

every county and city, and almost every school district, is now on a cash basis and the taxes are no higher than in any active, progressive community. While in some instances the tax rate at first glance would seem to be high, when it is taken into consideration that both real and personal property is listed at about one-third its actual value, it will be seen that the rate was comparatively a very moderate one. It is a significant fact that the tax rate in the majority of the counties of the Territory had been reduced the past year.

The total Territorial indebtedness of Oklahoma on June 30, 1901, was \$466,220.13, or about \$1 per capita. Of this indebtedness \$48,000 is in bonds issued for educational purposes in the first year of the Territory's history. The balance is in warrant indebtedness accumulating by a casual deficit each year, and mostly caused by the failure to realize sufficient from the general-fund levy of 3 mills to meet the warrants authorized to be drawn upon that fund. This does not include the indebtedness incurred in the erection of the Northwestern Normal School, amounting, with interest, to a little over \$100,000, and provision for the payment of which was made at the last session of the legislature by the levying of a special tax. All this indebtedness bears 6 per cent interest, but it could be funded into long-time bonds at a very much lower rate. This procedure would, I believe, be advisable and of great benefit to the Territory, in that the annual interest charge would be greatly reduced and all of the Territorial business be put on a cash basis.

The present Territorial revenues are adequate to meet all expenditures, and the rapid growth of taxable wealth would make it easy to accumulate a sinking fund to take up the bonds when due.

"A child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward looking
thoughts."

The public school system of Oklahoma is at once the pride and glory of the rising Commonwealth. Its remarkable development has kept pace with the phenomenal material progress of the growing State.

Legendo recounts that that Athene sprang, fully armed, from the brain of Zeus; so our public school system seems to have sprung into existence fully developed.

One of the first acts of the legislative assembly a decade ago was to enact comprehensive laws for the establishment and support of a public-school system. Indeed, the organic act passed by the General Government appropriated \$50,000 to assist in establishing public schools, most of which was expended in teachers' salaries.

At first the township was the unit of organization; later it was displaced by the district system. Today the public-school system embraces rural, town, and city systems, together with higher educational institutions, including a university, agricultural college, and normal schools.

In each county there is a county superintendent, elected every two years, whose duty it is to see that the school laws are enforced in the counties, to visit and inspect the schools, to hold public gatherings, to encourage education, and to make full and complete reports of educational conditions and progress. There is also a Territorial superintendent, appointed by the governor, who has general supervision and management of the schools, under such limitations and restrictions as the law may prescribe.

The general educational policy of the Territory is molded by the Territorial board of education, consisting of the Territorial superintendent, the president of the university, the president of the normal school located at Edmond, and one city superintendent and one county superintendent appointed by the gov-

ernor. This board grants Territorial certificates and diplomas, certificates to instructors and conductors of normal institutes, and prepares the questions for Territorial, county, and city teachers' examinations.

Some years ago the Territorial board outlined a graded course of study for the rural schools, which has since been put in active operation by the various county superintendents. This course of study graduates into the high schools and the preparatory departments of the higher institutions of learning. Last year over 700 students took the examination; about 312 passed. Since the system was inaugurated some 1,332 pupils have graduated. Our cities have first-class graded schools, equal in efficiency to those of cities of corresponding size in older States. Laws authorizing township and county high schools are upon the statutes. So far none have been organized. It is hoped that every county will organize a county high school at an early date. A few comparative statistics will show the rapid growth of the public school system. In 1891 there were 9,395 pupils enumerated; in 1900, 114,737. In 1891 there were 438 teachers employed; in 1900, 2,343. In 1891 the estimated value of school property was \$12,085; in 1900, \$760,972. In 1891 there were 109 schoolhouses; in 1900, 1,930. In 1891 there were 358 school districts sustaining schools; in 1900, 2,096. In 1891 the amount received for school purposes was \$44,664, while in 1900, \$774,176 was received. These statistics are based upon the 1900 report, as the 1901 report will not be due until October 1.

In Oklahoma the district-school system prevails. The district school is managed by a school board consisting of a director, clerk, and treasurer, each of whom holds his office for a period of three years. The district board has charge of the schoolhouse, of the finance of the district, employment of teachers,

provides the necessary apparatus, doing all those things which will promote the interest and efficiency of the school. In July each year there is an annual meeting in each district at which a member of the school board is regularly elected, the length of school term determined, and the amount of annual tax voted.

The qualifications for teachers are similar to those required by the States. Examinations for applicants to teach in the rural schools are held quarterly under the direction of the county examining board, consisting of the county superintendent and two associate examiners appointed by the county commissioners. Three grades of county certificates are issued—first, second, and third grades. The first grade is good for three years, the second for two years, and the third for one year. Under certain conditions temporary certificates are sometimes issued. A normal institute lasting from three to six weeks is held in each county annually. A three-years' graded course of study has been outlined by the Territorial board of education and introduced by the country superintendents. Graduates of this course of study are given normal-institute diplomas. Teachers who hold first-grade certificates, normal-institute diplomas, and two teachers' reading-circle certificates are granted high-class professional certificates by the county examining boards.

The average length of school term last year was four and one-half months. In Pawnee County the average length of term was six and one-half months. As the wealth of the people gradually accumulates the length of the term increases. Throughout Oklahoma a system of separate schools has been planned and is now maintained. The advantages of the races are, however, identical. Our schools are free, and a uniform system of text-books has been used for ten years.

In each county there is a teachers' association, which usually meets monthly.

At these meetings educational topics are discussed by the teachers and patrons of the schools. There is also a Territorial teachers' association which meets annually, usually during the Christmas holidays, at some central point.

"Books are the negative pictures of thought and the more sensitive the mind that receives their images the more nicely the finest lines are produced."

The legislature, by enactment, has made provision for a library in every school district. Each year a stipulated sum is set aside to increase the library. Very many of the districts are accumulating a list of most excellent books for general reference and for literary study. The county examining boards recommend a list of suitable books and the district boards and teachers make selections therefrom. In each county there are also teachers' and students' reading circles. Pedagogical and general culture books are recommended by the Territorial board, which the teachers study.

Oklahoma has looked well to her schools. Foreigners who are contemplating moving into Oklahoma will find that the system now in vogue is equal to the best system in the land.

Our people are enthusiastic and our teachers ambitious to lay well the foundation for a great public school system and build thereon a magnificent superstructure worthy of a great State. Without hesitation I commend its efficiency and completeness.

HOBART, OKLAHOMA.

Hobart is the county seat of Kiowa County, the best and most productive county in the new country. It has a population of 4,000 inhabitants, and only 13 months since it was a cattle pasture, and today it is farther advanced in everything that tends to make it double its population within the next few years than many cities that have been in existence for the past fifty years. It has the wealth, loca-

tion and soil and men of energy and push to make it the metropolis of the new southwest in the next few years. Today we have two railroads, the St. Louis and San Francisco, and the Rock Island, and a good prospect for two more. We also have graded streets, one electric light plant, one ice plant, two large cotton gins now running. Wagoner & Co. are now constructing one of the largest cotton seed oil mills here that are in the South, at a cost of \$150,000. Among the other large buildings in the course of construction is a 250-barrel capacity flouring mill and two grain elevators. We have two graded schools also building, and are now constructing the third building at a cost of twenty thousand dollars. We have now nine church organizations, and five of them have good church buildings. All the leading fraternal orders are represented here. We also have several wholesale houses carrying different lines of goods, and almost every other line of business that goes in the make up of a good substantial city.

KIOWA COUNTY.

This is one of the three new counties that was opened for settlement by the lottery plan on the 6th day of August, 1901, and is the best part of the famous Kiowa, Comanche and Apache Indian reservation, known as the cream of all lands formerly owned by the Red Man. This county is bounded by the Washita River on the northeast, and by the Red River on the west and the two Elk Rivers, which are ever running rivers, being fed by springs running from north to south through the center of our county. The new settlers are of the better class, coming from every State in the Union, and are thrifty, industrious, church-going, law-abiding citizens.

Those who have tested the adaptability of the soil in the past season affirm that the soil of Kiowa and adjoining counties will yield bountifully of the following cereals. Corn, wheat, oats, Kafir corn,

broom corn and cotton, and among the grasses grown here are millet, Hungarian cane and alfalfa, and the writer believes that as our land is put in cultivation this will prove to be one of the greatest alfalfa growing countries in the west, as we have any amount of sub-irrigated land, and at one of our missions, south of Hobart, that has been running for ten years, on high land they are now harvesting two good crops per season. We also have the native grass, that is harvested in abundance for such stock as does not run on pasture.

This is eminently a fruit country. Oklahoma fruits, such as peaches, apples, apricots, cherries and grapes, are known the world over for their size and fine flavor. Grapes never fail and are next to the California grape in quality and flavor. No country can produce a greater and more perfect variety of apples. Peaches are another crop that never fails in this part of Oklahoma.

All kinds of vegetables can be grown here to perfection by proper planting and cultivating. Potatoes and cabbage are as fine in quality as the Michigan grown. The melon crops here are equal to the Georgia grown. The writer observed on the streets of Hobart today a wagon load of 54 watermelons that averaged 84 pounds to the melon. This is the home of the sweet potato, and the flavor will surpass the New Jersey variety that has the wide world's name of "Perfection."

The climate is pleasant, ranging in temperature between the extreme heat of the South and the rigid cold of the North. The winters are mild and short, enabling stock to live on the native grasses. The days are warm here in summer, but the nights are cool. This climate should be a guarantee that this section is a healthful home for the prudent and wise liver. The elevation is 1,545 feet above sea level. From the government records of the past the average rain fall was from 1880 to 1889 33.66 inches per annum. The air

is pure and a health-builder for the invalid.

This is the home of cattle and hogs. As the writer has stated before, this is the cattle man's paradise of the past, and many have made fortunes on leased lands for grazing. The winters are mild and short, enabling stock to live and do well on grass through the winter. Besides this the farmer has his large wheat fields to pasture his stock on in winter, and they will grow fat on the same.

Hogs are healthy in this climate, and the writer predicts, after having 25 years' experience in the stock business, that this new country will prove to be one of the greatest hog and alfalfa growing countries in the West. One has only to go six miles north of us, to Washita County which has been settled 12 years, also to Greer County, 12 miles west of us, to prove the above statements.

To the miner or investor, Kiowa County presents an inviting field. It is well known that the range of mountains running diagonally through the south part of the county, is rich in precious metals, as recent developments have conclusively shown. Mining companies have chartered and pay ore has been struck at a very shallow depth. The assays prove the richness that can not be doubted, and will undoubtedly increase in value at a greater depth. Oil and asphaltum have been discovered at many points, and the writer predicts that it will only be a few years until our mills and factorics will be running with oil for fuel, as at the present time we have greater prospects for oil than they did at the celebrated Beaumont gushers a few years since.

The timber in Kiowa County is confined mostly to the water courses of the lower bottom lands. Prairie fires have no doubt been the main destructive forces against the growth of timber over all the prairie country, but along the water courses the timber consists of pecan, walnut, oak,

hickory, hackberry, elm, cottonwood and mesquite.

CHANDLER.

Chandler (population 3,500) is the county seat and largest town in Lincoln County (population 30,000), and is the largest local cotton market in Oklahoma. In 1901 it shipped 14,500 bales of cotton, which yielded more than \$600,000 to the farmers. The cotton seed from the same crop amounted to 8,000 tons and found a ready sale in Chandler at the big cottonseed oil mill, yielding \$140,000 more to the cotton grower. Do not lose sight of the fact that less than one-half of the Lincoln County crop was marketed in Chandler. This is but one of the many crops that are successfully and profitably grown here. In season cantaloupes and peaches and other fruit are shipped by the car, and the success of this fruit industry is established beyond question. Chandler ranks well as a market for live stock and for all kinds of grain and produce. It has the largest and most successful pressed brick plant in Oklahoma, with an output of three cars per day. It has three cotton gins, two mills, and many smaller industries. Numerous fine buildings have been erected by private enterprise, and the city has two fine brick school houses, costing \$16,000, and numerous churches. Among the many conveniences may be mentioned the system of water works, owned by the city, a good telephone exchange and numerous long-distance lines. The business men of Chandler are enterprising and energetic, and its banking and other institutions are solid and reliable. Besides the Frisco, the Rock Island Railroad also runs through Chandler. Business in all lines is rapidly increasing in volume, and it is apparent that Chandler is destined to be one of the leading cities of Oklahoma. At this time exceptional opportunities are offered for profitable investments, either in business lines or in farm property. Chandler has an ice plant, 15 tons daily capac-

ity, and a steam laundry, electric light plant and canning factory are to be established in the near future.

LAWTON.

Lawton, the "magic city of mountain and plain", is situated on a beautiful elevation overlooking the Cache Creek Valley with the magnificent Wichita Mountains in the background. It is three miles south of Ft. Sill, the famous military reservation, and six miles from the mountain. It was founded Aug. 6, 1901. The townsite, comprising a half section of land, sold at public auction for \$414,000, \$130,000 of which goes to the city for municipal improvements and the remainder to the county to erect court house, build roads, bridges, etc. Four hundred acres of land have since been platted for townsite purposes, adjoining the city.

March, 1902, the population of Lawton, according to the assessor's returns, was 7,082. Lawton has two railroads, five banks which have on deposit more than six hundred thousand dollars, a splendid system of graded schools, nine church congregations with six church edifices, some of them costing as much as five thousand dollars, electric light, a fine system of water works and sewerage. The property of the municipality will soon be in course of construction. Lawton is the seat of the U. S. Land Office, U. S. court, near the center of a large agricultural country and a good flow of gas, also many evidences of oil and valuable mineral have been discovered. Lawton is the largest city in southwestern Oklahoma, the Indian Territory or northwest Texas. It is well situated geographically to become a manufacturing and distributing point of importance and if the stories of gold, silver and copper in the Wichita Mountains prove to be true, some of the hundreds of prospectors will be richly rewarded and Lawton will become the largest city in Oklahoma.

The Lawton Commercial Club is a wide