

prove of greatest benefit to the agricultural interest. I have devoted all of my time, all of my energy, all of my ability to the duties of my office, and with the means supplied by it, aided by some from my *private resources*, I have endeavored to carry out its spirit, and to do "the greatest good to the greatest number." The imperfections of the present law were pointed out to the House of Delegates at its last, and I shall make them the subject of a particular memorial to you at your present session, with the confident hope that due regard for the interest of the State and obedience to the general wish of the people will give such amendments to it as will most conduce to its efficacy.

I know, and all know who have information on the subject, that it is *utterly impossible* to carry out the letter of the present law, so as to make it of any benefit whatever. I, therefore, in my second, as I did in my first term of office, carried out to the best of my ability its spirit. The General Assembly sustained me in my course then, and as the reasons which caused my action then have been and are in full force now, I confidently anticipate similar results.

There are some, I know, who have taken exception to my not obeying and administering the law according to its letter, but I am sure that when they have a proper understanding of the nature of the duties to be performed they will admit the propriety of my course. At any rate I desire to have the fullest inquiry and investigation into all of my official acts, and *I am prepared to meet any responsibility* which I may have incurred.

I could not close this report without giving publicly my heartfelt thanks to the people at large for the kindness and generous confidence which they have on all occasions manifested to me. I do not flatter myself that this has been due to any personal merit of my own, but on that account am not the less sensible of the honors which have been conferred on me. The *cause* in which I was engaged was dearer to me than any considerations of self, and tributes of respect to it could not fail to excite the warmest feelings of thankfulness.

To all who have extended to me tokens of respect and consideration, I again repeat my sincere thanks, and give them in return all that I have to give, heart-felt wishes for their peace, prosperity and happiness.

JAMES HIGGINS.