, to call your attention also to the matter of the necessity for better accommodations for our Supreme Court. The space allotted in the State House for the use of the Supreme Court has all been taken up with the library and records, except one consultation room and the court room. I respectfully ask, that you look into this matter and provide for the necessities of the Court in this regard.

BEAUTIFYING STATE HOUSE GROUNDS.

I would also urge, that some steps be taken toward beautifying and improving the grounds that surround this Capitol building. With the expenditure of a little money, a great improvement can be made, and I feel assured that all our people wish that their State House grounds shall be beautified and improved.

IMMIGRATION.

There is no question of greater moment to our material and industrial life than that of immigration. The labor question is a very serious one. Many thousands of acres of lands are now lying idle for the want of laborers, and many other avenues of trade are offering work to the workers. To my mind, the best solution of this question is the bringing in of home seekers, home builders and desirable workmen.

I, therefore, recommend that you take such steps as may, to you, seem wise, to foster and sustain the Department of Immigration, now accomplishing so much work on this line.

STATUE OF JOHN C. CALHOUN.

While many of the States of this Union have honored themselves by placing in the Hall of Fame, in the Capitol at Washington, D. C., statues of one or two of their honored and eminent sons, who have done noble work for their States and for the Union, South Carolina's place has remained vacant. I respectfully recommend that you give

this matter your careful attention and give such consideration to the same, that at no distant day the statue of John C. Calhoun may adorn that Hall, for by thus honoring that noble son of South Carolina, we will honor ourselves.

Such other matters, Gentlemen, as may be proper to bring to your attention during the present session, I shall allude to in special messages.

CONCLUSION.

Allow me to add, in the words of that eminent Statesman, Thomas Jefferson, who when called to the office of President of the United States, closed his inaugural address, in part as follows:

"I repair, then, fellow citizens, to the post you have assigned me, with experience enough in subordinate offices to have seen the difficulties of this, the greatest of all. I have learned to expect that it will rarely fall to the lot of imperfect man to retire from this station with the reputation and the favor which bring him into it. * * * I shall often go wrong, through defect of judgment; when right, I shall often be thought wrong by those whose positions will not command a view of the whole ground. I shall ask your indulgence for my own errors, which will never be intentional; and your support against the errors of others, who may condemn what they would not, if seen in all of its parts. My solicitude will be to retain the good opinion of those who have bestowed it in advance, to conciliate that of others by doing them all the good in my power, and to be instrumental in the happiness and freedom of all.

"Relying, then, on the patronage of your good will, I advance with obedience to the work, and may that Infinite Power, which rules the destinies of the Universe, lead our councils to what is best, and give them a favorable issue for your peace and prosperity."

M. F. ANSEL.