

GO33.2/IN1/1951
c.1

INAUGURAL MESSAGE
of
THE
HONORABLE DAN THORNTON
GOVERNOR OF COLORADO
Delivered to the
Thirty-eighth
COLORADO LEGISLATURE
in Joint Session



AT DENVER
JANUARY 9, 1951

COLORADO STATE PUBLICATIONS LIBRARY
GO33.2/IN1/1951 local
Colorado. Governor/inaugural message of

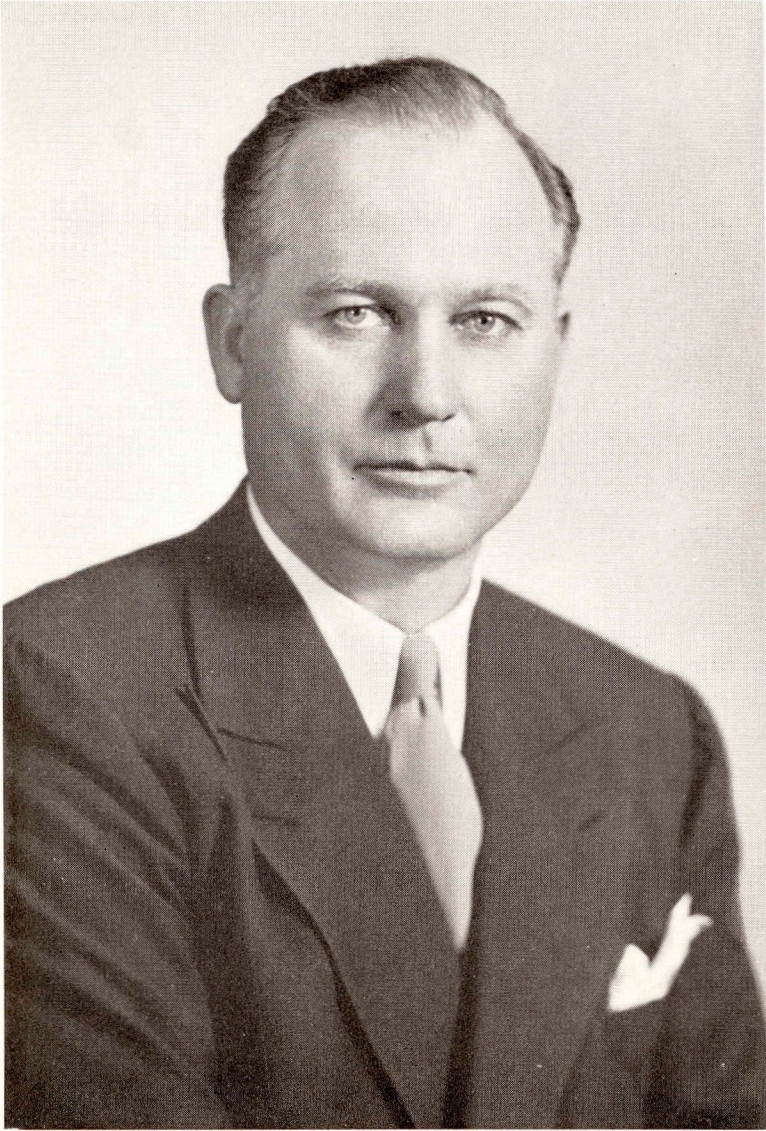


3 1799 00028 1154

INAUGURAL MESSAGE
of
THE
HONORABLE DAN THORNTON
GOVERNOR OF COLORADO
Delivered to the
Thirty-eighth
COLORADO LEGISLATURE
in Joint Session



AT DENVER
JANUARY 9, 1951



GOVERNOR DAN THORNTON

INAUGURAL MESSAGE OF HON. DAN THORNTON,
GOVERNOR OF COLORADO

BEFORE THE JOINT SESSION OF THE THIRTY-EIGHTH
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

*I extend my greetings to the Members of the Thirty-eighth
General Assembly:*

I have the distinct honor, as well as the duty, to submit for your consideration certain matters which I deem are of the utmost importance to the people of the State of Colorado.

As a former member of the General Assembly, I have a cherished acquaintance with many of you, and while I propose to suggest and recommend, I appreciate that the responsibility is yours to enact legislation which you feel is necessary and most beneficial to the growth, progress and welfare of our beloved state.

Those of us who now take over the reins of government fully realize that certain definite commitments were made to the people during the recent campaign and it is quite apparent to me that the electorate issued a mandate to us which should be fulfilled. The suggestions and recommendations which I have to offer follow my pre-election pledges and proposals in which most of you concurred.

The international situation was serious during the campaign, but today the picture is much darker. The world is divided into two distinct beliefs. For our part, we have the philosophy that the people are the masters—this is the democratic concept. On the other hand, there is the philosophy that the people are subservient to the supreme rulers—this is the totalitarian concept. The world cannot survive when only one-half is free while the other half is under slavery. The Korean War, while extremely serious, is only an indication of what we may expect the pattern to be in future years. At the moment we are moving toward all-out mobilization of our forces—human, economic, educational, natural, political, scientific, moral, spiritual and all others.

It is, therefore, the responsibility of every citizen, and especially of the officials of both national and state governments to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent a third world war and to bring about everlasting peace. To accomplish that objective, we must tighten our belts, we must strengthen ourselves in a military way. That means personal sacrifices for all of us. The people in this state must be content to forego

those things which are not of fundamental importance or essential to the welfare of the national emergency. Consequently, we must preserve and protect the general funds and surpluses, so that if another world conflict becomes inevitable we will have immediate finances available to meet unusual conditions. Economy must be a primary objective of our administration, coupled with accomplishment and efficiency.

CIVIL DEFENSE

Our President has recently proclaimed a national emergency. A closer cooperation and coordination of labor, management, industry and government in their contribution to all-out mobilization is necessary if we are to be prepared for the crisis which lies ahead.

Necessary decentralization of war industries on the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts is under way. Surveys should be made of all parts of Colorado for the purpose of determining where new war industries can be located and where people may be cared for in the event we are attacked.

An Act relating to civil defense, patterned after model laws of other states and approved by our National Government, was passed by the Extraordinary Session of the Thirty-seventh General Assembly. I propose to effectuate the provisions of that statute to the end that our state is properly organized. This, however, is not enough. We must utilize the knowledge of retired military men living within our borders. We need efficient and experienced organizers who are able to cooperate with national governmental agencies and coordinate their functions with the local organizations, which will be established under the provisions of the Act. It is imperative that we further formulate and develop plans for the reactivation of the Colorado State Guard in case the National Guard is called to duty. The State Guard is necessary if we are to insure the protection of our homes, vital mines, industrial plants, highways, tunnels, bridges, reservoirs, buildings and public utilities. Our citizens must be taught the precautions which may be taken in the event of an attack. We must cooperate not only with our National Government but with our sister states in the Rocky Mountain area in the development of an effective program of civil defense.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

The people, by the adoption of a Constitutional Amendment in 1948, recognized the need for improving our educational system, and placed the executive authority of the Depart-

ment of Education in an elected board of five members with power to appoint a Commissioner of Education. This department is about to organize and function as a policy-making body. Professional leadership with an adequate staff to study and appraise our school system should bring the desired results. I recommend that you appropriate adequate funds for the operation and maintenance of this department so that it will have a fair opportunity to prove its worth and provide leadership in public school matters.

We are challenged with the problem of lifting the qualifications of teaching to meet the crucial needs of the people . . . likewise there are the questions of control and support of education. It is my firm belief that the details and operations of the educational programs in each district are the responsibility of the local boards, but the State should assist, financially and otherwise, in maintaining the essential conditions and circumstances which will enable the local boards to meet their responsibilities. Lay and professional leaders, and experience in other states, as well as statutory enactments, support this point of view.

Progress can be made now by instituting a sound financial program and a more simplified system and method for financing schools in one enactment or in a closely related and connected series of laws. I suggest that this problem should receive your attention, together with consideration regarding an increase in salaries for school teachers, keeping in mind the ability of the State to carry its financial burden.

School district reorganization is now progressing, but it still faces difficult problems. Some of them involve people, their finances, their traditions and their children, and, as a consequence, their feelings. Others involve the equalization of educational opportunity and the costs of education to the taxpayers. These problems *can* be solved and the solution rests with an informed public. House Bill No. 900, passed by the Thirty-seventh General Assembly, has helped in some respects, but it has also caused dissension. I believe it essential that we should re-examine our procedures under the Bill, with the view to modification according to the wishes of our people. Whenever and wherever practical, consolidation should take place, but it should be on a voluntary basis and to the mutual advantage of all parties concerned. Any unit that desires should be permitted to maintain its own district. It should be assisted by state aid the same as are the reorganized districts if it maintains and finances its educational program according to defined standards. It is our responsibility to supply the framework which will lend stimulus to the unification of our school units.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The forward movement of education should keep pace with the progress of society. Higher education in Colorado has been confronted with many serious problems which include: the retention of competent staffs, greatly expanded enrollments, the need for more student housing, and a shortage of academic buildings and instructional equipment. Facilities must be provided; standards must be continually guarded and raised in order to meet the needs of our citizens. Income from veterans' education has been reduced drastically, costs have risen greatly; requests for increases in support of our institutions of higher learning have risen sharply. I recommend that you give serious consideration to the needs of these institutions and that adequate funds be appropriated consistent with the financial ability of the State.

TAXES

We all acknowledge that federal taxes must of necessity be increased because of the armament program. For that reason, our people should not be burdened with additional state taxes except in a case of extreme emergency.

I suggest that you explore the advisability of taking some action to afford the taxpayers more convenience in the filing of their income tax returns.

There is another matter to which I invite your attention. Under our laws the taxpayer is compelled to pay a surtax of two percent on income from intangibles in excess of two hundred dollars. Elderly people who have been thrifty and who have built up small estates, particularly widows who have received insurance benefits, have invested their funds in securities. In many cases these people are exempt from the payment of any normal income tax whatsoever, yet they are penalized under the present law. The collection costs are out of proportion to the amounts involved. I recommend that you raise the exemption on the surtax on intangibles to correspond with the exemption on the general tax. My information indicates that this proposed legislation will not cause any material decrease in the net amount of revenue collected by the State.

PENAL AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS

Never, during the entire history of the State, has there been a coordinated and businesslike plan for the administration and supervision of its penal and charitable institutions. Under the present system, nearly all of the wardens and superintendents of the respective institutions are responsible only to the Governor. There has been no uniform method of accounting. The procedure of operation and conduct of the affairs

of the various institutions differ. The heads of the institutions have been permitted to assume tremendous authority which could, under certain circumstances, be extremely detrimental to the inmates and the patients and injurious to the interests of the State. Time and again deficits have been incurred in some of these institutions, and because the unfortunate must be properly cared for, former General Assemblies have been quick to grant appropriations to cover such deficits.

This is not in keeping with sound governmental or business-like procedure. I suggest that you explore the advisability of providing for the appointment of a Director of Penal and Charitable Institutions, prescribing his duties and responsibilities. Such Director, acting under an unpaid board or commission, if advisable, could coordinate the business affairs of such institutions, require the use of uniform methods in accounting, insist upon full property accountability, study their business operations and determine their policies. I recommend that such Director be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor. In this way, there would be no danger of him being able to assume authority to which he was not entitled and he could not become absolute in the administration of his duties and responsibilities.

I have investigated similar positions in other states and I am now convinced that if the position of Director of Penal and Charitable Institutions is created in Colorado, it will not only result in a tremendous financial saving to the State but it will permit quick detection of situations such as the one brought to the attention of the people by the press during recent months.

ADVERTISING THE STATE AND DEVELOPING OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

During the years following World War II, there has been a great decentralization of industry—a circumstance which has created opportunities for the alert states of the Union to develop in this field. This situation has brought on intensive spending of advertising dollars by other states. Of the forty-eight states in the Union, forty-two have appropriated funds for advertising. Of those forty-two states, Colorado ranks next to the bottom of the list.

For the past two or three years there has been a popular state-wide awakening to the need for an advertising program which will lead to the development of industry here, and to larger markets and a greater demand for our farm, livestock and other products. It is our responsibility to sell our state, not only as a tourist attraction but we should increase the sale

of the things which are grown and produced here. We need industries; we need jobs; we have grown up among the states of the Union; and, we need to gain an ever-increasing number of new permanent residents to add to the strength of our economy.

Experience, comparison, and actual results have shown us that Colorado can be benefited a hundredfold from every advertising dollar wisely invested. The people of this state expect their government to provide sufficient funds to enable us to compete with the other advertising states. We will need a minimum of \$250,000 a year for State advertising if we are to do a successful job. I am basing this recommendation upon complete and comprehensive studies of our needs prepared by highly competent and trained advertising executives. And, I intend to give this information to the advertising committee.

I am also going to propose to that committee that they select a number of qualified businessmen to serve as an unpaid but interested advisory council on advertising. This council should consist of men familiar with the problems of agriculture, industrial development and travel. It would sit with the advertising committee and assist the members in making decisions which would enable them to more intelligently direct the broadened activities of the State Advertising Department and in outlining the duties of the State Publicity Director. Responsibility for the State's advertising would, of course, continue to be vested in the three-man advertising committee, working directly under the Governor.

WORKMAN'S COMPENSATION

Living costs have risen tremendously during recent years. They have almost doubled during the past decade. Yet, under the present law the minimum and maximum weekly benefits are wholly inadequate, under present conditions, to provide the bare necessities of life for the injured and his family during the period he is incapacitated. The working people in Colorado are doing a great job. If we are to keep faith with the laboring people in this great state, amendments should be made to the workman's compensation law, increasing the minimum and maximum benefits.

HIGHWAYS

All of us in Colorado want the finest roads possible. We need better through highways, better farm-to-market and school roads. Colorado needs a long range highway program. The Governor's Highway Committee, of which I have been a member, has covered the entire state from north to south and from east to west, making investigations and studies and

meeting with local agencies in an effort to obtain all the information possible in order that a long range program might be formulated. I have never known a more conscientious committee, with such a serious regard for its responsibilities. Its members deserve the commendation of all state officials and citizens alike.

The work of that committee is now completed—it has prepared its report. You may expect to receive bills based on that report. I know you will give them careful consideration, and determine whether such legislation or any other laws are necessary to provide a better highway system for Colorado.

We know that during the last world war our highways were not properly maintained. They were permitted to deteriorate. This was not the fault of our state officials but was the result of short-sighted policies of our national government. I do not feel that this practice was in the best interests of the State or Nation. It was not good sound economy, nor did it result in any over-all saving to the State of Colorado. The Congress of the United States should be memorialized to cooperate with the states and to continue to carry its share of the responsibility along with that of the states to the end that there will be continued maintenance and upkeep of our highways during the emergency period.

F. E. P. C.

During the past four months I have traveled over the entire State of Colorado. I have talked with people in all walks of life and of every nationality. I am convinced that right-thinking Americans firmly believe in equal and non-discriminatory work opportunities for every citizen regardless of his race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry. Those principles have made America great. They are in keeping with the very things for which we are now fighting. I suggest that you consider the adoption of a reasonable and enforceable fair employment practices act, especially in the field of state and municipal employment where the positions are supported by public moneys or tax funds, as well as in the field of private industry. Such legislation might well include the manner, method and procedure for hearing complaints and for the enforcement of the act. I am sure that you will agree that any legislation along this line must be fair to all parties concerned.

COURTS

Under our form of government the judicial branch was established for the purpose of safeguarding the rights of people and administering justice. In order that the judicial branch can successfully function, adequate facilities and machinery

must be provided for the trial of cases. This means that there should be a sufficient number of judges to handle with dispatch the business at hand. It is my understanding that in several of the judicial districts, particularly in Denver, court dockets have become so crowded that unreasonable lengths of time elapse before the cases are brought on to trial. Some of the judges are grossly overworked and underpaid. This is not conducive to prompt or effective administration of justice. I suggest that you explore the entire matter and adopt the necessary amendments to cure this situation.

I might add that the Colorado Bar Association has, during the past ten years, made a very careful and comprehensive study and survey with respect to the improvement of the judicial system in Colorado. Attention might well be directed to a study of the benefits that will be derived by the repeal of obsolete laws and the adoption of certain corrective measures advocated by the committees of the Colorado Bar Association in order to bring our judicial system up to date. In the event that changes in our Constitution are desirable and essential along these lines, appropriate action should be taken to submit those questions to the electorate.

FISH AND GAME

Colorado has the greatest hunting and fishing potentials in the world. All of the revenue derived from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses should be used in the propagation of fish, the improvement of our hunting and in the efficient administration of that department. I suggest that you consider carefully some type of legislation which might well be enacted to bring about a better understanding and closer relationship between the land owners and the sportsmen.

The depletion of fish in Colorado's streams is of great concern to the people of our state. A determined effort should be made to find and correct the cause for this condition. I suggest that you consider whether the elimination of certain types of bait or methods used in taking fish from our streams would help alleviate this condition. We cannot afford to allow this great Colorado asset to deteriorate.

WATER

Always one of Colorado's great problems is the protection and conservation of our water resources which are the life blood of the state. The State Engineer has capably administered our state water decrees. The Colorado Water Conservation Board was created by legislative enactment in 1937, to handle interstate water matters and protect that great resource against outside claimants. That Board is one of our

most important departments and has been operating efficiently and effectively, and it is justly recognized as the outstanding agency of its kind in the entire west. It has been diligently gathering information and data essential to the continued defense of our water rights and finding ways and means of applying our water to beneficial uses. The consummation of the Upper Colorado River Compact deserves special credit. Our future growth and development require that ample funds be provided in order that this work might be continued.

MINING

Colorado has some of the largest deposits of minerals, coal and oil shale in the world. To a large extent, mining in this state has been retarded. It has been shackled by unnecessary government restrictions and regulations. Our mining resources must be developed. The mining interests, particularly those engaged in the operations of small mines are entitled to some assistance. The National Congress should be memorialized to place the development of our large oil shale deposits on a commercial basis, to expend money in the development of the coal industry, to install experimental plants to test the feasibility of extracting oil from coal and to assist the miner generally in working and developing his property. Your attention is solicited for the purpose of finding some solution to the many problems confronting the mining people to the end that there will be a revival of the mining industry in this state, the result of which will be to provide more employment and wealth to our people.

STATE DEPARTMENTS

It is the responsibility of the chief executive to familiarize himself with all our state departments and institutions—to know their problems, their policies, their aims and their programs. It is his responsibility to work with all administrative heads and to meet with them periodically. I intend to do just that, and it shall always be my aim to render whatever assistance I can in making our state departments function properly, and our institutions excellent in every detail. In order to accomplish that objective, sufficient funds should be appropriated for adequate maintenance and operation consistent, however, with our financial ability and in keeping with the general economy program.

STATE EMPLOYEES

May I make this suggestion to state employees generally: I will expect efficiency, loyalty and cooperation from all employees at all times and they can be assured of the very same from me. It is my firm conviction that state employees and the

chief executive must work together as a team if our state government is to function properly, efficiently and effectively. Salary adjustments should be made as living costs increase.

CONCLUSION

You will observe that many important matters have been omitted from this message. It is impossible to cover all subjects pertaining to the problems of our state in one message, and I respectfully reserve the right to submit supplemental messages to you at any future date whenever the urgency of the situation so requires.

Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-one will be a year of uncertainty for the world, but for Colorado it will be a year of challenge. Always a leading livestock and agricultural state, it will become our solemn duty to produce meat and farm crops in even greater quantities if we are to feed an army on a war-time footing.

Our great state, rich in agriculture, rich in natural resources, rich in productivity . . . and rich in that priceless heritage of hospitality, can well become a haven for many people and many vital industries.

Here, almost in the geographic center of our nation, sheltered and protected by the majestic Rockies, we enjoy ideal living conditions in a bountiful land.

To maintain this way of life, to expand our economy and to assure ourselves and others of a happy future here, we must be prepared for any eventuality. We face a period of grave danger, a period which will test our strength. We must be ever mindful of our veterans and of those wearing the uniform of our country and the sacrifices they are making. We must, during the next year, contribute even more men to the armed forces. We must produce more food, expand our economy and prepare for the defense of our people and our land.

Our welfare, our growth, our future will depend to a large extent upon how we as a people use the next few years. I feel certain that Colorado and its people will never be found wanting. God bless you all.