

OAKLAND'S EXPENSES.

The Mayor Points Out How They May Be Reduced.

Mayor Robinson, at the meeting of the City Council of Oakland last evening, presented his first message. After expressing his belief in the sincerity of the members of the Council in their efforts to further the best interests of the city, the Mayor called attention to the immense increase in the expenditures of the city funds during 1881 as compared with 1876. The Mayor stated that he had carefully examined the details of expenses for the previous six years, and said: "By this examination I find that the total expenditures for the city government in 1881 were, in round numbers, \$100,000 more than they were in 1876. This increase appears to be mainly for current expenses, and occurs as follows: Increase in cost of Police Department, \$14,000; in Fire Department, \$12,000; in Street Department, \$17,000; in School Department, \$28,700; in lighting streets, \$18,000; in Health Office, \$3700; in Assessor's office, \$4300, and in the City Pound, \$2000. There has been another department added since 1876, which involves an annual expenditure of \$11,000. I refer to the Free Library and Reading-rooms." The Mayor pointed out that while the Council was not responsible for the general management of the department, yet they are called upon to decide as to the amount of funds to be placed at its disposal, and are expected to take interest in its affairs. The Mayor stated that in naming the different departments he did not wish to cast reflections upon the management, but simply to call attention to the facts and urge upon the Council the necessity for active and determined efforts toward economy.

With regard to the Police Department the Mayor considered the management in good and sufficient hands, but suggested, in the interests of economy, the question of reducing the number of men upon the force. [The population numbers 36,000 and the police force 25 men.] He considered the force could be reduced without endangering the peace and quiet of the city.

In regard to the street expenses the Mayor considered \$17,000 for sprinkling the streets for one season much too large a sum, and recommended that the work be advertised and sealed proposals invited.

As to street lights, he said: "It seems to me that \$52,000 per annum for lighting the streets, City Hall and engine-houses is too much light for the people of Oakland for one year. They cannot afford it." The Mayor suggested that no more lamps be placed unless the tax upon the property within the area to be lighted is sufficient to pay the cost of the light for one year, and that lamps now in use whose light is not so paid be discontinued.

The sum of \$6000, expended in the Health Department, considering the freedom of the city from contagious diseases, the Mayor thought exorbitant and recommended that a reduction be compelled in the expenses of the office. He also made several suggestions in relation to minor offices.

In referring to the bonded indebtedness of the city, the Mayor said: "The interest paid upon our bonded indebtedness last year was \$55,660. The amount of the indebtedness is now \$543,500, most of which is drawing interest at the rate of 8 per cent a year. Had you the right to call in the bonds which are now outstanding, I could readily place them at a much lower rate of interest. There is, however, one class of these bonds, amounting to \$70,000, and bearing 10 per cent interest, which were issued in 1870 and made payable in 1890, which are redeemable at the option of the city any time after 1880." The Mayor advised the calling in of these bonds, stating he could place them for the remaining eight years at 6 per cent. The Mayor inclined to the opinion that the bonds bearing 5 per cent interest could be placed at their par value, and recommended that steps be taken to call them in and replace them with others in like amount and denomination, and bearing a reduced rate of interest. In reference to the Sinking Fund created by the Mam Lake Sewer bonds, amounting to \$173,000, and falling due in 1885, the Mayor suggested the propriety of placing the \$32,000 now in the Sinking Fund where they will be earning something. [The money at the present time is lying idle.]

As to the School Department, the Mayor considered the management all that could be desired in the way of economy and prudence, and deprecated any reduction in the amount required by the Trustees to keep them up to their present standard. The Mayor said: "While the figures show an increase of cost in this department over what it was in 1876, yet it will be seen by a reference to the very full and complete report of the Superintendent for the last year that the increase in pupils, and the necessary increase in room and teachers, is very much greater proportionately than the increase in the cost has been. We cannot afford to cripple or impair the usefulness of this department by withholding the necessary support to the Trustees."

In regard to the Chinese question, the Mayor recommended instant and peremptory legislation, prohibiting the use of buildings within the city limits by Chinese and making it an offense with severe penalties attached for any person to lease property to be used for such purpose. The Mayor closed with an earnest wish that the legislative and executive departments of the municipal government might work together in harmony and accomplish results satisfactory in some degree to their constituents.