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Inaugural Message

—OF—

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Gov. Winfield S. Hammond

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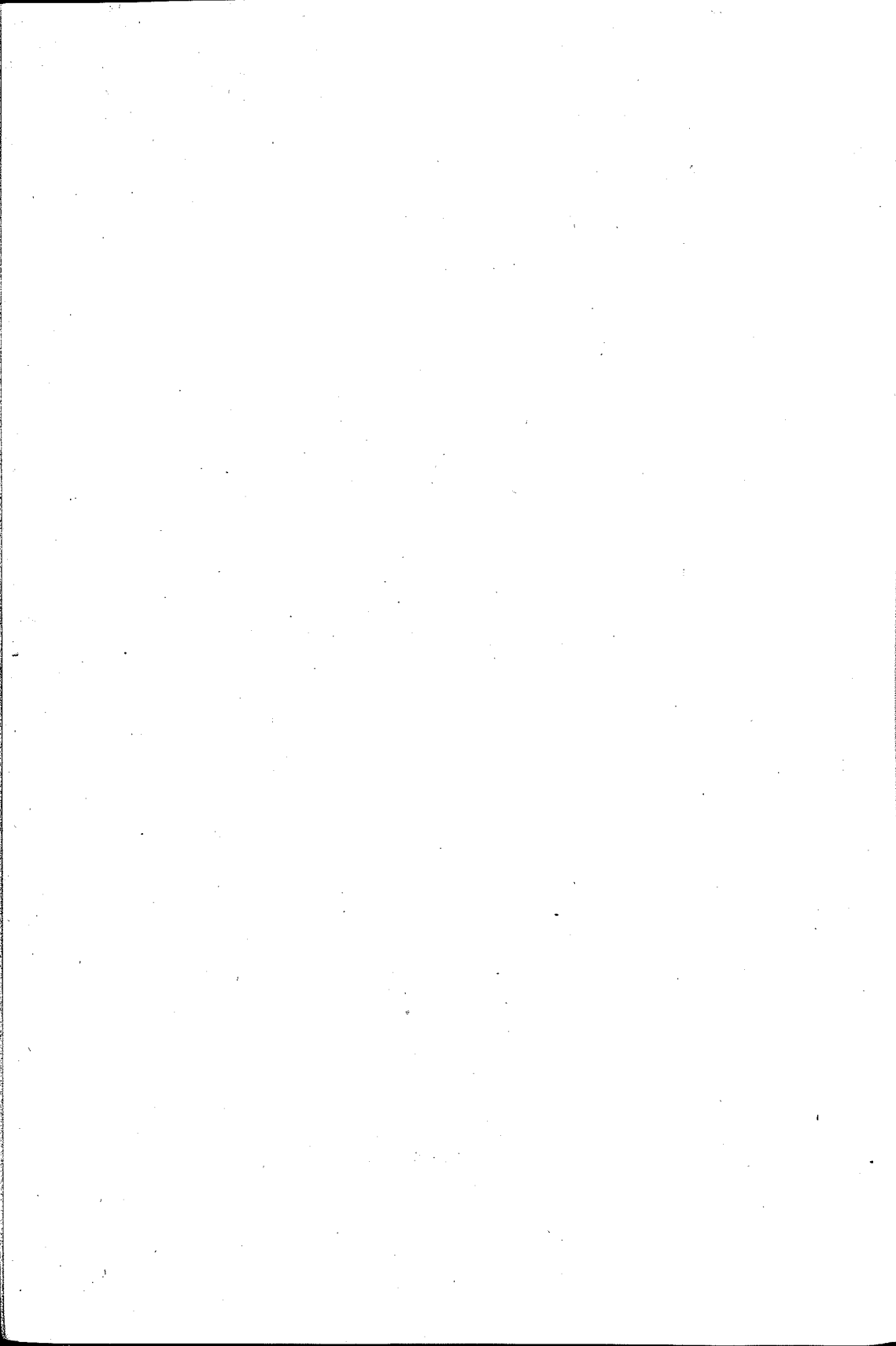
Legislature of Minnesota

1915

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Minnesota, Governors

## Inaugural Message

—OF—

### Gov. Winfield S. Hammond

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**Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives:**

The last legislature in its wisdom saw fit to enact legislation providing for the election of the members of both House and Senate as non-partisans. There is considerable difference of opinion as to the expediency of this departure from a well established practice in Minnesota, but the statute has been enacted, and in the recent election the voters selected their representatives in this legislative body regardless of their political beliefs. As a citizen of the State, one may be a Democrat, a Republican, a Socialist, a Prohibitionist, a Progressive or a member of the Industrial Labor party, but as a legislator he should be a non-partisan. The statute is entitled to a fair trial, and the work of this body may determine whether or not the present plan shall be continued. Indeed each member of this body owes it to his constituency and to the State to conduct himself in matters coming before him as he would if he were affiliated with no political party, and his failure so to do can not but be considered indifference on his part, not only to provisions of existing law, but to the conditions under which he was chosen and his obligations to the electors of his district. It is to be hoped that political partisanship will not appear in the discussions or the actions of either body of the present Legislature, but that all members will enter upon their high and important duties with but one purpose,—that being a purpose to serve the State to the best of their ability for the promotion of the common good. This high and lofty purpose, if adhered to as it should be, will result in effective and wholesome legislation in the highest degree beneficial to Minnesota, and in an equal degree, creditable to themselves. In your efforts to meet in a fair, broad and open-minded way the responsibilities with which you are confronted, you will have the sympathy, the support and the hearty co-operation of the Executive of this State.

The people believe in primaries. They realize that there are defects in the primary election system, but they prefer that system as it is to a return to the old convention plan, and unless it be to cure some defects in the present law or some unfortunate conditions that the statute permits, there should be no change in our primary election law.

### PRIMARY ELECTION LAW.

It is a matter of common knowledge that many Democrats vote in Republican primaries and help nominate Republican candidates. Undoubtedly many Republicans likewise vote in Democratic primaries, and members of other political parties assist in nominating candidates for whom they do not intend to vote. Perhaps on the whole no great harm is done by this kind of voting, but the spirit of the law is violated. It was intended that each political party should hold its own primary; should nominate its own candidates, and that only members of that political party should participate in their selection. Heretofore in many portions of the State the minority parties presented no candidates for county and legislative offices. In the general election the members of those parties voted for men others had nominated. They could then qualify under the law and many felt justified in voting in the primaries where a choice of candidates was offered because in the general election there was no opportunity for selection. It may be that at times they supported a candidate for the nomination because they believed him to be more likely than another to be defeated in the general election by one of their own party; but the number who indulged in that practice is comparatively few, and to repeat what was said a moment ago, there is probably no great harm done by the voters of one party going into the primaries of another. Many times because of their participation in the selection men best fitted for the offices they sought were chosen and became the party nominees. Now if a large number of Republicans are voting in Democratic primaries, why would it not be well to allow all Republicans to vote in them? If a large number of Democrats are voting in Republican primaries, why not let all Democrats vote in them? Suppose the Progressives do take part in nominating the candidates of the Prohibition party, and the Socialists assist in making the selections of other parties, the nominees for public office would probably be as good men and as good party men as they are now. If such voting were permitted by law none would refrain from exercising the privilege that others take. The judgment of men who are unwilling to violate the spirit of law ought to

be of value, not only in the selection of public officers, but in the selection of candidates for public office. Should the Legislature see fit to amend the primary law so as to permit all electors to participate in each primary, considerable criticism of the system would be avoided; no harm would be done, and on the whole, probably better nominations would be made. In the Republican primaries, of course, the only candidates to be voted for would be Republicans, and in the Socialist primaries only Socialists would be considered, but all voters, irrespective of party, would select all the nominees.

While no material change need be made in our election laws, it is very desirable that their provisions be re-arranged in a more orderly manner, and that many passages difficult to understand be re-written. It is quite necessary, in my judgment, that there be a thorough going over of these laws, and the perplexities and apparent inconsistencies now found in them removed. If this is done, I am confident it will meet the approval of our citizens, especially our election officers and the judges of our courts.

#### **AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION.**

At the last election there were submitted to the electors eleven proposed constitutional amendments, and all but one defeated. The ordinary voter has not the time, or will not take the time, to familiarize himself with so large a number of propositions. Each one is worthy of much study and of earnest consideration. It is too much to expect that voters will give such study and consideration to eleven proposals in a single election. One or two of them might be submitted and the judgment of the people obtained upon these, but when a large number are proposed a great many voters will either not vote at all or vote "No" because they do not feel justified in voting "Yes." Of the amendments approved in the Legislature it is advisable that some method be adopted to determine the one most important, and submit that, and that alone, to the plebiscite.

The first proposed amendment providing for direct legislation by the people of the State through the initiative and referendum was defeated, although it received a greater number of votes than any one of the other ten amendments save only the 9th, which was approved, and there were less votes against it than were cast in opposition to the one that carried. If in view of the non-partisan character of the Legislature or for any other reason the people of the State deemed it unnecessary to have direct legislation in Minnesota, the amendment should not soon again be presented, but it is probable that there were many voters in Minnesota who believed in

direct legislation by the people and who would have supported the first proposed amendment, were it not for the manner in which it came before them. The details of the plan were incorporated in the amendment. It was proposed that the law itself should be a part of the constitution. This, in my judgment, was ill-advised. Experience teaches us that laws after they are written and passed and put in practice need to be amended frequently to meet changed conditions and to remedy administrative defects overlooked in their preparation. If the entire law is a part of the constitution then there can be no amendment without the cumbersome and difficult process of amending the constitution itself. While I think this particular amendment should not be submitted at the next election to the people, I do recommend that a proposed constitutional amendment empowering the Legislature to enact legislation establishing the initiative and referendum be submitted. Such an amendment should be short, easily understood. Then there would be no doubt after the vote was canvassed as to the opinion of the people of the State concerning direct legislation.

#### **UNIFORMITY OF LEGISLATION.**

The Legislature in 1911 established the Minnesota Board of Commissioners for the promotion of uniformity of legislation in the United States. In 1913 the uniform negotiable instruments law and the uniform warehouse receipts law were enacted. The Commission will make recommendations this year, to which the Legislature will undoubtedly give most earnest consideration. The work of this Commission is of great value and should be encouraged. Uniformity of legislation throughout the United States is very desirable from every view point, and this State ought to be well to the front in promoting such uniformity. I recommend that the small appropriation for the Commission be continued, and that its suggestions and report be given special attention.

There must be no backward step taken in the construction and maintenance of good roads throughout the Commonwealth, and in the development of a conservative forestry policy. The so-called Dunn law, in my judgment a well-balanced enactment, may perhaps be made better by some minor changes, but on the whole it is working well. The amount of money expended for roads increased more than 200 per cent in the six years ending in 1913, and so large an expenditure directs the attention of the people to the work accomplished and the methods pursued. Care must be taken lest criticism develop into antagonism, and it would be well to leave with

the local authorities as much control and direction of road-work as is compatible with uniform improvement of the highways throughout the State. This matter, too, I am confident will receive your attention.

### **STATE REFORESTATION.**

Now that the 9th proposed amendment to the State constitution has been carried, permit me to repeat what I took occasion to say recently in a public address:

“Within the boundaries of the State there are approximately 50 million acres of land; 33 million of these acres were originally forest lands, and probably 28 million acres (including cut-over and burnt-over areas) are forest land today. A large part of this area is suitable for agriculture and ultimately will be devoted to that purpose. The other part is non-agricultural land and can be put to no better use than forest culture. Some of this land is the property of the State, some of it is in private ownership, and except for the timber now standing upon it, of little value. If the State should adopt the policy of acquiring as rapidly as possible while it is cheap this non-agricultural land now owned by individuals and would conserve its own lands of this character, planting each year some portion of it to trees, in years to come the Commonwealth would be possessed of magnificent State forests. Spruce develops very rapidly here, and there is great demand for it for pulpwood. Minnesota may be called the home of the white pine, and its value for lumber is well known. Birch, poplar and other trees do well. If we had a great area forested and belonging to the State, it would yield a large annual income as well as provide a splendid playground for health and recreation seekers; to say nothing of the satisfaction of making good use of what would otherwise be waste land and making beautiful and attractive what would otherwise be a cheerless uniformity. This cannot be done in one generation, but we owe it to ourselves and to those who will come after us to proceed along economic lines to the accomplishment of this result.

“The great enemy of the forest is fire, and there should be adequate appropriations each year for fire prevention. Last year we lost through these forest fires \$98,000.

“Next, each year some portion of the non-agricultural land not owned by the State should be acquired and made a part of our public domain, and no year should pass but that a considerable portion of such land should be planted to trees. We may well be proud of our position as an agricultural State,—third in the production of



wheat, third in the production of oats, and first in the production of barley. But this is not all; our iron ranges are now yielding more iron ore than is produced in all the rest of the States together—five-eighths (better than 62 per cent) of the total of the United States in 1913; Minnesota alone producing more iron ore than any foreign nation in the world except Germany. Nor is this all. It is the greatest lumber producing State east of the Rocky mountains. Thousands of our citizens find employment in its lumber camps, on the rivers, in the mills and in the manufactories handling this product. Possibilities for development appear now to be without limit, and it is the part of wisdom to take advantage of our opportunities. We receive from the federal government \$10,000 a year to aid in this work. Our State should stand first in forest conservation and forest culture.”

There is in the State a great body of land which ought to be productive, but which is now little better than a waste. This land, fertile and capable of producing crops and furnishing homes for settlers, needs improvement. Some of it must be cleared; some of it must be drained; some of it is inaccessible and roads must be built so that it can be reached. There are many settlers attracted by its fertility who would like to purchase it and make homes upon it, but they are without the means needed to purchase and improve it and to await its development. They must find land that will yield quick returns. It seems to me the State can well afford to develop this waste land, and when it is ready for settlement; that is, when settlers can go upon it and by industry and good judgment secure an early return for their effort, sell it to actual settlers on easy terms. This land ought to be upon our tax rolls. It ought to bear its burden of State, county and school district expenditures. It is economically wrong to let it remain useless and idle, and this rich State can well afford to begin its development and to encourage its early settlement. In this connection let me say that before any land is sold by the State it ought either to be most carefully examined by competent persons to determine what, if any, minerals there may be in it, or if there is no such examination, sold with all mineral rights reserved by the State. We should seek to put agriculturalists and farmers on this land and to give them every encouragement to farm, but we should preserve to the State all mineral rights.

### **TEMPERANCE LEGISLATION.**

In the last election there was much controversy over temperance legislation, and practically every Representative and Senator elected

have come here either opposed to a change from local option to county option or in favor of such a change; very likely each member desires an opportunity to express his own opinion and to give voice to the prevailing sentiment in the district he represents. There are numerous plans for the promotion of temperance, and every one is in favor of temperance legislation or claims to be in favor of it. Some of our citizens would prohibit the sale, the manufacture and the use of intoxicating liquors of all kinds within the State. Others would prohibit their manufacture and sale, but not their use. Others would distinguish between spiritous liquors and malt and vinous beverages. The majority, however, apparently favor the licensing of the sale of intoxicating liquors either by the counties or by lesser political units, and while I am convinced that sooner or later the people of this State will pass upon some kind of a prohibition measure, just now the question is, Shall there be county option in place of existing local option? I hope this question may be taken up at once and disposed of at the earliest possible date, so that other matters of great importance may receive the attention of members. It is very advisable that this be done because of the intense feeling and bitterness which frequently accompanies consideration of this matter, a bitterness entirely unwarranted by its importance from a temperance standpoint or from any other standpoint. The existence of such feeling, however, does not make for the calm and deliberate consideration of measures and such consideration is much needed, especially at this session. Since nearly every member knows now what his vote will be, it does not seem that a discussion of the matter at any length is either desirable or necessary. Whatever determination you may reach upon county option, I trust that all other proposals tending to promote temperance among the people of this State will receive your attention, and that you may be able to place upon the statute books some measures that will make for temperance. Economic questions are of great importance. Social and moral questions are of even greater importance, and in your treatment of them they ought not to be relegated to a secondary place.

#### **REORGANIZATION OF STATE GOVERNMENT.**

A matter of great concern and of far-reaching consequence will come before you at this session. For many years students of public affairs and those concerned in the activities of the State have believed the civil administration should be re-organized. We have now a number of offices, departments and commissions acting inde-

pendently and unrelated to each other. There is lack of co-ordination and lack of supervision. Necessarily there is duplication of work and that means unnecessary work. The information acquired by one commission may be needed by another or in one of the State offices, but either because of lack of knowledge in one place that the information has been obtained in another or because of a difference in nomenclature or in classification, it is not available for the purpose desired and must be secured again from original sources. The duplication of work necessitates a large number of employes. If one man can perform the services required in two departments, it is a waste to employ two men. If the men are in the field, the State must pay not only double wages but double traveling expenses.

But there is a matter of still greater importance. These commissions, boards, departments and offices, working along different lines and oftentimes at cross purposes, make effort for good government far less effective than if directed by one chief supervisor and toward a definite goal. Efficiency is the highest type of economy. The purpose of re-organizing the civil administration of Minnesota is to secure economy through greater efficiency. The Governor of this State in October, 1913, appointed the Minnesota Efficiency and Economy Commission. It was made up of thirty citizens of the State, representing all parts of it geographically. The Commission organized and selected its statistician and its secretary. It has performed a notable work. Several months ago it published its preliminary report and announced that its final report would be ready for the Legislature of 1915. That report has been prepared and will be brought to your attention. It proposes three things: First, a re-organization of the civil administration of this State. Second, the inauguration of the merit system for the selection of State employes. Third, the establishment of a budget for use in connection with appropriations. Now, its third recommendation, the establishment of a budget, will encounter no serious opposition, that is, direct opposition. Every one will pronounce it a good thing. Something toward its establishment might be done even if the other recommendations were unapproved, but the work would be done much better, much more effectively, and be of greater value, if the proposed re-organization is accomplished. Each commission, department or office for which appropriation is made or which has the expenditure of money, would some time previous to the meeting of the Legislature make its estimate of the amount of money required for its operation for two years following, and the amounts of money necessary to meet any expenditures which it may have been directed

to make. These estimates, after an examination by the Governor and the heads of the various commissions, departments and offices, and their approval, would constitute one part of the budget. Similar estimates of all revenues of the State from its many sources of income would constitute the other part of the budget. The Legislature in making its appropriations would have before it fairly accurate knowledge of the State's needs and its means. This of course would be of great value. I hope whatever you may decide to do in reference to this matter, to place before the next Legislature something like a budget. It so happens that no time elapses between the inauguration of the Governor and the meeting of the Legislature, so estimates must necessarily be made under the supervision of the Governor whose term is ending.

### **MERIT SYSTEM IN PUBLIC SERVICE.**

But there will be opposition, and very pronounced opposition, to the first and second recommendations of the Commission. There is much sentiment for the doctrine "To the victors belong the spoils." It is urged that those who are active in political campaigns, who give of their time and their means for the success of party candidates, deserve recognition at the hands of those candidates when successful, and that practical recognition is the bestowal of public office. It has been the practice to reward fidelity to party and campaign activity with appointment to administrative place. In the main we have had good and efficient officials under that policy, and especially is this true in the more conspicuous of the appointive offices. But in many of the less important places toward which the scrutiny of the public is not directed the strongest and most efficient men have not been selected, and often men who have developed into excellent officers have been removed, to the detriment of the public service, for no other reason than their political opinions. It is only fair to say in passing that there have been fewer partisan appointments to office and partisan removals from office in Minnesota than in many other States. It is proposed that, except the heads of departments and a few other officers, those who desire to enter the service of the State shall be examined by a non-partisan board, and their qualifications for public service determined by that board. Those found to possess the necessary qualifications shall be entitled to a place on a list of eligibles, the place upon such list to be determined by the ratings received in the examination. Whenever vacancies occur this non-partisan board will nominate from the eligible list candidates, and the heads of the departments select from

them to fill the vacancies. The appointments will no longer be dependent upon party service nor upon political opinion. This will tend to bring to the service of the State efficient and well-qualified employes who will feel that they cannot rely upon influence or favoritism to hold their positions, but must depend upon their industry, efficiency and worth. The proposal will meet opposition; first, from those who believe that party service should be rewarded by public place, and secondly, from those who believe it unwise to establish an office-holding class. To the objection of the first, it can only be said that it is an effort to promote the interest of the State rather than the interest of a political organization. But to the objection of the second, a further answer should be made. The merit system has been adopted by the Federal Government, and appointments to the civil service of the United States are now made in the manner in which it is proposed to make them in Minnesota. Those in the federal classified service are inclined to feel that, once appointed, they have such an interest to their positions that they cannot be separated from them without their consent. Many when by reason of old age or physical infirmity they are no longer able to render effective service, feel that since in case of removal they cannot secure remunerative and suitable employment, they should either be retired on partial pay, pensioned or permitted to hold their places and render such service as they are capable of performing. Where there is no provision for retirement on pay or for pensions many thoroughly inefficient employes are retained in the service, to the detriment of the work and the discipline of the administrative corps. I think, if the merit system is established, the term of those appointed should not be indefinite, but should be made for fixed periods, say, for six years, the efficient and worthy to be eligible for re-appointment.

#### **OPPOSITION TO RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.**

However, the first recommendation of the Commission will encounter the greatest opposition, for in the re-organization of the civil administration a great many offices are abolished, and we cannot expect that those who now hold such offices will favor the plan. Many of these places are held by men of the highest integrity and of great ability. From their standpoint and from that of their friends, the re-organization is not desirable. It would not be fair to say that their opposition is based upon selfishness, and yet the personal element enters largely into it. But, gentlemen, there can be no re-organization without the abolition of many official positions.

This is not a plan to be added to the present system. It is to take the place of it. We cannot keep what we have and have this also. The Commission cannot be charged with having done any other than a patriotic duty. Its members have served without compensation. They neither seek nor expect any reward whatsoever for their work other than the consciousness of public duty well performed. The proposed re-organization has their unanimous support. It has not only the approval of thousands of representative citizens, but it has been commended by the press and from the platform. It cannot be disregarded. It must have your best thought and your most careful consideration. In the report is included a form of bill for an act making effective the recommendations of the Commission. The parts are so related one to another that it must receive your sanction or your disapproval as a whole. While it may be bettered perhaps by some amendments—indeed I think it would be better to have members of the Railroad and Warehouse Commission appointed as other boards and commissions are instead of elected, and the term of civil service employes limited instead of indefinite, nevertheless the plan must stand or fall as a whole. To mangle it is to defeat it, and it should not be adopted in part. If I may be permitted to make a suggestion as to the method of dealing with this report: I believe it is worthy of the study of a special committee in the House and a special committee in the Senate; that the bill when introduced should be referred to these committees and they hold joint public hearings upon it, in which the members of the Efficiency and Economy Commission should be invited to take part; and that after the hearings such communication and joint action as your rules will permit should be had by the committees, to the end that the reports in House and Senate conform as nearly as practicable to each other. I recommend this report to your consideration. I believe if you enact its provisions into law, you will do the State a great service.

### **RAPID INCREASE IN EXPENDITURES.**

It appears from a chart in the final report of the Commission that the State expenditures in 1905 were between eight and nine millions of dollars; five years later, in 1910, they were between eleven and twelve millions of dollars, an increase of approximately three million dollars. In 1912, two years later, they were between fourteen and fifteen millions, another increase of three millions, and in 1913, eighteen and a half millions, about the same increase. The expenditures of the State for the decade between 1903 and 1913 increased approximately 125 per cent, while the population of the State during the same interval increased about 17 per cent.

In 1913 there were six States whose governmental cost payments or expenses were less than \$2.00 per capita; twenty from \$2.00 to \$4.00; eleven from \$4.00 to \$6.00; ten from \$6.00 to \$10.00; and one over \$10.00 per capita. Minnesota is one of the ten States whose governmental cost payments or expenses were from \$6 to \$10 per capita.

It is true that large expenditures do not always mean extravagance or waste. If there were a plague destroying the people of the State, and by a large outlay of money its ravages were checked and thousands of lives saved, there is no one who would say the money was ill-spent, and yet the burden upon the State might be so heavy that taxes would be many times multiplied. The work of some of our boards and commissions may have been extremely beneficial to the people of the State, may have saved them from large payments of money. The cost of maintenance of the boards and commissions may have been trifling compared with the results obtained. The mere fact, then, that our governmental expenses have been increasing does not warrant one in charging the State with extravagance.

Nevertheless, we find our expenditures growing very much faster than our population, and our State among the number having the greatest per capita governmental expenses. There is complaint over taxes and the people expect this Legislature to move in the direction of economy. Of course a small portion only of the taxpayer's burden is due to State taxes. I hope that in reviewing the work of this session it may be said there is a substantial reduction in the amounts appropriated, and if the municipalities of the State would do proportionately as well taxes would be substantially lightened. The appropriations of the Legislature of the year 1913 were \$1,275,130.90 more than the appropriations for the year 1911. I recommend that in making up the appropriations you do not permit the aggregate amount to exceed the appropriations of 1911. This I am quite sure can be accomplished without injury to the State or any of its institutions or activities.

### **INSANE HOSPITALS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS.**

The question, "Is insanity in the United States on the increase" has received the attention of many students and investigators. In six years from 1904 to 1910 the number of insane reported in institutions increased 25 per cent, while during the same period the population of the United States increased but 12 per cent. In 1904 one person out of every 543 was confined in an institution for the

insane, and in 1910 one person out of every 490. These figures are startling, but it should be noted that an increase in the number of insane persons in institutions does not necessarily mean an increase in the number of insane persons in the country. Formerly there was dread of confinement in an insane asylum, and people were reluctant to send to them relatives and friends. But that feeling of dread has largely passed away, and the well managed institution is now recognized as the best place for the mentally afflicted. The demands made upon our State asylums for the insane are very great. Whatever is needed for the care or comfort of those confined in these institutions should be provided, and for them I bespeak the most generous treatment.

I shall not refer to the penal, educational and other institutions of the State other than to commend to you the reports of the officers having them in charge, and to express the hope that you will so provide that they will continue to rank among the best in the United States. Minnesotans are especially proud of their public schools, their normal schools and their university, and desire that they be furnished with everything needed for their development.

Gentlemen, in conclusion, I wish to say that it is my hope our relations will be most cordial. I desire to feel that I may approach you freely for counsel and support, and likewise I hope you will feel free at any time to call upon me. We all desire to make a good record, a praise-worthy ambition for every one. Let us co-operate to the end that at the close of this session we may deserve the commendation of the people we are here to serve.