

# GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.

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## STATE OF LOUISIANA,

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, }  
New Orleans, January 11, 1871. }

Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives  
of the State of Louisiana:

I congratulate you upon the favorable auspices with which you assemble. Our State has been blessed by the providence of God with plentiful crops. The staples of sugar and cotton, which are the springs of our wealth, have been produced in larger abundance than in any year since the war. This increased production has disproved the gloomy forebodings of those false prophets who predicted the ruin of our agricultural interests, as a consequence of the change made by the war from slave to free labor; another proof that what is just to all is best for all.

The rise in real estate; the increase in home and foreign trade; the augmented commerce of this metropolis of Louisiana, and of the South, though unfavorably affected by the European war; the additional lands put in cultivation in the past year; the gratifying progress toward good railroad connection with different parts of our State, and of the Union; and the growth of our principal cities, are

some among numerous evidences of the rapid recovery of all the business interests of the State from the prostration which followed the war. It only needs that legislation should lend such additional encouragement as it legitimately can to these interests, and, above all, that it should refrain from imposing any new and unnecessary burdens upon them, to cause our State in the next two years to surpass in material progress and prosperity any previous era of its history.

In the last summer, while that scourge of the South, yellow fever, has repeated its ravages in neighboring cities, our chief city, New Orleans has escaped with a comparatively small mortality. This may be attributed to the increased skill and care of the health and quarantine officers, and the proper enforcement of the quarantine regulations. This fact might lead to the inquiry whether a judicious system of sanitary arrangements, on an enlarged scale, and based upon

known scientific principles, might not banish this pestilence from our borders entirely. The importance of such a consummation, in every moral, social and physical point of view, renders it a matter worthy of grave consideration. The pecuniary loss alone inflicted by the presence of this fever, or the bare rumor of its presence, upon all branches of trade, has been estimated, by practical business men, at several millions of dollars annually.

A growing spirit of harmony and good will between the different classes of our people has been strikingly evinced during the last year. It has been seen in a strongly pronounced disposition on the part of all good citizens in most parts of the State, without respect to partisan differences, to preserve order, enforce the laws, and render obedience to all legally constituted authority. The devices and machinations of evilly disposed demagogues and irresponsible parties, who seek to profit by times of alarm and violence, have been set aside by the good people of this State, who are most deeply interested in its peace and prosperity. The result has been that this disposition, aided by the salutary laws passed by the General Assembly and by Congress, have secured, during the last fall, the most quiet, peaceable and orderly election the State has witnessed for many years. In former elections, even within two years, New Orleans and the State have been the scenes of violence, riots and bloodshed, which have disgraced their name, and greatly injured all their interests. This fall, an important and exciting election was held without any conflict or disturbance, and with scarcely an arrest. Such a thing was never known in New Orleans before. I feel especially gratified to be able to lay this before you as a matter of record,

because the last General Assembly, deeply impressed by the alarming and increasing violence and lawlessness displayed in our elections, and their lamentable effects upon every interest of the State, had, with a view to remedy these evils, enacted stringent penalties against such offences, and for their more certain enforcement had clothed the Executive with ample powers. I have endeavored to use these powers with moderation and impartiality, but with firmness, and with the single aim to preserve the peace and to secure to all men, irrespective of party, race or color, the free exercise of all their rights as citizens.

That I have been able to do so without arraying against the law any class or party, may be accepted as a proof that the laws were wholesome and wise, and that the people, as a whole, have been satisfied that their execution was faithful and impartial.

I cannot pass from this subject to other details, in justice, without calling your attention to the general and peaceable acquiescence of our people in the results of the reconstruction policy of the General Government. Their acceptance of it as a finality has been much more satisfactory in Louisiana than in any other State in the South. This must be attributed to the patriotism and wisdom of our people, and to those features of State policy which have led to this great and desirable result. It has always been my sincere conviction that it is safe to trust to the good sense, the honor and the sober second thought of the people. This conviction has determined my course on matters of State policy, even in matters where I was forced, for a short time, to differ from many of my political friends. The peaceable



character of the late election, and the favorable condition of Louisiana, as compared with many other Southern States, have, I think, convinced both friends and foes that I was right. I have refrained from all severe and arbitrary measures, or recourse to mere force, appealing, on all occasions, and in all localities, to the justice and discretion of the people themselves. Under all circumstances, however, I have held myself in readiness to employ all the resources at my command, both civil and military, to enforce the laws, preserve order and protect every citizen in his rights, so far as the authority of the Executive could be lawfully used. The good results of this spirit of harmony on all sides, upon the prosperity of the State, cannot be estimated.

It has been my pleasant fortune, during the past season, to visit a great portion of our State, in answer to repeated and cordial invitations from many of my fellow-citizens, which were extended to me by gentlemen of all political parties. I had been led to believe, from the assurances of many prominent citizens, that I would find the leading, most influential and enterprising people of the different localities imbued with better and more advanced ideas than those petty partisan animosities and sectional hates and prejudices, which, swaying the breasts of a small class of men, more noisy than important, had hitherto caused much of the domestic trouble of our State, and brought disgrace upon its name; and that the good people of the State had taken its peace and order into their own hands, as was proper, and that the power of these bad and restless spirits was gone. I am glad to say that these assurances have been realized. I have everywhere been re-

ceived with that wonted cordiality and hospitality for which Louisianians are so deservedly famed. What is more important, I everywhere saw evidences that the people were determined to see that the laws were obeyed, and the rights of all men, under the law, respected. I was met with assurances from all parties, that in every effort to advance the welfare, credit and the great interests of the State, I should receive the hearty support of the people.

#### AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION.

The last General Assembly proposed four important amendments to our constitution, which were duly ratified by the votes of the people at the last election. The first amendment repeals the ninety-ninth article of the constitution. This article, by reason of its disfranchisement of an influential class of our citizens, for political reasons, was obnoxious to them and their friends, as the result has proved, was distasteful to almost all. Incorporated in our constitution by an unwise spirit of retaliation, and by its peculiar phraseology, serving mainly to irritate and humiliate, while debarring from suffrage and office only the most scrupulous and upright of the class it was aimed against, and admitting all others, it had all the most odious features of disfranchisement, with none of its good effects, if such there be. It is to the lasting credit of the first Republican Administration of Louisiana, that the amendment to strike out this last vestige of the war, in our constitution, was passed with the unanimous Republican vote of the General Assembly, and indorsed unanimously by the people. It is no longer a part of the constitution. Henceforth, in Louisiana, all disabilities resulting from

the war are removed, and no citizen is disfranchised by its laws, except for crime or mental disability.

The second amendment limits the total amount of State indebtedness that can be contracted up to the year 1890 to the sum of \$25,000,000. All indebtedness, of whatever character, contracted above the amount, before that time, is illegal, null and void. This voluntary limitation by the people of the amount of indebtedness which they will incur, for a term of years, will have the double effect of increasing the credit of the State securities, thus lessening the interest the State will have to pay on any future loans, and of compelling rigid economy on the part of the State Government.

The third amendment prohibits all officials who have held public moneys from voting or holding office until they have procured from the proper authorities receipts in full for all funds which they have thus held. The former history of the State, with regard to many of its public funds, is a sufficient proof of the wholesomeness of this measure. It is to be hoped that it will lead to a more stringent accountability by public officers for such trusts.

The fourth amendment removes the ineligibility, for a second term, that was imposed by the constitution upon any incumbent of the gubernatorial office. Under this amendment, the reelection of a Governor is left like that of any other officer, to that last and best arbitrament of all free governments, the good judgment of the people. While this might seem to most minds a sound principle, yet I did not feel at liberty, owing to my personal attitude toward the question at issue, to take any part in the discussion for or against it. The amendment was spontaneously and volun-

tarily presented to the people by the last General Assembly, and has been ratified by a majority, approximating 24,000 votes.

#### GENERAL POLICY.

The great questions of public policy now most urgent are such necessary measures of State and national legislation as will most speedily bring us railroads, open natural water courses, facilitate ocean commerce, and redeem our alluvial lands from annual inundation. These will bring us settlers, open lands to cultivation, afford direct and speedy transportation to all products and merchandise, and make New Orleans, what nature destined it to be, unsurpassed by any commercial city on the Atlantic seaboard. In this connection I will say that it is the unanimous sentiment of our people that it is the duty of the General Government to grant to Louisiana and other Southern States their proper proportion of national aid in prosecuting great works of internal improvements, of which they were deprived during the war, and which has been so lavishly granted to Northern States. Such action would go far to cement the kindly relations now so rapidly growing up between the sections. I would recommend the General Assembly to memorialize Congress upon this important subject by a joint resolution.

#### LEVEES.

The care of the levees and the protection of the valuable alluvial lands of the State which mainly produce our two great staples, are especially recommended to your attention.

And upon this all-important subject I would remark that the reports from the Board of Public Works show that the appropriation of three



millions of dollars in the bonds of the State have been exhausted, and that still the large crevasses at Ashton and Diamond Island Bend, and several smaller breaks, are open, and some of the levees are still below grade.

Their reports show that they have constructed 6,058,750 cubic yards of levees since their organization, at an aggregate cost of \$3,273,000, and that they will require \$2,000,000 more to place the whole system in repair, and thereafter a constant annual appropriation or tax to provide for the inevitable wear and caving of the banks of the rivers.

From these figures we can judge the vast expense of the levee system, and this will be the case whether the work be done by the riparian proprietors, the parish authorities, the State or General Government, or by a private corporation, and the matter is of such magnitude that it should engage your earliest and most earnest attention.

The bill passed by the last Legislature giving the levees to a private corporation, contained some serious objections, and I have returned it with my veto; but it is evident that some more efficient plan must be adopted than that of irregular and uncertain appropriations, for though it can be shown that the works done by the Board of Public Works have been successfully constructed, yet this vast labor will be nearly useless unless the other and constantly occurring crevasses are closed and the large works, already built, saved from the encroachments of the river.

I would therefore recommend that a sufficient appropriation be made, and that the powers of the Board of Public Works be increased so that they can have works done without

contract, when desirable, and also to authorize them to check the encroachments of the river where the large and costly works are in danger, if it be practicable.

It seems apparent that the Congress of the United States is willing to assist the riparian States to rebuild the levees, if some tangible plan is adopted, and probably a co-operative board, to be appointed by the President of the United States, would insure this desired assistance.

#### MILITIA.

In accordance with an act of the last General Assembly, I have taken steps to enroll the militia of the State, and have also accepted several volunteer organizations. In performing this duty, I felt it to be at once a grave and delicate task. Upon no subject was more apprehension felt, or would a mistake in judgment have been so disastrous to the general interests of the people, as upon that of the organization of the militia. I was urged by some to organize a purely partisan militia, and seriously blamed by others for not doing so. I refused to do this, and accepted as volunteers all good citizens who offered their services, without distinction of party, until the legal complement of the First Division was filled. I uniformed and armed these, so far as the appropriation allowed me, and placed in their hands the preservation of peace and order, and the protection of life and property in the State, in case of any emergency in which the civil authorities should need their aid. All classes and all parties were represented in the militia. The result was that, during the late exciting election campaign, all classes and all parties were relieved of apprehension

from each other, and felt a sense of security. In adopting this course I received the severe censure of many of my political friends, who were opposed to receiving into the militia men who had fought on the side of the South during the war. I believed that the honor of Louisianians could always be trusted. The result has amply fulfilled my expectations.

#### SCHEMES.

I warn you, gentlemen, against certain schemes of plunder which are already organizing, and will continue to be organized and presented to you for your votes. These are propositions which, under the guise of public improvements, or of claims against the State, are simply plans to rob the treasury and fill the pockets of unprincipled speculators. The persons who will probably importune you most pertinaciously for the most barefaced of these speculations are well-dressed gentlemen, claiming to be the representatives of the most respectable of our people. It is these pleasant gentlemen in broadcloth, with their gigantic swindles, embracing millions, and not the poor and needy applicants for some long-delayed but petty act of justice, who have most depleted the public till in the past, and will endeavor to do so again.

#### BRIBERY.

I ask your attention to the fact, that there now exist on our statute books no adequate penalties against the crime of bribery. This defect should be remedied by appropriate legislation, which I sincerely hope the wisdom and patriotism of your honorable body will promptly devise. I am

in receipt of information of acts of bribery on the part of public officials, but owing to the defect above named in the law, I am without the means of bringing the offenders to justice, or stopping the mischief. It has become a crying evil, and if suffered to go on, will destroy the confidence of the people in government, and seriously endanger our liberties and highest interests. I hope that the General Assembly will enact some law on the subject, providing adequate penalties and placing it in the power of the Governor to prosecute with vigor and promptitude, all persons offering bribes and officials receiving them.

#### STATE LANDS.

I recommend to your attention certain amendments to the laws relative to public lands, contained in the report of the Registrar of the State Land Office, which is herewith submitted.

#### POLICE JURY.

The police jury system is cumbersome and awkward, and leads to great delay and inconvenience in the management of parish business. In some parishes there are six, eight, ten and fifteen police jurymen to be elected. These officers are obliged to meet often and travel far. It is difficult to obtain gentlemen of the requisite capacity, integrity and public reputation to serve in these positions. Hence, oftentimes, in many of the parishes, this branch of the public service is neglected, to the great detriment of general and individual interests. I recommend that the system be so changed as to reduce the number of police jurors in each parish to three; to make their meetings



monthly, in sessions of three days each, and to allow each police juror a small per diem, say \$2 per day for each session. This will facilitate business and secure the services of competent men, and not increase materially the public expenses. I would also recommend that these police jurors be made parish officers, and be elected or appointed for the same term as other parish officers.

#### CHARTER OF CITY OF NEW ORLEANS.

Among the most important acts passed at the last extra session of the Legislature, was the new charter of New Orleans. With a view of putting the new government into operation as soon as possible, I made the appointments required of me by law of a Mayor and the several Administrators. The charter has been found to work well, with the exception of some minor particulars, which will, doubtless, be brought to your attention by the Mayor and Council. To any representations and suggestions they may make, I bespeak your respectful and careful consideration. Much of the success of any system or form of government depends upon the character and ability of its officers. The situation in which the affairs of the city of New Orleans stood, through bad and partisan management, required more than ordinary care and capacity in those who should have them in charge. With that view I made my selections to the several positions, and, I flatter myself, with success, for they have earned the respect of all parties for fidelity of management; and all who were candidates were elected to the same or higher positions by triumphant majorities. The funding provisions of the charter requir-

ing the issue of three million of bonds to take up the floating debt have been found inadequate. At least eight hundred thousand dollars more will be required to take up audited and, as yet, unpaid portions of the debt. The Legislature omitted many just debts and claims by the peculiar phraseology of the bill, which limited the obligations provided for to four classes, viz: Judgments, registered certificates, warrants and city notes.

The large proportion which the assessed property, taxes and population of the city of New Orleans bear to the whole State, earnestly claims your time and attention during the present session. The questions involved are not without great difficulty. Prominent among them is one arising out of the careful and scrupulous compliance of the Administrators with the provisions of law relative to the consolidated and railroad debts and the one million loan. The city has redeemed half a million back interest, nearly half a million of capital, and all the current interest of her bonded debt. It purposes to continue to do so, but the strain upon its coffers has rendered a deficit inevitable during the coming year, which the City Council is unable to meet under existing laws.

Among these laws are cited those which take a large class of public expenditures out of the control of the city, such as prison expenses, police, printing, expenses of the criminal court, fees of various public officers for services done the city, coroners, jurors, etc. The city has to act the part of a mere paymaster, in many cases, and the laws have taken it out of its power to comply with its municipal functions and duties, by making

contracts to the best advantage of the tax-payers. In all these abuses, which have existed under one party as well as another, and which have gradually grown more and more serious, the demands of the time require a reform.

I have no doubt the subject of municipal police will be fully impressed on your attention. The city should have the control of its assessments, expenditures, and the numbers, salaries and distribution of its police, its regulation, for all local and domestic purposes, and the enforcement of its ordinances; while the power of the State should be carefully reserved, to be exercised and asserted as primary and supreme in all cases where a necessity may exist, such as riot, insurrection or public danger. It ought to be out of the power of any city authorities to use their control at such or any other times, separately or independently of those of the State, which should have precedence in enforcing the laws and maintaining public order. The example of the past in 1866, and at other times, and under various administrations, shows the danger of permitting any question of the paramount control of the State authorities, when proper occasion arises for that power to be exercised.

The unsettled floating debt and apprehended deficit will approach two millions of dollars, which the city government must meet in one or all of three ways: By retrenchment of all expenses now within its control, and modifications of legislation, to enable it to curtail expenditures now out of its control; by the issue of bonds; or by increased taxation.

The bonded debt is now \$17,315,000, and the taxation is two and five-

eighths per cent., both high enough in all conscience. Bonds of the city of New Orleans bring but about three-fourths of their par value, thus, in fact, augmenting by one-third the debts they are issued to pay. Increased taxation, on the other hand, is, perhaps, equally serious. This question had best be left to the City Council of New Orleans, with the power to levy a tax not exceeding one per cent., or issue bonds, not at present authorized, not exceeding two million dollars; or to exercise a part of each of these powers. This will place the responsibility where it belongs, and the City Council cannot safely, and will not probably, act in this matter without full discussion and concurrence on the part of taxpayers as to what may be the wiser and better course.

The city government has now power to issue bonds for wharf and street improvements, a power which has been judiciously and sparingly exercised. Relative to wharves, this was probably the best and only disposition that could be made; but the new charter takes away the power to require street paving to be paid in part by the property facing. To attempt to meet the paving requirements of New Orleans by issuing bonds would create a herculean debt, and I recommend a return to the old law requiring proprietors to pay their proportion of the paving.

It is highly expedient and proper that but one treasury should exist for custody and payment of city or local funds in the parish of Orleans. It is unnecessary, merely on account of the different purpose and destination of the various funds, to multiply treasuries.



The defalcation in the metropolitan treasury is an example of the error of so doing. I am satisfied that the police treasury, and the fourteen ward school treasuries, should be done away with, and that all their business should be performed by the city treasury, which is under proper guards and securities in the bonds required; and in the fiscal agency regulations, which have been carefully provided by the experience of the past, and are necessary as a check and preventive against squandering and embezzlement.

#### FINANCES OF THE STATE.

I transmit to you the annual reports of the Auditor and Treasurer. You will therein find a complete statement of the financial condition of the State. I cannot too seriously urge your careful consideration of the matters discussed and the information furnished by these officers.

Our State is not well off, but it is far from being bankrupt. We are burdened with a heavy debt, but we have immense resources. Our recuperative powers are perhaps greater than those of any other section of the country; but a small fraction of our rich products—sugar, rice and cotton—is used in home consumption. The saving, the wealth of the State, increases with wonderful rapidity. Therefore, I am hopeful for the future, and look forward to a day, not far distant, when our finances shall have obtained a most prosperous condition.

Several wise financial measures were adopted by the last Legislature, and have conduced to a more healthy condition of the Treasury. Prominent among these I regard the requisite provision for funding the floating debt of the State. These measures,

and others, will enable the State to very soon assume a cash-paying basis.

I earnestly recommend you to exercise rigid economy in making appropriations. It must be borne in mind that the constitution now limits the debt of the State to twenty-five millions. Our present bonded indebtedness must now preclude us from making further appropriations as subsidy or other assistance to works of internal improvement. I do not forget that it is the policy of the State to use all proper means to assist and protect every enterprise calculated to increase facilities for production and transportation. The railroads, canals and other public works so fostered will, I doubt not, inure to the incalculable benefit of the whole people. Still, I think that we have granted such aid about as far as we safely can. We must now strive to live within our income. If we reduce the taxes to the least amount necessary to conduct the Government upon an economical basis, in a short time the problem of the payment of the debt will solve itself. With peace and prosperity, with untold agricultural and mineral wealth, with a system of improvements carefully fostered by the State, our capital will soon double, and, without increasing the tax, the bonds can be rapidly retired.

I need not specially call your attention to the several suggestions made by the Auditor. I will, however, note a few. First, some changes are needed in the revenue law. The Auditor has carefully prepared a bill, which accompanies his report. I commend it to your careful consideration. One serious defect in the system, the Auditor states, is that the fiscal year is made to run from December to December. This causes serious complications in the collection of taxes and

licenses. The date was fixed to enable the State officers to prepare their annual reports before the meeting of the Assembly. To remedy this evil, the Auditor suggests a change in the date of the convening of the Legislature, and that the current year be the fiscal year. I join in this recommendation.

The Auditor calls attention to the large and increasing amount of unpaid taxes, exceeding four millions of dollars. I join in urging you to adopt some practical method to enforce collection at the expense of the delinquents.

In conclusion, upon the subject of the finances, I recommend, in conformity with the suggestion of the Auditor, that you consider the propriety of levying an equitable tax upon successions not falling to forced heirs. I also recommend that you consider a law to require insurance companies doing business in the State to deposit bonds to secure prompt payment of policies. This has been successfully tested in other States. I further recommend you to consider a plan for registration and cancellation of bonds held by those who derive a permanent investment in such securities. By this means the tax due from this species of property could be more readily and cheaply collected. Such measures would tend to greatly reduce the general taxation, and would relieve the property of incubus which prevents its movement.

I beg leave to call your attention to an important subject, which has never been alluded to by any previous Executive of the State.

#### LIFE INSURANCE.

In the present impoverished condition of our people, life insurance is suggested as the great practical rem-

edy. Previous to the desolation of the late civil war, an acquaintance with the subject of life insurance was quite limited in the South. Then it was a rare occurrence to find a man who had not, by his labor and enterprise, gathered around him enough of material wealth for the support and education of his family in the event of his premature death. The reverse is now the case. The exception is largely in favor of those who, if suddenly taken away, would leave their families in destitute or straitened circumstances. The subject of life insurance becomes one of vital importance to the man whose moral duty it is to provide for the future comfort and independence of his household.

There are now about twenty-four life insurance companies doing business in this State, which have issued policies amounting to many millions of dollars. This sum is designed for the protection of the widow and orphan. I, therefore, recommend that you pass such a law for the government of these institutions as will give greater protection and confidence to this great and growing interest.

#### LAND SCRIP.

The scrip issued to the State by the National Government for the endowment of a college in the interest of agriculture and the mechanic arts, has been received by the commission appointed by your honorable body to receive and dispose of the same. As it will, probably, be sold during the current year, and its proceeds determined, it is important that the Legislature should take the necessary steps, at an early day, to locate and establish a college, which shall fulfill the intent for which the beneficent grant was made.



It may be that after a careful examination of the institutions of learning now under the fostering care of the State, it will be found that the course of study in some of them may be so modified or enlarged by a judicious use of this grant, as to wisely fulfill the obligations assumed by the State in its acceptance.

I invoke your careful attention to the subject.

#### STATE HOUSE.

The subject of the erection or purchase of a suitable building for a State Capitol will doubtless claim your attention. The condition of our finances imperatively demands that in this, as in all other matters, we shall practice the most rigid economy. The cost of suitable grounds in New Orleans will be a very heavy item, and there are, besides, many other reasons why the seat of government should be removed from this city. In a large city the facility for forming combinations to influence legislation is so great that in most of the States of the Union they have found it necessary to remove their State capitols from their principal towns.

Our predecessors followed this example, and established the State capital at Baton Rouge, a point accessible from all parts of the State, and destined to become still more so when the railroads now chartered are completed—an event that we believe will occur before the time for your next regular session. At this point was completed, in 1847, a State House, which for architectural beauty, convenience of arrangement, and solidity of structure, compared favorably with any building for a similar purpose on the continent.

Unfortunately, during the late war, this building was seriously damaged

by fire, but I am informed, upon what I regard as good authority, that the injury was not so serious or so difficult to repair as is generally believed, and that it can be restored to its original condition of strength and beauty for less than one-fifth of the original cost.

I therefore recommend that authority be given me to employ one or more competent persons to examine the building, and report its condition, and the cost of repairing it.

#### EMIGRATION.

The European war, in addition to its disastrous effect of depressing the price of cotton, has caused the suspension of the Hamburg steamship line to New Orleans, and interrupted, for a time, the Bremen line. The recent arrival, however, of nearly eight hundred emigrants on a single steamer, gives promise not only of an increased emigration from Germany, and possibly from France, after the termination of the war, but, also, that New Orleans will hereafter share more largely in the benefits of the immigrant trade. The establishment of the Liverpool and Mississippi Steamship Line, whose ships are built especially for the transportation of emigrants from Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries, will also increase the popularity of the New Orleans route of immigration, even to the Northwestern States. It is to be hoped, however, that the planters and landowners of Louisiana will be able to induce a larger number of the immigrants landed in New Orleans to settle within the borders of the State.

During the last year, the Commissioners of Emigration have published largely in the Northern States and in Great Britain, and it is their intention to send a competent agent to Europe

as soon as the war shall have terminated.

During the autumn there has been a large influx of laboring population from the Northwestern States.

#### LAKE BORGNE CANAL.

Since the last session of the Legislature work on the Mississippi and Mexican Gulf or Lake Borgne Canal has been prosecuted with great vigor. Nine machines are now employed in excavating. The canal will be opened for business up to the river bank in the course of thirty days. The lock will be completed and the canal connected with the river about the first of July of the present year.

#### PUBLIC PRINTING.

I recommend as of great importance the necessity of amending the law relative to public printing.

When the act in relation to the matter was passed, the State was in no condition to disburse money, but was obliged to issue warrants worth at that time only forty or fifty cents on the dollar in payment of the work. Since then the credit of the State has improved, and warrants are now selling at seventy-three cents on the dollar, with a fair prospect of soon reaching par value. We are now in a condition to greatly reduce the price of public printing, and should limit the number of papers in which the laws are to be published.

#### REGISTRATION AND ELECTION.

The disregard of the rights of franchise evinced in many localities in the State in 1868, induced the last Legislature to resort to the most stringent measures for the protection of the people. The violent rancor of that period having now given place to more liberal and just acknowledgment of the true relations of all our citizens, I commend to your consideration the modification of the registration and election laws to an extent, that, while securing the inalienable rights of all, will make the usage under them less irksome and exacting to the few.

I will transmit to you in a few days the report of the State Registrar, embodying his views as to the modifications that are deemed desirable.

As reports have not been received from the Administrators of the Charity Hospital at New Orleans, of the Deaf, Dumb and Blind Asylum, Insane Asylum, Military Academy, and State Penitentiary, I am unable to submit them with my message, or to make any recommendations in their behalf. On their receipt at this office, I will lay them, with such suggestions as I may have to offer, before you for your consideration.

H. C. WARMOTH.