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INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

HON. TELLER AMMONS

Governor of Colorado

BEFORE THE

JOINT SESSION

OF THE

THIRTY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AT DENVER, COLORADO



JANUARY 12, 1937

*Senators and Members of the House of Representatives of the
Thirty-first General Assembly of the state of Colorado:*

Public office is a public trust and, with a full appreciation of all that this implies, I am assuming the office of Chief Executive of our great state. I desire to express to the people of Colorado my most sincere appreciation and gratitude for the very high honor they have conferred upon me and shall endeavor at all times to do my best to fulfill this trust.

I am sure that you share with me a full appreciation of the responsibilities that are entrusted to us in promoting the general welfare of our state as a whole, and our experiences have taught each of us that cooperation and teamwork are essential to achieve results. Unity of action is essential in every branch of government and the relationship of each of the separate divisions of government will best be served by keeping this principle before us. Each of the divisions of state government has its respective duties and responsibilities and only by cooperation can best results be obtained.

Our state, in common with the other states of the Union, has experienced very trying times in the past few years. We have felt the effect of the depression, both in an economic and social sense. Even the most skeptical now freely admit that social and economic conditions are on the upgrade, but in this feeling we must not assume that the task is complete, and we believe that good judgment should suggest that we bend every effort to the immediate problems, but at all times keep in mind our long range program of establishing social and economic security and to eliminate the causes so as to prevent recurrence of the chaotic conditions of the past few years.

Our state has been signally blessed in nature's endowment of natural resources. And it is yet young enough to still possess much of the pioneering spirit that characterized the development of this great section of the country in which we are privileged to live. Inspired by such heritage we should go forward with the will to meet all our responsibilities.

I herewith submit to the members of the Thirty-first General Assembly some of the important problems confronting the state today. Perhaps it will be necessary for me, from time to time, to present other problems to you.

WATER CONSERVATION AND UTILIZATION

We all realize that water is the limiting factor in the future development of our agricultural, mining and other industries and general growth. Three-fourths of our agricultural crops are produced on irrigated land. One million dollars worth of water is capable of producing many millions of dollars of gross

income when properly used with other factors of production such as land, labor and capital.

Colorado has lost millions of dollars of income because of the lack of adequate storage and distribution of water. Recent economic and engineering studies have shown us that by proper storage control of our water resources the state will add millions to our land values.

We hope that this will be the beginning of a new era in the development and conservation of our greatest natural resource—water—. Immediate action is necessary to effect the most beneficial use of this valuable asset.

The State Engineer's office, the State Planning Commission, the Colorado Agricultural Experiment Station and the Federal Reclamation Bureau and public spirited citizens have made excellent progress in this direction, but it is not enough, we need continuous investigation of promising irrigation and water projects.

In order to protect and develop the natural resources of the state, and in order to coordinate the activities of the various departments dealing with water resources, I recommend that you enact a law creating a Colorado Water Conservation Board giving it ample power to defend the state's title to the water which arises within the state. The commission should be given other broad powers which will enable it to fully cooperate with the national government and other agencies.

Due to our priority system of appropriations, it is urgent that we encourage and assist our citizens to make beneficial use of our waters as rapidly as possible and then see to it that their water rights are protected by the state government.

The past few years the tremendous value of our water has become more apparent because of the severe drouths suffered by the semi-arid states, and as a consequence, every other state surrounding Colorado has been and is now taking advantage of every possibility to develop and conserve its water supply and much of it is being done to the detriment of Colorado. Colorado must proceed with survey work immediately and encourage private capital to develop and finance feasible projects. Better cooperation should be encouraged in order to secure federal aid on projects approved by the Reclamation Service and Army. Full cooperation should be given to our representatives in Washington in order to secure Federal Aid and to seek an equitable apportionment of federal funds for water projects, particularly where Colorado is not protected by compacts.

In order to protect our present wealth and in order to further increase the income and prosperity of the state, I sincerely ask that you give careful consideration to this constructive program of water development.

The Board should be in a position to move rapidly. Many matters now pending should be attended to immediately. Colorado has already lost millions of dollars by delay and in not providing adequate funds and proper organization for handling the situation.

TAXES AND FINANCE

Let us work together to the end that Colorado may have the most economical and efficient government with the least possible tax burden. The people by their votes have earmarked substantial portions of our tax revenues of the state to specified functions of the government. They have also enlarged some of the old, and created entirely new functions which entail further expenditures of the taxpayers' money. For this reason it is very difficult for the governor to control expenditures. Our task is not an easy one but it is a task that we must approach with complete harmony and sound and deliberate judgment. I have always envisioned our state government in its financial aspect as a going business concern governed by the same simple rules as all other business.

We must approach the immediate problem of finances the same as you would your own business problems. The first objective must be to determine the actual needs for the necessary operating expenses of the state government. These needs must be provided for by the current biennial appropriations. Careful determination must be made of the amount of these appropriations to keep them within the ability of the state to pay them. Absolute necessity must be the controlling factor. Appropriations for the necessary operating expenses of the state should be passed together with the necessary revenue measures to balance the budget. This administration plans to enforce the budget laws of the state and set up the necessary controls to see that it is enforced.

We ask your cooperation in passing certain appropriation and legislative bills which will make it possible to obtain greater economy and efficiency in the operation of the state government. Some of these bills will amend the 1933 Code Bill in such a manner as to obtain a larger degree of simplicity and correlation of activities of the state government.

Colorado should develop a broader base of taxation which takes account of the ability to pay and benefits received. An ideal system of tax assessment would involve collection of a

reasonable part of the necessary public revenue from a tax on property; another part from a reasonable net income tax that can be used for replacement purposes; a third, from business and profits on natural resources, and a fourth, from inheritances.

In instances where specific services are rendered by state departments to individuals or groups, the revenue to pay for these services should be obtained by direct fees. These departments should be self-sustaining.

An amendment was passed by the vote of the people which permits the General Assembly to enact laws to enforce the collection of an ownership tax from the owners of automobiles in lieu of the property tax. This, in my opinion, is a proper and important subject of legislation.

We recommend that an act be passed providing for the quarterly payment of property taxes with certain rebates if taxes are paid in advance.

HIGHWAYS

Colorado began a modest highway program in 1910 with an expenditure of forty thousand dollars. At the present time the state is spending about ten million dollars annually on a normal program and is now engaged in spending twenty-five million dollars on a construction program for the purpose of completing the primary road system. Highways in Colorado have developed rapidly so that the problems of planning and financing their construction and maintenance has become one of the most important problems in the state. The taxpayers of Colorado want good roads built with their money, but they want the money spent wisely.

Our objective is to have a well constructed and continuous state highway system which will serve the commercial, social, tourist, and recreational needs of the state.

The state highway department is now giving a great deal of attention to traffic and research studies in connection with the development of a modern system of transportation. In order to carry out a harmonious plan and bring the people closer together, we must first construct a primary system of roads based on traffic and economic needs which will reach all sections of the state.

MINERAL DEVELOPMENT

We should encourage mining and oil development. Prospectors should be given every inducement to reenter the field. Geological surveys should be continued and expanded to increase our knowledge of mineral deposits.

I recommend that in some fitting and forceful manner the mining situation of the state be brought to the attention of our national government and that our national representatives be assured of our unqualified support in any effort which they will make for the financial betterment and the revival of this major industry.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Colorado has within the past two years enacted legislation to cooperate with the Federal Government in receiving the benefits of the federal social security law.

While some of this legislation is new to our state, its needs have long been recognized. In other countries where such legislation is in effect they have experienced frequent amendments to their original legislative enactments to accomplish desired changes and broaden the scope of its services.

PUBLIC WORKS

Together, we must make the choice of whether we shall prosecute prudent programs of public works to provide employment for those in need through involuntary unemployment, or whether we shall adopt the less constructive program of public relief as a means of furnishing existence to able-bodied men and women.

The State Planning Commission has served as a clearing house for all of the institutions and divisions of government within our state in the field of proposed public works programs. The information available from this source should be utilized by this legislature and by the administrative offices of the state government in cooperation with the federal government in providing a prudent program of public works commensurate with the needs of the state regarding both work opportunities and needed improvements. If we fail to utilize the cooperation afforded to us at this time for public works, we may well expect to spend a large portion of their cost in meeting the inescapable problem of unemployment and destitution without creating any permanent values to our state and its people.

A well planned program of public works should not be mistaken for a haphazard realization of sectional desires, but should be embarked upon only after mature judgment.

COOPERATION WITH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The federal government has contributed large sums of money for relief, for old age assistance, for building federal highways, for the development of our national parks, national forests, and for reclamation projects in the state. Federal funds

have also been contributed for fundamental research in agriculture, irrigation, soil erosion, land use, mining, geology, forest research, marketing, education, census, business surveys, and numerous other projects. In some cases the state is required to match or supplement federal funds. We should make every effort to meet these allotments as it is a good investment on the part of the state.

We should cooperate with all federal agencies so that Colorado may take advantage of federal services for which we pay large amounts of taxes annually.

PROTECTION TO INVESTORS

During all of its history, outside capital has been instrumental in bringing about the growth and development of this state, and we must look to the same source, in addition to local investments, for years to come for capital with which to increase our business and trade and develop our natural resources. If we are to secure this assistance, we must see to it that securities offered for sale in this state by all concerns have substantial value. Proposed enterprises must be meritorious and securities of all kinds offered to the public must fairly represent values that will command the confidence of the investing public.

I hope that you will enact such measures as will insure this result, or so amend existing laws as to effectively eliminate from this state unsound promotion schemes of all kinds and to provide adequate regulation and enforcement of security laws applicable to sales and offerings of investments in this state. In the enactment of these laws it should be made possible for the state to cooperate with the national government in the strict enforcement of the national security laws.

INSURANCE

For many years last past, Colorado has needed additional legislation for the purpose of obtaining closer supervision of insurance companies, the protection of policy holders, both in and out of the state. The result has often been that losses have been suffered and our people have not received full benefit of insurance for which they have amply paid.

There are now no laws in this state for proper supervision and regulation of mutual benefit societies and associations. It is exceedingly important that laws be enacted to supervise and regulate this business for the protection of the public.

I recommend that legislation be enacted to provide regulation and supervision of this business by the state of Colorado.

LABOR

Our state has passed through the trying conditions of the past few years with a minimum of industrial disturbances. This I believe has been due to the efforts of the department of state government charged with this responsibility, and in no small measure to the intelligent leadership of labor and their continued willingness to assume the responsibilities that leadership in this field compels, and the increasing willingness on the part of employers of labor in our state to participate in a program of cooperation.

This mutual understanding should be encouraged and strengthened and the principles of collective bargaining should be encouraged.

Unemployment has been a problem of major concern to our state and nation for the past several years. It is recognized that the only answer to unemployment is employment. The elimination of child labor, of sweat shops, and of starvation-level employments, as well as the elevation of the economic standards of all our people are a vital concern of state government.

Among thinking people, there is quite general agreement that legislation to protect and safeguard the social and economic welfare of the working people of our state has not kept abreast with the legislative development in other fields. If we expect to enjoy a continuation of industrial tranquility we must give serious consideration and proper recognition to legislation and administrative action in connection therewith.

Government should recognize its responsibility to all classes of its citizens and pass such laws to protect the interest of all. It seems to me that with the many fields from which to choose, the recent mandate of the people of this state was that they preferred that we should continue to expend the well-established democratic principles upon which both our political and industrial course has been chartered. And therefore, I urge the fullest consideration of legislative proposals tending to provide every reasonable safeguard for the economic and social security of our people.

GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

The Game and Fish Department is one of the most important assets of the state. The value of this department during the past few years, has increased to a place where it now controls real and personal property valued at more than two million dollars.

The state now realizes the potential value of this resource. I suggest that you go into this matter and set up plans to de-

velop for the future this immense resource of our state. Nature has made Colorado the nation's greatest outdoor country. We have only to protect and develop our stream and forest life to its natural status to have the greatest sportsmen's paradise in America.

STATE INSTITUTIONS EDUCATIONAL

The citizens of Colorado have long accepted the ideal of equality of opportunity and have considered the provision of equality of educational opportunity to be the principal means of realizing that ideal.

The state is growing rapidly and the school population is increasing. Because of our many advantages, Colorado attracts students from other states. Since our state is relatively young, we have not been able to build up endowments for our state institutions of higher learning. Their buildings and equipment have been provided from public funds based upon what the state could afford.

The welfare of the entire state is affected by the education and services provided the citizens by these institutions. Members of the General Assembly should visit these institutions early in the session, so that their work and needs may be better understood.

Millions of dollars in increased income of the state have resulted from the activities of these institutions, yet little or nothing is ever heard about it by the average citizen. For example, the research work of one man in one of our educational institutions recently resulted in stamping out peach mosaic on the western slope, with an estimated savings of one million two hundred thousand dollars annually. Work on carnation rot saved another two million dollar industry. Similar developments in other institutions have increased the wealth of the state enormously.

Most of our students are financially unable to go out of the state to the old established institutions of the east. Let us provide every opportunity within our means to educate them at home. Colorado institutions of higher learning have natural advantages which should be developed for the benefit of the state.

The demands of all state institutions for permanent buildings and equipment should be carefully considered to see if a plan can be worked out whereby the growth of the institutions can keep pace with the increased needs and growth of the population. The development of summer schools in these institutions has brought in millions of dollars annually to the state in the way of increased business to our farmers and merchants.

The State Planning Commission has suggested that a small mill levy tax over a ten year period may enable the institutions to provide the necessary buildings and also provide a legal method whereby the state may take advantage of federal funds for permanent improvements. Your careful consideration, experience and wisdom, will guide you in this action, but allow me to most earnestly urge constructive action consistent with the resources of our state.

STATE INSTITUTIONS CHARITABLE

The people of our state have at all times realized their obligations to care for and help the unfortunates. As rapidly as has been practicable, these institutions have been erected. Home for dependent and neglected children, school for deaf and blind, insane asylum, home and training school for mental defectives, and the workshop for the blind. The very mention of the names of these institutions touches a tender and sympathetic cord in every heart. They have urgent needs. You will confer with the heads of these institutions and you should visit these institutions and give them patient and thoughtful consideration, then you will respond to the wishes of your constituency and to your own sympathies and judgment in extending help within the resources of the state.

PENAL AND QUASI-PENAL INSTITUTIONS

As to penitentiary, reformatory and industrial schools for boys and girls. Environment and heredity have been determining factors in the wayward careers of many of the inmates. The heads of these institutions are endeavoring, through modern scientific procedure, to promote the responsibility of the state in these cases. Imbued with a kindly spirit they are attempting to set apart the incorrigibles from those who give promise of reformation.

They will ask for permanent improvements and necessary maintenance. This important question deserves serious consideration and you should visit these institutions and confer with the responsible authorities to fully understand their needs.

SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' HOME

In this home live those whom the state desires to surround with every comfort, and to whom the state would do honor. Let us remember that this is their home and the only one they possess.

Many of them are advanced in years, many maimed and feeble. Their requests are modest but they have necessary

needs. No request that is made of you appeals more to the chief executive of the state than the appeal of these heroes of yesterday. Consider well their request—be generous to this institution.

PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission has accomplished a great deal of effective work, in spite of the lack of funds. Work of tremendous value to the state has been accomplished and their report which has been prepared should be read by every member of the General Assembly.

Legislation suggested by the State Planning Commission should be given careful consideration as it will have an important bearing on the future development of the state.

BUREAU OF INFORMATION

The natural resources of our state offer unsurpassed year round recreational possibilities, whose development has heretofore been but slightly undertaken, but the benefits of which could mean so much in the welfare and prosperity of Colorado.

Prospective tourists and future residents should be fully informed of the facilities of our state.

The state should have a department or bureau of information in connection with the State Planning Commission which will cooperate with all corresponding agencies within and without the state, to inform the world of these assets as well as our agricultural, livestock, mining, industrial and other advantages to be found within the confines of this commonwealth.

In conclusion, we are entering a session which is confronted with serious problems, and with almost unbounded opportunity to pass legislation of everlasting benefit to the state. Let us enter upon this public service with a determination to loyally serve our state without permitting sectional, partisan or personal interest to swerve us from the full performance of our duties.

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