

Farewell address  
of  
Stanley C. Wilson  
As it appears in the  
Journal  
of the  
Joint Assembly  
1935

**Thursday, January 10, 1935**  
**Farewell Address**

*Members of the General Assembly:*

It is a Vermont custom that a retiring governor shall submit to the General Assembly a report of the governmental activities of the state during his administration, together with such recommendations and suggestions as he sees fit to make. In accordance with that custom, I now give you a brief account of my stewardship. I shall confine suggestions to those matters which have come especially to my attention through the experience of the past four years.

During this period we have dealt with numerous unusual and serious problems. Twice it became necessary to call special sessions of the General Assembly and we have had to deal with emergencies of many kinds and of serious import which have called for manifold activities outside the ordinary course of our state government. Under the circumstances I have not hesitated to call many times upon state officials for service outside the prescribed duties of their respective offices and to call for aid from local officials and private citizens as a matter of patriotism for the good of the state. To a marked degree I have been given full cooperation by officials and private citizens. Vermont is fortunate to have officials and employees who, though generally underpaid, give to their state honest, patriotic and efficient service.

**STATE INSTITUTIONS**

Our state institutions are in excellent condition.

I have to report that on July 30, 1934, the barn at the state prison farm was totally destroyed by fire. The loss was determined to be \$25,800.00 on the building, and \$10,455.05 on personal property, which included a large quantity of hay. A new barn, a little larger than the one burned, has now been completed and is in use. The cost of reconstruction was largely covered by the insurance received.

Since this fire, a new water supply has been provided for the prison farm with storage reservoir capacity of approximately 3,000,000 gallons. This water is piped to the farm buildings and hydrant service with about one hundred fifteen pounds of pressure provided for fire protection. This reservoir and water system was put in largely with prison labor and at comparatively small expense to the state, the cost being cared for from regular appropriations.

**PRISON LABOR**

Due to the provisions of the so-called Hawes-Cooper Act enacted by the 70<sup>th</sup> Congress and which became effective on January 19, 1934, a serious problem has been created as to employment of prisoners at the State Prison and House of Correction at Windsor. Under the provisions of this act, prison-made goods shipped from Vermont into any other state are subject to the local laws of such state, if the state has accepted the provisions of the act. Sales, if permitted at all, must be made under such regulations as the state law requires. The Supreme Court has not yet passed upon the constitutionality of the act. Considerable study has been made with a view to establishing at the state prison some industry or industries which will be suitable for prison labor and in which the manufactured product can be marketed, but in view of the unsettled state of the law, no definite conclusion has been reached. I suggest that the proper state officials be authorized by you to take action in this matter at the proper time.

**INSURANCE ON STATE PROPERTY**

During my first term it became evident to me that the insurance on state property needed revision. Conferences were held with insurance officials, and as a result a complete appraisal of state property for insurance purposes was made by a competent man approved by me and at the expense of the insurance exchange. As a result of this appraisal and negotiations conducted by the Commissioner of Finance and the Commissioner of Banking and Insurance, the amount of fire insurance was considerably increased but lower rates were obtained so that the net cost of the increased insurance was small. The insurance is now handled

through master policies with placement of insurance distributed among the different companies doing business in the state proportionally to the amount of tax paid by them to the state. This new arrangement reduces the possibility of dispute in case of fire and has distinct administrative advantages.

### REVISION OF PUBLIC LAWS

The revision of the Public Laws of the state, authorized by the General Assembly of 1931 and continued under authority of the Legislature of 1933 has been completed. The cost of this revision was kept within the estimates and was considerably less than some previous revisions.

### CONTROL OF TRAFFIC IN INTOXICATING LIQUOR

At the special session of the Legislature held last April there was enacted a new law for the control of the traffic in intoxicating liquor. It provided a state store plan for the sale of distilled liquors and provided for licenses for the sale of malt and vinous beverages. A State Liquor Control Board was created.

Eleven state stores were opened for business the middle of June and two agencies a little later. Up to the first day of January, 1935, the net profits to the state without deduction for possible income taxes payable to the federal government amounted to \$150,464.19. The revenue to the state up to the first day of January from license fees and druggists' permits amounted to the further sum of \$12,030.00. State taxes received on malt beverages for the six months ending December 31, 1934, amounted to \$51,967.40. License fees for the sale of malt liquors at retail are paid to the towns and cities where the licensed places are located.

On the whole, I think the operation of this new liquor control law has been as satisfactory as could be expected. No law dealing with the traffic in intoxicating liquor will be entirely satisfactory. Every reasonable effort should be made to control the traffic, to eliminate bootlegging, and to build up intelligent and powerful public sentiment in support of the control laws. Especially should effort be made to encourage temperance by making intemperance unpopular. We do not want to encourage the use of intoxicating liquor for revenue purposes. We want to discourage its use, but if it is to be used, the state should have the revenue and profits instead of letting the liquor interests and bootleggers control the business.

### STATE PUBLICITY

The campaign of Vermont publicity which has been carried on for some years is getting results. I believe the money provided for advertising Vermont is well spent. About one-third of the appropriation is used for newspaper and magazine advertising, about one-third for publications, and the remaining third for exhibits, pictures, salaries and office expenses, contracts with travel bureaus, information booths and other activities. The publicity is intended to cover Vermont agriculture and Vermont industries and to stimulate the great recreational and summer business of the state. I believe that the future prosperity of the state depends to a large extent on the development and utilization of our wonderful scenic wealth to supplement our agriculture and our industry. I am proud to have had a part in publicizing Vermont through numerous broadcasts and other public addresses.

I commend to your consideration a report of the Vermont Bureau of Publicity recently published, and hope that you will continue this activity with such reasonable appropriation as you feel able to provide. We need the business which this advertising brings to Vermont.

### EDUCATION

Education is essential to the safety and proper administration of a representative government. Our purpose should always be to improve educational facilities and so far as reasonably possible to make them equally available to all our young people, whether they live in populous communities or back on the farms. We may admire the success of individuals who have lacked educational advantages but that is no excuse for failure to do our best to remove from all our young people any educational handicap.

The last legislature provided for a commission to study the educational system of the state and make report as to facts, with suggestions for improving conditions. This commission has completed its labors and its report will be submitted to you. I commend this report to you as worthy of careful consideration.

## BANKS AND BANKING

One of the emergencies which has had to be dealt with during my terms as Governor pertains to our banks. The general economic condition resulted in a great reduction in the values of real estate. Property owners to whom our banks had loaned money were unable to make their payments and in many cases were unable even to pay interest and taxes. The value of the security was greatly reduced. The entire investment market was greatly affected.

The last legislature provided legislation to deal with this situation. This legislation enabled banking officials to safeguard the interests of depositors without undue hardship to borrowers. Our Vermont banks have come through this troublous period fully as well as the banks of any other state. The orgy of bank failures which occurred in some state was avoided. People who had money on deposit in our banks have lost much less proportionally than those who had their money otherwise invested.

It is the business of the state to preserve to persons of small means the opportunity for safe investments. It is the savings of the many rather than the swollen fortunes of the few that make a nation financially secure. No one can prophesy the future of state banking. The present federal domination of state banks may be the forerunner of a coming unification of our banking systems. In any event we should foster the spirit of thrift and safeguard the savings of our people.

## MAPLE SYRUP AND UNFAIR COMPETITION

Vermont is famous for her maple syrup and sugar. Because Vermont maple products are recognized as leading in quality, certain manufacturers of blend syrups are now putting them on the market under names and in connection with advertising apparently cleverly designed to deceive consumers into the belief that they are really the products of the maple forests of Vermont. Some of these blend syrups contain but little maple product and even that is understood to be largely imported. Whether or not this practice is actionable under federal laws, I believe Vermont has the power to protect its maple sugar makers from this unfair competition to some extent. I suggest that the manufacture, labelling, sale and advertising of such products within this state are within the control of the state and that carefully drawn legislation should be enacted to curb these practices that are greatly injuring our farmers. I am for Vermont made syrup spelled M-A-D-E.

## ERADICATION OF BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS

An increased appropriation for the eradication of bovine tuberculosis was provided by the last General Assembly. As a result of this action, initial tests on all the herds in the state were completed before July 1, 1934. The retests are now being made regularly and the great work of freeing the dairy industry in Vermont from the handicap of this disease will soon be completed.

Under authority of this act \$600,000.00 was borrowed by the state, which has been carried as a temporary loan. This was an emergency measure to protect the markets of our dairy products. The results have justified the action.

## UNEMPLOYMENT AND POOR RELIEF

The state and the towns were struggling with the problems of unemployment and poor relief in 1933 when Congress enacted several laws which directly affected Vermont. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration was created and provided with funds for use in cooperation with the states. Shortly afterwards, in cooperation with the state, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration set up a relief administration for Vermont. For a time the federal government provided sums which were in the nature of match money; or in other words, it refunded to the state, to be redistributed to the towns, a proportion of the expenditures of the towns for unemployment relief. Ordinary poor relief was excluded in this computation.

Later, the Civil Works Administration was set up, and the CWA functioned for several months.

On April 1, 1934, the entire administration of federal relief funds was turned over to the state, subject, however, to the required compliance by the state with definite rules and regulations governing the use of the funds.

Up to January 1, 1935, federal relief funds were received for use in the state as follows:

Administered directly by the Federal Emergency

Relief Administration for Vermont.....	\$ 456,782.53
Administered through the CWA.....	1,750,783.59
Administered through Vermont Emergency Relief Administration.....	<u>1,237,990.61</u>
Total July 1, 1933, to January 1, 1935.....	\$3,445,556.73

Every endeavor has been made by the Vermont Relief Administration to handle the funds wisely. We have been required to carry on some branches of relief service that personally I have deemed unwise or unnecessary. The Vermont Relief Administration has declined to enter upon some activities which seemed to be entirely unadapted to our conditions. We have, however, cooperated fully with the federal government and the administration of relief in Vermont has received high commendation by Washington officials. The percentage of administrative costs has been kept down below the average for all the states.

I hope that the amount of unemployment relief required will gradually become less. We must recognize, however, that we have confronting us serious problems along these lines. It is inevitable that federal funds will soon be greatly reduced, if not cut off entirely. Vermonters must be prepared to assume the whole burden when it is cast upon them. We have definitely and deliberately insisted that without legislative authority we should be cautious about setting up any new department or organization which will be comprised of or controlled by professional social workers. I believe that poor relief can be best handled by local officials with some guidance and supervision from the state. The closer the administration of relief is to a community, the better it is. Selectmen and Overseers of the Poor are better able to judge the needs of people in their towns than are professional social workers from outside. I hope you will not make the mistake already made in many states, of creating a great overhead organization which will constantly require more funds and become an unnecessary burden to the people.

#### CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

Another of the federal activities with which we have been called upon to cooperate has been the Federal Emergency Conservation Work. As a result of this activity, Vermont has had a large number of forestry camps in this state—considerably beyond the quota for Vermont.

The CCC men have done valuable work for the state in the development and improvement of the state forests and state forest parks. They have built and are building roads, some of them of real importance. Among them are those on Burke Mountain, Mt. Ascutney, Mt. Philo, Elmore Mountain, and in the Groton State Forest.

#### FLOOD CONTROL

In the late spring of 1933 it came to my attention that the Director of Federal Emergency Conservation Work was seeking an outlet for the employment of many thousands of men of the Veterans Division of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Vermont was fortunate in having available definite plans for flood control as a result of a survey following the 1927 flood made by army engineers in cooperation with the state. Most of the reports of the army engineers had been fully approved and printed as public documents by Congress.

Vermont succeeded in getting the federal government to approve flood control work in the Winooski Valley. The great flood control dam at Wrightsville and another at East Barre are nearing completion. Between four and five thousand veterans in the Conservation Corps have been engaged in these projects and channel improvements in the Winooski River. The so-called Clothespin Dam in Montpelier has been rebuilt with a structure that will reduce the danger of high water in Montpelier, and numerous channel improvements have been made along the river. The work already in progress will be of great value to the cities of Barre and Montpelier and to Waterbury, as well as the people all along the river to Lake Champlain. The state will get a direct benefit from the elimination of flood damage to its property. The annual flood menace and the greater menace of infrequent great floods will be reduced. We hope to have a third flood control dam constructed on the Little River in Waterbury, which will be larger than the other two dams combined.

The expense to the state for these great structures is small compared to the total expense of the projects and to the benefit to be derived. I feel that Vermont was fortunate indeed to secure this work. The total cost to the government to date is over \$5,500,000.00 and probably will be more than \$7,000,000.00. The expenditures by the state to the first day of January, 1935, in this connection have been \$153,531.90. The total expense to the state on these projects probably will be less than \$200,000.00, and under the Act which authorized the expenditures, a reasonable portion of this expense is to be reapportioned to the municipalities especially benefited. Provision should be made so that further flood control work may be done.

### GREEN MOUNTAIN PARKWAY

The State of Vermont has pending with the federal government an application for the construction of the Green Mountain Parkway. As a result of this application and favorable preliminary action by the Federal Board of Public Works and the President, an appropriation of \$50,000.00 was made by the federal government for surveys. The preliminary survey and the reconnaissance survey have been completed. A portion of the final or location survey has been made.

There is a great deal of misinformation with reference to this project. The proposition is for the state to provide a right of way for the parkway, which will then be built by local labor and be owned, operated, controlled and maintained by the federal government without expense to the state. Its construction according to the revised plans would largely solve our unemployment relief problem. It would, in effect, be a national park extending along or near the Green Mountains from the southerly border of the state to a terminal near Jay Peak, at the Canadian border.

This is part of a general plan now being worked out by the federal government. Time will not permit telling the story about the parkway. I have information from a source that cannot be quoted publicly but which I have disclosed privately to my successor and to a limited number of your membership which convinces me that Vermonters have the opportunity to secure this great public work if they choose. It is a part of a plan which includes ultimately the construction of a national parkway from Georgia to the Canadian border. If Vermont so elects, I believe the state can be the northern link of the parkway chain and have the most outstanding advertising feature for her scenic resources of any eastern state. If Vermont fails to grasp this opportunity, New Hampshire or Maine, or both, will have the parkway and Vermont will be on a sidetrack.

A copy of the summary of the report of the engineers and the map showing the proposed location of the parkway was recently received by me and is available for study. I hope that you will take no action which will prevent the realization of this great project for Vermont.

### VERMONT STATE PLANNING BOARD

Late in 1933 I was requested by the National Planning Board to appoint a Vermont State Planning Board to work in cooperation with the federal organization along lines in part designated by the federal government, but with freedom of action for state problems. I appointed such a planning board. The board is semi-official and the members have been serving without pay. The National Resources Board, which has succeeded the National Planning Board, has appointed a Consultant and an Associate Consultant to aid the State Planning Board. Employees have been furnished and their salaries paid by the relief administration.

Problems relating to land and water use, transportation, recreational facilities, long term public works program, town finances and the financial relation between state and towns are under consideration.

In view of the necessity for cooperation with federal authorities, the Vermont State Planning Board should be given permanent status. In these days we must plan for the future. Probably the best example of what deliberate planning may accomplish is found in the work that was done for Vermont after the flood of 1927 in a complete flood control survey of the state. It was due to the fact that plans were available that we were able to secure on short notice the great flood control work in the Winooski Valley.

## HIGHWAYS

Good roads are essential to the progress of our state. The kind of road required in a given place depends largely upon the traffic which it is to carry. With limited funds at our disposal and a large mileage of roads to care for, it is evident that we must build wisely if we are to serve our people well.

We now have 14,386 miles of roads divided as follows: state roads, 1029; state aid roads, 3363; town roads, 9994. Only a small part of the mileage is properly classed as heavy traffic. Very little would be so classed in the more populous states. It is essential that we improve our roads as rapidly as possible so as to make them usable the year around. The traveling public wants above all to be out of the mud and out of the dust.

During the past four years rapid progress has been made along these lines. Persistent experimentation in this and other states has developed a low cost road surface which is giving very satisfactory service. It costs much less than either cement or macadam. It is bituminous treated gravel and is commonly called mixed-in-place. By the uninitiated it is frequently mistaken for macadam. It should not be confused with the old style surface treated roads of years ago merely because it has a black top. Properly constructed on adequate base and with proper drainage, it is economical in maintenance and adequate for nearly any traffic we have. By making use of this type of construction we have been able rapidly to increase the mileage of roads with a surface superior to gravel. During the past four calendar years such construction has been as follows:

Concrete .....	80.5
Macadam.....	81.8
Bituminous concrete .....	3.3
Bituminous treated gravel.....	<u>405.1</u>
Total .....	570.7

In addition a considerable mileage of roads has had base, grading and drainage work done preliminary to surfacing later.

We now have 352 miles of concrete, 171 miles macadam, 3 miles bituminous concrete, 644 miles bituminous treated gravel and 2 miles miscellaneous, making a total of 1172 miles of roads with surface superior to gravel.

The biennial report of the Highway Board shows that during the period from 1918 to 1933 the average cost of roads per mile was as follows: For concrete \$42,337.73, of which \$24,476.77 was for the surface or slab; for macadam \$30,019.50, including \$9,652.07 for surface; for bituminous treated gravel \$10,382.61 including \$3,553.54 for the surface. These figures need no comment when we are struggling to cover a large mileage of roads rapidly with limited funds.

During the past two years in accordance with a policy approved by the last legislature the major portion of the new construction work has been done on secondary or state aid roads. In 1934, of the improved surface, 60 miles was put on state roads and 79 miles on state aid roads. A great deal of work has been done getting roads so they will be out of the mud even though money be not available for final surfacing. We must continue the use of moderate cost construction if the people on secondary roads are to have improved roads within a reasonable time.

We are now getting praise from our visitors for our roads. But there is still a great deal to be done. A generation of constant improvement is ahead of us and we must not let up, because to progress in these days of the motor vehicle we must have roads satisfactory for motor vehicle use.

In connection with work on highways, I call your attention to the fact that it is through highway work that we have been able to give great relief from unemployment. It has been the only means for putting people at work all over the state and have the work a real benefit to the public. Statistics compiled by the Highway Department show that the money appropriated by the state for construction and maintenance of highways furnished 378,751 days labor during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1934. In other words, it would have furnished 2272 men work for 50 weeks of 30 hours each, during the year. In addition to that, an average of about 123 people have been employed in the highway office or at engineering work, and an average of about 45

employees during the year at the state garage. Combined, these funds were sufficient to furnish steady employment for 2440 people or to take care of approximately that number of families. Federal funds provided work sufficient for steady employment for approximately 530 men addition for the year.

In these days when unemployment is one of our great problems, it would be unwise to reduce appropriations for highway purposes. All of this work is done from money paid in to the state treasury for motor vehicle registration fees, operators licenses, and the tax on gasoline. I am strongly in favor of continuing the policy of preserving these revenues, paid by motor vehicle users, for the improvement of the roads of the state.

### STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Four years ago the legislature provided for the state taking full responsibility for construction and upkeep on about one thousand miles of roads. The state road plan has worked well. It has been so much more satisfactory to the traveling public that there is a strong demand for more of the main roads to be taken over by the state.

Many people now blame the state highway department for unsatisfactory winter maintenance on state aid roads without realizing they are only state aid roads and that the state has no control over the situation. Patrol maintenance is by no means perfect on state roads but it is much better because of better equipment and better organization for prompt dealing with storms. I recommend that an increased mileage of state aid roads be taken into the state system.

### FISH AND GAME

Fish and game mean much to the state not only for the pleasure of the sportsmen, but also both directly and indirectly for commercial advantage.

The food value of our fish and game is considerable. I am informed that during the recent depression many people relied upon these food sources to a considerable extent. But above all, good hunting and fishing is an asset to the state which provides recreation for our people and is an attraction to summer visitors and summer residents.

During the past four years considerable progress has been made in the great work of restoring to Vermont streams, lakes, and forests the fish and game that once were so plentiful. Fish and game clubs have been cooperative, and there has been an increased interest in considering the fish and game problem on a businesslike and long-term basis.

During this period approximately \$92,000.00 or about one-fifth of the income of the department, has been spent for new construction, permanent improvements, repairs and new equipment. The new construction includes the hatchery at Salisbury, rearing pools and improvements at the state game farm.

All of the income of the department comes from fish and game licenses, and there should be no occasion to change the rule by which this department supports itself.

The records show that there has been a steady and rather rapid increase during the past four years in the number of fish planted and great increase in the number of yearling fish. Experience has demonstrated this policy to be wise. I suggest, however, that hunting and fishing will not be satisfactory again until public sentiment is properly educated. So long as game hogs and fish hogs are permitted to go their way unrestrained by law and without the finger of scorn being directed at them, we will not be able to make the progress we should. We should not endeavor to provide unrestricted sport for the few, but should endeavor to see to it that any person who buys a fishing or hunting license may have reasonable expectation of sport.

### STATE FINANCES

During the last two years the general revenues of the state have decreased, largely due to economic conditions. Anticipated revenues from a sales tax provided by the last legislature did not materialize because of litigation which has prevented collection. The cost of goods and supplies bought by the state during the same time has increased. The cost of living has increased. In addition, there have been sizable emergency expenditures along lines already mentioned.



In spite of the adverse general conditions the finances of the state are sound. On January 1, 1931, the total bonded indebtedness of the state was \$9,125,531.90. On January 1, 1935, it was \$7,294,031.90. In other words during the past four years the bonded debt has been reduced \$1,831,500.00.

On January 1, 1931, the outstanding temporary loans amounted to \$2,230,000.00. Today the outstanding temporary loans amount to \$2,080,000.00 or \$150,000.00 less than they did four years ago. Included in the list of temporary loans is \$600,000.00 specially authorized by the 1933 Legislature for the speeding up of the bovine tuberculosis program and which it was planned to extend over a considerable period.

The credit of the state has been maintained. A very low rate of interest on temporary loans has been secured. With the hoped for return of normal conditions, the state should continue to be in fine financial condition.

### CONCLUSION

Today I shall turn over the governorship to my successor. You and he will have the responsibility for the legislation of this session. It is my earnest hope and belief that the problems confronting you will be wisely solved.

Governors may come and governors may go, legislatures may come and legislatures may go, but so long as the people of our state continue honestly to follow the principles of good government set forth in our Constitution and ingrained in the hearts of Vermonters, the Green Mountain State will go on to ever greater strength and influence.

STANLEY C. WILSON.