

Inaugural address
of
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Inaugural Message

Members of the General Assembly:

It is with much pleasure that I greet you here today. We have been highly honored by our various constituencies and come here, I know, with the high resolve to serve with unity the whole people of our state.

FINANCES

The finances of the state will affect the larger part of your action. The money which you appropriate must come from taxation. Our people are not so situated at the present time that we should add to their burdens, but should rather lighten them. Our present tax system is equitable and, I believe, should be retained. I am decidedly opposed to a return to taxation of real estate, but our revenues have shrunk very materially and it will be a problem to meet our most necessary requirements.

The payments on our bonded indebtedness have been met and so this indebtedness has been materially reduced, but we have a large floating indebtedness. The Treasurer is now borrowing this money at very advantageous rates, but times may change and this item may become troublesome. I very much wish that the amount of this indebtedness might be reduced by payments. Or it might be well to issue bonds patterned after our flood bond issue. The rate might be temporarily more than we are paying now. I simply wish to bring this to your attention.

You will have in your hands within a few days the biennial budget, which will give you in some detail the items of departmental expenditures; the statement of the Commissioner of Finance, regarding expenditures other than departmental, and the statement of the Treasurer of the indebtedness of the state. I commend this budget to your careful consideration.

My recommendations for appropriations follow closely the amounts in the appropriation bill of two years ago. I have raised the appropriation for the Educational Department to approximately the former amount and doubled the appropriations for publicity and for mother's aid. Aside from these changes, the recommendations, as I say, follow the appropriation bill of the last session. The figures in the budget are based upon the salary lists before the Emergency Salary Bill. If this bill is re-enacted the amount saved through it will be reflected in the figures of the budget.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is our most important industry. Substantially one-third of our population lives on farms. Another third in our villages are hugely dependent upon the income from these farms. Thus a profitable agriculture and a satisfying rural life constitute our chief concern. Briefly, while conditions have improved somewhat during the past year, it still requires substantially twice as much milk, or other products, to meet the fixed charges and living costs of normal times. The problems connected with this situation are far too numerous to be covered in this message. I will mention only a few.

The major source of farm income in Vermont is from the sale of dairy products—primarily fluid milk. The nature of this product is such as to present peculiar marketing problems which must be solved if producers are to have a stable market and consumers a stable, adequate supply of high quality product. The solution of these problems require, at this time, not only strong producer organization, but also assistance from governmental agencies. All possible encouragement and facilitating legislation should be provided to this end. We need the continuance of our state milk control board to care for the problems connected with milk marketed within the state, just as we need federal government assistance—by way of marketing agreements and licenses—in connection with the milk marketed outside the state.

We should give careful consideration to other agricultural problems, especially maple syrup, poultry, potatoes and fruit—important products of our Vermont farms.

Along with effective marketing of our agricultural products goes efficient production of them. The only way to hold our markets is to produce at a cost low enough to enable us to meet competition. There is no substitute for this. To that end many things are necessary. Farmers must have the latest and best information available regarding production as well as marketing. Our agricultural educational institutions must be maintained and liberally supported. The Agricultural College, training our young men and women in agriculture and home economics; the Experimental Station, engaged in research to solve farm and home problems; the Extension Service, with its County, Home Demonstration and 4-H Club agents carrying the gospel of better farming, better marketing and better living to our thousands of rural homes. Our State School of Agriculture, giving sound training to boys unable to attend college, and the agriculture and economic courses in high schools. These must all be maintained and supported as they are necessary to a prosperous and satisfying rural life.

Some provision should be made for effective control of devastating diseases of plants and animals, especially when such diseases are costly to the producer and jeopardize the health of the consumer. We have practically eradicated bovine tuberculosis and must see to it that we remain free from it. The federal government, with emergency legislation, is attacking Bangs disease and mastitis and we should cooperate to the fullest extent with this activity.

There are many federal projects related to agriculture of which we may take advantage. We should be alert to work out ways of profiting by these activities. Legislative action can help. It can provide protection, safeguards and facilities that cannot be provided otherwise. It is our duty to enact this legislation, where needed, and to this duty I would direct your attention.

INDUSTRY

It is recognized that there can be no permanent prosperity for one class of our people at the expense of any other class. We move up and down together, the farmer, the merchant, the laborer, the banker and the manufacturer. We cannot live independently. We are all profoundly concerned with the well-being of all of our people.

A large part of our manufactured products are sold outside of Vermont and we are naturally brought into direct competition with other states, particularly with all New England. We must aid and encourage our industries wherever we may, because with increased output comes increased employment for labor and better wages.

Our small industries in small communities must lie protected because they are a great and necessary contribution to the welfare of the people of our small towns.

It is very essential that any proposed legislation which would place upon industry increased burdens should and must be avoided.

LABOR

In these unsettled times labor has suffered with others – perhaps more than others. They must be given every opportunity to help themselves and promote their welfare. We must not forget them in any particular.

WELFARE

Regarding the activity of the state in its various departments, the Department of Welfare has under its care the State Hospital at Waterbury, the Industrial School at Vergennes, the State Prison at Windsor, Riverside at Rutland, the Brandon State School, Kinstead, the Washington County Sanitorium at Barre, and the Vermont Sanitorium at Pittsford. These are fine institutions and we can be proud of them and their management.

They are, of course, occupied by unfortunate wards of the state who are in need of and are receiving the finest care possible. I would like to emphasize and extend the humanitarian side of their care. There is much of worth in these state wards.

EDUCATION

At the last biennial session of the Legislature a resolution was adopted requesting the Governor to appoint a commission of seven members to consider and report upon our educational system. The commission called for was appointed and has made a painstaking study of state educational problems and has lately made its report.

I anticipate that much good will come from this study and the commission's recommendations.

HIGHWAYS

The extent of our road building is a question of money. Our policy of appropriating motor vehicle and gas tax revenues to highways, as required by state law, with the cooperation of the federal government, has made possible the accomplishments of the past several years.

I heartily favor the extension of our state highway system, as proposed by the Highway Board, and approve the policy of extending improvements, through state aid, to other classes of roads. The wisdom of this policy is very apparent.

It must not be overlooked that highway construction and maintenance offers the most direct and available work relief measure carried on by the state.

However, in view of the high registration fees and their burden upon our people, I recommend that a reduction of 15% be made in fees for registration of pleasure cars. In view of what happened to the income from this source the past year—there being such a marked increase in face of the reduction of 10% in fees granted at the last session of the Legislature—we might expect to gain in revenue by this reduction, contradictory as it may seem.

I would like also to recommend a change of registration date from January 1st to April 1st.

You will recall that the highway system of Vermont is divided into three classes; state highways, state aid or secondary roads and town highways sometimes referred to as "back roads".

The state highway comprises 1,029 miles of important trunk lines. They were taken over by the state in 1931. Up to that time they were classed as state aid highways and were combined, with the present state aid highways. This system is under the direct control of the Department of Highways.

The state aid system is 3,362 miles of roads, selected by the selectmen as the most important in their towns. These connect the different villages of the state and reach to every town. The State Highway Board is recommending in their biennial report the taking over of about 700 miles of the more important state aid roads into the state highway system. I have already endorsed this recommendation of the Board.

The town highways total 9,993 miles and generally lead from the state aid system into the more remote districts. These are entirely supervised by the town authorities. The Legislature appropriated at the last biennial session \$500,000 annually to aid the towns in the construction and maintenance of this system. This amounts to approximately \$50 a mile.

The federal aid system are the roads on which the state is commonly authorized to spend federal funds. In Vermont this system corresponds almost exactly with the state highway system.

It seems to me that this division of our highway system is extremely well adapted to the needs of our state.

RECREATIONAL

The recreational business of our state is coming to be one of the chief income producers for our people. It would appear wise to take advantage of and foster this line endeavor.

Our publicity department has done excellent work with the small amount available for its use. Neighboring states have large and costly programs and I am recommending in the budget an appropriation of \$50,000 for publicity.

While our publicity department calls attention to our attractions and sings our praises as a recreation ground, the Fish and Game Department and the Forestry Department are doing their part to make good these claims, as well as to serve our own people.

The departments are closely related. Right now they are working together, under the leadership of the Fish and Game Department, in making wonderful exhibits in several of the larger cities.

I wish to offer for your consideration a consolidation of these three departments through a Department of Conservation, with a board of three members, similar to our other boards. This board could select the highest type of directors for these various endeavors, with a continuity of work removed from politics. I leave this with you for consideration.

During the past year and a half the Forest Service has had the successful direction of fifteen Emergency Conservation Camps.

As a result of the labors of these 3,000 youths much valuable work has been done for fish and game, recreation and forestry. Several hundred fish dams have been built, miles of stream improved, several thousand wild game food plants set out. Eleven new forest fire look-out towers have been built. Twenty new picnic sites with pure water and sanitary facilities have been developed. Arches and picnic tables sufficient to seat 6,000 people at once are now available to public use, About thirty miles of ski trails on Mount Mansfield, Burke Mountain and Bald Mountain at Townshend have been built. Over seventy-five miles of forest roads have been built and repaired. Beach developments at Sand Bar and Elmore Lake will be available for public use next summer. Eight thousand acres of timber lands have been improved by cuttings.

It is expected that the Federal Government will continue and increase this work over the next two years. Vermont must be ready to accept what federal assistance is available to us. The fish and game and recreational developments already completed will not only serve our own people but will also attract many thousands of tourists.

STATE PLANNING BOARD

In cooperation with the National Resources Board, an advisory State Planning Board has been appointed in Vermont corresponding in character to similar boards or commissions in more than forty states.

The Vermont board has already demonstrated its value as a research and coordinating state agency and I recommend that you give this matter consideration and possibly the passage of a simple act establishing an official statutory commission.

RURAL ELECTRICITY

It seems probable that something may be accomplished in the near future regarding rural electrification. Vermont is backward in this respect. The period of the kerosene lamp is past. It is time that the farmer and his wife have the help of electricity at a price within their means.

Maybe the young people would take more kindly to the home place if it could be modernized and brightened up in this way. Efforts will be made through various agencies to bring about a more general electrification.

OLD AGE PENSION

If it seems likely that relief, aside from that afforded by public works, will be thrown back upon the state and municipality, we must prepare for this emergency.

One form of assistance in which the Federal Government is likely to join for a major part is the old age pension. I most heartily recommend to you the enactment of an old age pension law.

I trust the measure would be one provided for entirely by the state and administered by the state, unless federal enactment provides otherwise. Such an act would furnish a measure of relief to our towns.

I hope that such a law may be enacted at this session.

FEDERAL

A matter of great importance is the cooperation with the Federal Government in their plans. We should certainly cooperate with the federal authorities in the flood control. The last legislature appropriated \$500,000 to take care of this emergency and some \$160,000 of this money was used in providing the state's share in the several flood control activities which are now approaching completion. This would amply provide for the acquisition by the state of the land necessary for the construction of the flood control dam above Waterbury. It may be advisable to acquire and develop more state forest and recreational projects while we have the aid of the civilian conservation corps. It is truly remarkable what has already been done, as I have partly recited, with their help.

There will probably be presented to you a bill or bills drawn in Washington with a view to adapting some of our laws to make them more workable with those of the Federal Government.

CONCLUSION

I have touched briefly upon the more important matters that I wish to bring to your attention; that is, state finances, some of the problems of our agriculture, fostering industry, the welfare of labor, further humanitarian work among our state wards, the extension of our state system of highways, the formation of a Department of Conservation with a larger appropriation for publicity, rural electrification and an old age pension law that fixes a sweet reward for those most perplexed.

I wish you all a very happy experience here.

The Governor having concluded the reading of his message, was escorted to the Executive Chamber by the committee appointed by the Chair.

The Joint Assembly dissolved.

RAWSON C. MYRICK,
Secretary of State, Clerk.