

Inaugural address
of
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*Ernest W. Gibson resigned January 16, 1950 to accept appointment as a U.S District Judge.

Thursday, January 6, 1949
Inaugural Address

To the General Assembly and the People of Vermont:

I take the oath of office for a second term as Governor of Vermont with a prayer in my heart. I pray that you and I, the servants of all the people of Vermont, working with our people, can truly say by January, 1951 as Nehemiah said, ‘and so we built the wall, for the people had a mind to work.’”

THE WORLD OF TODAY

It is well for us to take a brief look at the world of today; a small world of which Vermont is a tiny, but important part. It is a world in which science has largely annihilated time and space. It is a world which asks the definite question—Can we live together as close neighbors, with peoples of different colors, different creeds, and different languages? The very smallness of Vermont makes it a perfect laboratory to help develop the moral leadership our country must furnish to guide the world to peace and plenty.

FREEDOM VERSUS TYRANNY; FRANKNESS VERSUS DECEIT

There are two great ideas struggling for mastery in this little world. The one championed by Soviet Russia would have the State the master of the individual—would make human beings servants, serfs, or slaves of the few that grasp and control the reins of government. Those who proclaim and uphold communism, do it in a deceitful dishonest manner. They profess that they are believers in democracy—are benefactors of the people—while behind an iron curtain they practice slavery and injustice of the rankest sort. They rule by fear, brutality and ruthlessness. Always remember—these adherents preach one thing and practice another. There is no truth—no reliability in them.

Then there is the other idea—the idea that the State is the servant of the individual; that we, the chosen officials of the people, are servants chosen to carry out the will of the people.

If we are to give life to this last idea, the idea in which we believe, if we want this idea to spread over this world of ours; we must practice what we preach. We must not hesitate to plow ahead on the course the people, our masters, choose.

1946—THE PEOPLE SPEAK

Two years ago the people of Vermont spoke. They elected for their servants those who had literally spelled out a constructive, forward looking program which would cast the mold of a greater Vermont. The details of that program were discussed in all parts of this state. The people by their votes said:

We want our educational system revitalized;

We want better health for all;

We want our state institutions put in shape to care for the unfortunate;

We want an adequate, modern law enforcement agency created;

We want our Development Commission properly equipped to aid in bringing into Vermont small industries that fit our state;

We want the development of Vermont’s recreational facilities encouraged and stimulated;

We want our waters free of pollution;

We want our agriculture improved and the further destruction of fertile farmlands stopped;

We want happy relationship between employer and employed;

We want our veterans carefully looked after;

We want a hard surface highway into every village;

We want cheaper electricity and adequate powers for our Public Service Commission;

We want these things and we are willing to pay for them.

THE 1947 LEGISLATURE RESPONDS

The legislature of 1947 responded well to the expressed voice of the people. As you know, our normal schools were turned into teachers' colleges, the minimum teachers salary was substantially increased, an adequate compulsory teachers retirement system was created and an amount in excess of a million dollars a year additional state aid for education was voted.

For greater efficiency, all our social services were grouped in one state department—the Department of Social Welfare. Adequate appropriations were made so that those legally entitled to receive benefits to which they were entitled by law could actually receive them. Brutality was abolished from the treatment of juvenile delinquents. Provision was made for desperately needed dormitories at Brandon. Critical needs of other state institutions were met. A department of Public Safety, containing State Police, was created. A research unit was provided for in the Development Commission—this to serve as a foundation for the securing for Vermont of new small industries. A separate, independent Fish and Game Commission was established. Every aid was given those who were investing private capital in developing recreational facilities. An enabling act was passed to aid communities in sewage disposal problems. Two additional buildings were provided for the State Agricultural College. Sympathetic attention and consideration has been given to any problem presented by any veteran. We have had but two strikes in Vermont in the past two years—and these were amicably settled. A basic highway policy has been instituted—namely, that we protect our investment in the main hard surface roads and concentrate on hard surfacing those state and state aid roads not now hard surfaced—until we can have a hard surface road into every village.

All of these things were done and provision was made to pay for them. There was created for the State of Vermont one of the soundest tax systems that any state has—certainly sounder than that of any other New England state. A graduated income tax bill was adopted, a bill designed to produce revenue to meet the present and anticipated requisites of government; to distribute the burden as equitably as possible—a bill streamlined and simplified. The tax is based on ability to pay and on nothing else. Ways of increasing revenue within this soundly devised framework will be discussed in my budget message.

EDUCATION KEYNOTE OF 1947 LEGISLATURE

Progress has been made in the past two years. Some necessary things weren't accomplished and couldn't be, but in all probability the legislature of 1947 will be known in history as the Education Legislature. It left for the legislature of 1949 the tackling of better health—the second great foundation stone upon which democracy rests. If our children, who are our greatest capital asset, can reach maturity well educated and in sound health, we will not only have given them an equal opportunity with all others in this world, but we will have done our part to promote democracy throughout the world.

1948—THE PEOPLE SPEAK AGAIN

This last summer the people spoke again. They said "we want the program started in 1947 continued and finished. We want progress continued. This is the time for courage and for confidence and the proving of democracy. We reaffirm our belief that education and health are the very foundation stones of democracy and we want to see every Vermont youth at his or her maturity well educated and in good health."

SPECIAL MESSAGES ON HEALTH AND UTILITIES

This whole problem of public health is of such great importance that I am taking the liberty of leaving it for special and detailed discussion in a message which will be presented to you later.

I shall take up in a special message also the all-important problem of an adequate supply of electricity for the people of this state and of badly-needed additional powers for the Public Service Commission.

These special messages I shall have in your hands in the immediate future.

EDUCATION

Equitable Distribution of State Aid

Two years ago, as I have already outlined, this state made great progress in this field of education. However, there is still much to do to make our educational system in Vermont second to none. It cannot be done all at one time, but at this time we can complete the solid foundation upon which will grow a modern top-notch educational system for Vermont. One need that should be met by this legislature is to provide a more equitable basis for apportioning the considerable sum of money that this state appropriates for education. The 1947 legislature created a commission to study the basis upon which state aid for education is allocated among the towns and to report to this General Assembly. Senator Charles P. Smith of Chittenden County has served as chairman of that commission. His commission has proposed a new, and to me, simpler and certainly more equitable basis for the distribution of this state aid. I concur with the recommendations made in this report and recommend that this legislature adopt such legislation as is necessary to substantially carry the recommendations as made into law.

Improvement Needed in Teachers' Colleges

As I have previously stated, our normal schools have now been converted into teachers' colleges. This means that Vermont has departed from its old system of two-year training for its teachers and now provides a four year course for those who will face the complex problems of today's and tomorrow's classrooms. The greatest asset we have in Vermont is the youth of Vermont—the greatest asset our youth has is their brains, and anything that we can do to stimulate their thinking—will make for a better and greater and happier Vermont. So I ask this legislature to give its close attention to the set-up of our present teachers' colleges, to realize that for the first time in many, many years we have entering our teachers' colleges outstanding Vermont youth—youth who have decided to dedicate themselves to the teaching profession. Our percentage of enrollment in teachers' colleges this year far exceeds that of any other New England state. The youth of Vermont have confidence in the future of Vermont and we must not let them down. What you can do to improve these teachers' colleges should be done.

STREAM POLLUTION

Action Needed Now

For more than 45 years, we have had on our books legislation ostensibly designed to protect and improve the condition of streams and lakes of our state. Yet today our streams and lakes are more heavily polluted, I believe, than ever before. Section 1 of Act No. 109 of the Acts of 1943 well states the purpose of purifying our waters, but makes it impossible to carry out the purpose. There it is declared to be the policy of the General Assembly to preserve and improve the purities of the waters of the state for the protection of public health, animal and aquatic life, and for the use of agriculture and recreation. One cannot ride up and down the state without having forcefully brought to one's attention the great number of streams inundated with sawdust. One sees many beautiful streams into which all manner of refuse has been dumped. Of course, too, most of our municipalities use rivers and brooks as a receptacle for their sewage. Sewage disposal systems are costly and so we cannot expect to see one installed at once in every municipality, but we must ever drive towards that goal. There are some things that can be done now. I recommend that we forbid further dumping of garbage and other refuse into our streams and that the operators of saw mills which now dump their sawdust and other wastes into the waters of the state, be given a reasonable length of time for otherwise disposing of these wastes. I recommend that the Water Conservation Board be given authority to take steps to enforce such a law. I further recommend that municipalities be required to file with the Water Conservation Board on or before July 1, 1949, a map showing the details of its sewage system, so that we may have an orderly program leading towards elimination of sewage from our streams and rivers. I recommend that legislation be enacted preventing any municipality from increasing its pollution of our streams by more than 5% until such municipality has filed with the Water Conservation Board adequate plans for the eventual establishment of proper sanitary facilities. This pollution of our streams and lakes not only may affect the health of our citizens, but is revolting to people from outside the state who come here for recreation, for fishing and hunting. Most of all it deprives us of the God given right to the enjoyment in many ways of countless miles of rivers and streams.

VERMONT DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Organization Stage Completed

After a year and a half in the organization and growing stages, the Development Commission has reached the point where it can play the role in the government of the state and in the economy of the state which has been in our minds since its organization.

Competently staffed, it has made a good start toward the collection of the data which should be the basis of evaluating what has been done, and of decisions as to what should be done, while simultaneously working on specific projects requiring immediate attention. The preliminary work on our program of attracting industry to the state has been largely accomplished. Inventories of available space and sites have been made, cooperation of all interested groups has been solicited, and a sizable number of prospects have been developed. While there is nothing spectacular about this necessary spade work, we are confident that within the next two years our hopes for new industries, of small and moderate size, will be realized.

It is my hope that the Commission will ultimately take its place as the heart of the state government, that to it can be channeled information on all phases of the state's activities, and that to it the administration, our citizens and their representatives, may turn for information upon which to base the policies controlling our future development.

Adequate Salary for Managing Director

One matter should be faced squarely by this legislature. The present statutory maximum, \$4500, for the salary of the Managing Director is much too low; far too low to attract and hold the type of executive which the position demands. Further, the policy of not allowing subordinates to receive salaries in excess of that paid to the department head means blocking off division heads from normal merit increases which they could count on in a comparable position in another department. This situation, also prevailing in other state agencies, should not be allowed to continue.

Vermont Life

I believe everybody in the state is proud of our state magazine, Vermont Life. This magazine is published by the Development Commission for the state.

Housing

During the last year, at our request, the Development Commission made an exhaustive study of housing legislation of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey, with a view to deciding whether Vermont should take any action.

At present, it appears almost a certainty that the federal congress will, in the next session, make funds available for slum-clearance projects and probably for rental housing for low-income families. It is to be hoped that the 1949 General Assembly will, at least, revise the Housing Authorities Law so as to enable participation in this federal program by any interested Vermont town or city. Specifically, it might be wise to amend our statutes to remove the existing restriction on Housing Authorities to towns of 4000 or more. Consideration might also be given to the creation of a State Housing Board whose approval might be required of the adequacy of housing projects and proposals for financing, under consideration by local authorities, and which might be empowered to act as a housing authority for the smaller towns of the state.

FORESTS AND FOREST PARKS

Use Increases Each Year

The season of 1947 was the largest season ever, for our State Forests and forest parks. Three hundred thousand people enjoyed these recreational facilities. I recommend that we put these State Forest Parks in as good physical condition as we can possibly have them, but I do not recommend the purchase of any more land at this time either for our forests or our forest parks.

Forest Conservation Badly Needed

I have been greatly distressed by the apparent ruthless cutting and slashing of many of our forests. The time has arrived when we should consider our forests as crops rather than mines. Unwise cutting of our forests has left them in poor condition. Today each acre of our forest land is not growing over a third of what it is capable of producing due to the type of timber cutting that we are following. We are wasting our heritage. The economy of our state, the demand for raw materials for our wood-using industries convinces me that we should now adopt a more constructive course. I recommend to this legislature that it consider a system of licensing forest operators. The condition should be imposed upon them that they do their forest cutting in such a manner that future growth would not be hazarded and that a new natural growth could be brought along on the areas cut. The average farmer who cuts over his own timber land does a fairly good job. So in any licensing law, such as I have suggested, I would define an operator as someone cutting over 300,000 board feet or 30 cords of wood in any one year. This would make the operation of such a law simple because it would be restricted to a relatively small number of operators rather than fifteen or twenty thousand timbers owners.

AGRICULTURE

Preserve Fertile Farm Lands

Agriculture is the very foundation stone of Vermont life. We must continue to make every effort to keep in good tillable condition every acre of farm land we possess in this state. We should oppose the destruction of fertile farm lands for any reason.

Protect Name of Vermont

I have been greatly disturbed by some of the advertisements I have read in large national pictorial magazines, advertising what is ostensibly the State of Vermont maple products. It is done under various guises playing on the good name of Vermont maple products. Actually, such products have but little, if any, Vermont maple syrup in them. We should take every step possible to protect the name of Vermont in connection with maple products, and if there is a way of preventing such advertising as I have mentioned, we should take steps to prevent it. Certainly we should make known to the world that such products are not real Vermont maple products. I recommend that we amend our brand registration law so that no such labels or brands be in the future approved without the approval in writing of both the State Department of Health and the Agriculture departments.

Our Maple Syrup Industry

I recommend the addition of a grading and marketing act for maple products so that one in purchasing our maple products may be sure of the quality one is obtaining and I recommend the financing of such an act by an industry tax upon every gallon of syrup made. As an incentive for our people not to cut their sugar maple trees. I recommend this legislature consider a tax exemption for operating sugar places, with a severance tax which would tend to discourage the cutting off of productive maple orchards.

Dutch Elm Disease

The Dutch Elm disease presents a very real danger to our trees. It has now been found in 9 towns and in 3 southern counties. Left unchecked there is every reason to expect this to spread rapidly and damage our trees. I believe provision should be made for inspections by our department of Agriculture to determine the spread of this disease and that steps be taken to encourage community effort in carrying out clean-up and control measures.

Bangs Disease

There is considerable confusion as to what the best program is for combatting Bang's disease in cattle. There is a national movement for uniformity in plans and for rules to govern interstate movement of cattle. I would recommend this legislature carefully consider whether or not Vermont should become a part of this uniform movement and amend our laws to conform thereto.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Organization Accomplished

On July 1, 1947, the Department of Public Safety came into being. Organization of such a department is a gigantic task, one that cannot be completed and perfected in one year or even two. Within the short span of eighteen months, the Department of Public Safety with its State Police, its Bureau of Identification, and its Fire Marshal's Division, all law enforcement agencies now functioning under a single head, has proven its worth. It has worked in friendly and close cooperation with all other law enforcement agencies. It has effectively improved the detection and prevention of crime throughout the State.

Modern Communication System Installed

For the first time in history, Vermont is now linked by teletype with all the law enforcement agencies of our sister northeastern states. Within Vermont a modern, three-way radio system has now been installed and is in full operation. Utilizing this modern method of communication, lost and missing persons have been located; transients have been informed of unexpected illness or death within their families; stolen property has been recovered; hundreds of criminals have been apprehended, and fugitives from justice from other states no longer seek safety within our borders without being speedily detected. Our own wrong-doers are becoming very much aware that word of their misdeeds will precede them wherever they go.

Trooper Within Thirty Minutes of Every Settlement

Today the State Police maintain five district offices which are open twenty-four hours every day of the year. Frankly, this is all they can afford. It is our aim to have a State Trooper within 30 minutes of any settlement in Vermont. Each of these five districts receives and investigates more than 35 complaints of all kinds every day. Our State Troopers patrol our rural areas as well as our main highways for longer hours than ever before. They are always on call to protect you wherever you may be.

Additional State Police Needed

During the past eighteen months each of our State Troopers has worked more than 91 hours per week. If they are to continue the type of service which we expect, if they are to cope successfully with an ever increasing volume of traffic, the present State Police force must be increased. I recommend, therefore, an increase in personnel for the State Police of fifteen officers in 1950 and twelve in 1951.

TRANSPORTATION

Fulltime, Well Paid Chairman of Highway Board

Our Highway Department handles more than eight million dollars per year. Our road building program, greatly curtailed during World War II, is still not working at top speed. In an age of machines and high speed, our organization is adapted more to the horse and buggy era. The Chairman of the Highway Board is paid at maximum but \$3,000 a year, yet his is the main responsibility for formulating a program for the expenditure of millions for our highways—his, too, should be the responsibility for putting steam into the department for the efficient rapid execution of this program, and for the weeding out of those whom the world has passed by. We cannot blame the chairman under the present system for this lack of steam. He does not receive sufficient pay to compensate him for putting his full time and energy into revitalizing our highway program. I therefore recommend not only that we continue the basic policy of hard surfacing dirt or gravel roads as rapidly as possible, but that the position of Chairman of the Highway Board be made a full time job with a salary commensurate with the great responsibilities it entails.

Aviation

Aviation has benefited by the largest development within any similar period of time. In part, this reflects a national trend; in part it was facilitated by the availability of federal airport funds supplemented by further funds for airport improvement from the state and municipalities. In addition, many private airports have been built and thereby serve a public use. A system of state approval of airports and air schools has produced a high standard in each case. Roof markings have contributed to safety, and made the area more easily navigable by out-of-state

pilots. Air carrier service is now rendered at the three major airports (Burlington, Barre-Montpelier and Rutland).

It is recommended that an appropriation of \$100,000 be made to continue participation of airport development under terms of the federal airport program.

STATE SALARIES

Department Heads Most Underpaid of any State Employees

The matter of salaries for state officials and employees is a disturbing one. In my opinion the most under paid group in the state service are the major department heads. As an example, our State Treasurer, who has the responsibility of handling millions of dollars each year, who has the responsibility of investing surplus money, of selling bonds at the proper time to provide working capital, of watching carefully our whole financial setup, is paid the salary of but \$5,000. The same is true of the Auditor of Accounts, the watch dog of Vermont expenditures, who tries his level best to see that every cent of money is spent in accordance with the statute laws of Vermont. The Commissioner of Taxes, who is charged with the collection of millions of dollars yearly of taxes, of doing it thriftily and of doing it honestly and impartially, is paid the salary of but \$5,500.00. Those are merely samples. I could continue on and list many other department heads with great responsibilities who are not receiving a salary in any sense commensurate with the heavy responsibility of their office. I sincerely hope this legislature will substantially increase these salaries.

Employees Retirement System

There is one amendment that I shall suggest to the Employees Retirement System Act and I ask that your most careful consideration be given it. It deals with compulsory retirement of elective officials.

Cost of Living Salary Adjustment

I do not need to tell you that the cost of living has gone higher almost every month during the past two years. Since we have tried to operate State business, by levying only such taxes as were necessary to meet the appropriated expense of State government as fixed by the legislature, it has not been possible to give the employees of the State more than an average \$50 cost of living increase in salary. This has not been enough to meet the actual increased cost of living. I, therefore, recommend that this legislature study this situation and appropriate from the General Fund Budget a sum to be used as a cost of living salary increase for State employees so that each one's actual financial position in terms of purchasing power will be as good now as it was two years ago. Employees not paid out of the General Fund Budget should, of course, be treated in the same manner.

FISH AND GAME

More Stocking Needed; Daily Take of Trout Should Be Reduced

The 1947 legislature set up an independent Fish and Game Commission. The commission's sole mission was to establish the wildlife policy of the state and I think it has done an excellent job. Nearly 103,000 resident fishing licenses and better than 33,000 non-resident fishing licenses were issued during the year ended April 30, 1948. This was a tremendous indication of the interest there is in fishing and hunting. At the present time, the most pressing demand is for more fishable waters. This means more stocking with suitable species of fish and of course protection from pollution. A major hatchery development is contemplated at Bald Hill in Orleans County. It is necessary to have controlled volume and temperature of water, supplied by drilling, before any large development is undertaken there. I believe a special appropriation for this project could well be considered by this legislature. I also recommend the legislature consider reducing from 20 to 12 the daily take of trout for sportsmen and that the season be extended up to and including Labor Day. Due to the hazards of forest fires at various times, the take of fish and game may be suspended by proclamation of the Governor. I recommend in such instances discretionary power be given to the commission to extend seasons, in such event, to compensate for portions lost.

Special Deer License Tag

To help in better enforcing the law and to aid in meeting the growing costs of deer damage, I recommend legislation authorizing a deer tag to be issued with all hunting licenses. This tag will constitute a special deer license and I recommend a fee of \$1 additional for this.

NATIONAL GUARD

The National Guard has made excellent progress in its reorganization. All but two of the units originally allocated to the State have been organized. Among these units are the 172nd Infantry which served so valiantly in the Pacific area during World War II. The organization of the 206th Field Artillery Battalion brought to Vermont its first National Guard artillery unit in recent years.

For the first time Vermont has an Air National Guard which is based at Fort Ethan Allen and the Burlington Municipal Airport. Its 134th Fighter Squadron is one of the best National Guard squadrons in the country. The total aggregate strength is approximately 2,000.

At the time of the disastrous Rutland flood nine units of the National Guard were on duty in that area for varying lengths of time, and units of the Air National Guard were used for observation and emergency transportation. All units were alerted during the drought period in the fall of 1947. Seven units, as well as the Air National Guard, under direction of town fire wardens and the State Fire Marshal, assisted in putting out forest fires. Our National Guard is to be commended for its assistance during these emergencies.

I bespeak the continued enthusiastic support of the growth of the National Guard in this state by every citizen. The National Guard really is this country's first line of defense. In this age, terrible disasters -- even wars -- can occur or start over night. Vermonters never have neglected their duty in this matter of defense.

VETERANS

Our State Veterans Board has given careful and sympathetic attention to any problem presented to it by any veteran. Yet a great problem still lies ahead. In the next three years approximately 3,000 Vermont young men and women who have taken advantage of their educational rights under the "G.I. Bill" will seek to put their newly acquired skills to work. Countless thousands of others who may find themselves in dead-end jobs should be given every assistance within our power to find their proper niche in our industrial life.

This State must be prepared to carry on a continuous specialized job placement program, which will awaken employers to the value of this vast reservoir of skilled manpower. To such a program I pledge the full resources of our state government. Vermont can ill afford to lose this group of trained youth to other states as it has so consistently in the past.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Workmen's Compensation Act Antiquated

On the whole, relations between employer and employees in Vermont have been wholesome. I believe there are certain corrective measures that should be taken for the good of Vermont. The Vermont Workman's Compensation Act has been amended in a piecemeal manner by a number of legislatures. This method is too slow and ineffective to bring this act to a parity with other New England states. I would, therefore, recommend that an interim study of our Workmen's Compensation Act be authorized to recommend a revision to the legislature of 1951. This should not, however, prevent this legislature from liberalizing certain parts of the Workmen's Compensation Act. Specifically amendments are needed now for these parts: the medical and hospital provisions of our Act, maximum percentage of wages which establishes the weekly compensation payable to injured workmen and the weekly compensation rate, and the matter of reducing the present exemption from seven employees to five or three employees, or even lower.

Woman and Child Labor

I would further recommend that we should not employ women workers in manufacturing establishments after 10:00 p.m. This prohibition should also apply to minors under 18 years of age.

Truck and Bus Drivers

I also recommend that a compulsory rest period for truck and bus drivers be decreed; so that all drivers of motor trucks and buses be allowed 24 hours of consecutive rest in every calendar week and that a limit be placed on the sustained driving period.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION COMMISSION

Change of Name Suggested

For a long time it has appeared to me that the name of this commission is misleading and is not descriptive of its functions. This commission deals both with unemployment problems and employment problems. I believe a more fitting name should be effected. I suggest the Vermont Employment Security Commission.

Change in Law Recommended

The existing law provides that the benefit year begins on the first Saturday in April of each year. This is in variance with the requirements that benefits begin on Sunday, and I recommend the act be changed accordingly. The act should also be amended to provide that an unemployed claimant must actually seek work. Such is not the case now. I recommend the broadening of UCC coverage to four or more employees. I also recommend that consideration be given to the employee who while unemployed and otherwise eligible for benefits, is taken ill and there is no suitable work for him. It would seem he ought to continue to draw benefits regardless of his illness while these conditions exist. I recommend also that maximum weekly benefits be increased. Benefits have been 50% although this has not been true of the lower income brackets. I recommend that up to a maximum of \$25 a week, our law be amended so that the unemployed person will receive approximately 50% of his wages while unemployed.

TOWN FINANCES

A State is only as strong as its component parts and it is vitally necessary that our towns be well managed. The State contributes large amounts to town finances and it is only reasonable that the State be assured that this is properly used for the purposes for which it is appropriated. I feel that the present Act enabling towns to have an audit by the State Auditor of Accounts should be amended so that an audit will be compulsory at least once in four years, and may be had oftener if the town desires it. This would in no way interfere with "home rule", but would provide further assurance that the barn door will be locked before the horse is stolen.

DISPLACED PERSONS

There are a large number of people, just such people as you and I, who have been driven from their homes in Europe. They dare not return. If they do, in all probability they will either be sent to slave camps or be executed. We call them Displaced Persons. Recently we have created a state committee to help bring Displaced Persons into Vermont. This committee is sponsored by the Governor. The influx of a few of these good people into Vermont will be good for us. The hardships these people have gone through have portrayed to them most vividly the value of freedom and just what hard work means. A little of their understanding of these things, if conveyed to us, will be for our good. I therefore recommend the state be authorized to guarantee a sum up to \$10,000 which will protect towns of Vermont from having any unfortunate Displaced Persons fall back onto towns. These people will be placed in communities through three great social agencies—Church World Service (Protestant), Vermont Catholic Charities (Catholic) and Rutland Jewish Center (Jewish). Coming into a strange country, the one thing they will have in common with our people is their religious faith, so these agencies form the basis for taking care of these Displaced Persons.

CONCLUSION

In opening this inaugural address, I referred to Nehemiah. I am sure most of you remember the story.

Nehemiah was an exile from Jerusalem, living in Persia. From travelers passing through he learned that the gates of Jerusalem had fallen down, and that its walls were tumbling into ruin. He knew that the only ones left behind by the conquering Persians were the aged, the sick, the children. The Persians only had use for the able-

bodied men and the young attractive women. Thus he knew that there were in Jerusalem, helpless, defenseless people without a protecting wall.

Nehemiah, after prayer and meditation, went to Artaxerxes, the King of Persia, and begged permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall. The permission granted, Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem and made the necessary plans.

He then roused the people to build the wall. All of the people joined—jewelers, druggists, housemaids, merchants; the ragged and the well-to-do. The wall was built. Then and only then could the aged, the sick, the children of Jerusalem be free from fear; then only could they relax, with happiness and love abundant.

Just so two years ago, we, the people of Vermont joined to start building a wall—not a wall to set us apart from our neighbors; but one that will spell love, comfort, and care for the aged and the sick; a wall that will provide an opportunity for uninterrupted education and for understanding; a wall that will provide strength and happiness for our children.

The wall is a symbol of a united people, determined that they should work together and live together as neighbors, with faith, with love, with charity, with hope.

Two years ago, we, the people of Vermont began to provide long deferred, long needed shelter and help for the aged and for the unfortunate. Desperately needed new buildings at some of our state institutions were authorized, and adequate appropriation was made so that those entitled to aid because of age, or being blind or crippled could have it. So too we provided a foundation for a good education for our children.

The wall is partly built. There are still things to be done, the public health to be protected. Our task is to finish that wall now that we too may say, “so we built the wall, for the people had a mind to work.”