

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS.

The following communication was received from His Excellency, the Governor:

STATE OF MINNESOTA,
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
ST. PAUL, Feb. 17, 1899. }

Hon. A. N. Dare, Speaker House of Representatives:

SIR:—By chapter two hundred and five (205) of the General Laws of Minnesota for one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five (1895), the Legislature of this state provided for the payment of a bounty of one cent per pound to producers of sugar beets, sorghum, or other sugar yielding canes or plants in this state. That act contains no limitations whatsoever, either as to the time during which the bounties shall be paid or as to the aggregate amount that may be claimed by any person or corporation. Without entering into any discussion as to the wisdom of legislation of that character, which in my judgment cannot be justified on principle, it seems plain to me that if the Legislature of this state is determined to use the taxing power to take the property of one tax payer and transfer it to the private use of another, which can only be justified, if at all, upon the theory that it is good public policy to encourage men to undertake an industry which, when established, would be of lasting advantage to the Commonwealth, then the aid or bounty must necessarily be temporary in its character, for I have never yet heard it advanced even under the plea of public policy that it was justifiable to permanently take the property of one tax payer and transfer it to another's private use to enable the latter to carry on an industry which but for such aid would not be profitable or self-sustaining.

This being the position of those who sanction the granting of bonuses or bounties from the public treasury to individuals, it follows that even under that view the legislation by which the grant is made should limit the length of time during which such bounty should be paid, as well as the maximum amount to which the state could become liable, for otherwise the treasury may be looted before the people are aware of the obligations incurred. This unpleasant contingency has arisen in many of our sister states where the questionable practice of bounties has been sanctioned. The corporation which will claim the appropriation made by House File No. 169, entitled "An act to appropriate money to meet any claim or claims made under the provisions of chapter two hundred and five (205), General Laws of one

thousand eight hundred and ninety-five (1895), relating to the manufacture of sugar and paying a bounty therefor," appears to have earned \$19,975 under the legislation of 1895, in the first year of its business. It has been stated by its officers, and I assume correctly, that with a sufficient quantity of beets (which it did not have last season), it can increase the production over that of last year by at least 150 per cent, and perhaps treble it, which would mean that before your body meets again, a claim for bounties might be incurred to this corporation alone exceeding \$100,000. Other corporations may come forward with claims for at least two seasons. This convinces me, in view of the state of our finances and the burdens already borne by our tax payers, to say nothing about the questionable character of the bounty policy itself, that it is imperative that the act of 1895 should be so amended as to plainly and specifically limit the extent to which the treasury of the state may become subject to claims thereunder. To assume to make any appropriations pursuant to that chapter in its present condition is therefore, in my judgment, unwise and unjustifiable.

In expressing these convictions, I do not wish to be understood as questioning the liability of the state for the payment of the bounty already accrued. To this extent the state is bound morally and legally, but public interest and the safety of the treasury in my judgment demand that any bill enacted by the legislature for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of chapter 205 of the General Laws of 1895 should also contain clear and explicit limitations as to the aggregate liability that the taxpayers of the state may incur thereunder. I am therefore constrained to return herewith to the House of Representatives House File No. 169 without my signature. I do this with less hesitancy as there is ample time at this early period of the session for the legislature to make proper provision for the safety of the treasury, either by the repeal of chapter 205 or by limiting its operations as suggested, and at the same time appropriate funds to pay the claims accrued under it to date.

Very respectfully,

JOHN LIND,

Governor.

On motion of Mr. Jacobson

The communication and H. F. No. 169 accompanying the same, were laid on the table.

Mr. Foss moved that the House do now adjourn.

Which motion was lost.