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ADDRESS

of the

HONORABLE WILLIAM H. ADAMS
GOVERNOR OF COLORADO

Before the

JOINT SESSION

of the

Twenty-ninth General Assembly
of Colorado

□

January 6, 1933

ADDRESS

*Senators and Members of the House of Representatives
of the Twenty-ninth General Assembly
of the State of Colorado:*

From the day of my induction into the office of Governor to this hour it has been a primary concern to me to have the affairs of government conducted at the lowest possible cost to the taxpayer consistent with maintaining a high standard of efficiency.

With this end in view I have repeatedly urged the curtailment of appropriations by the legislature and strict economy on the part of the administrative departments and institutions of the government. I am very glad to be able to state that with the cooperation of the several departments and institutions definite and substantial economies have been effected not only without lessening but with an actual and marked increase in efficiency. I have constantly kept in mind the simple but often forgotten fact that if expenditures are reduced the tax burden will also eventually be lessened.

Colorado is rich in natural resources. It is indeed a land of opportunity.

All the raw materials needed to produce a prosperous state abound. Colorado has great areas of rich, productive agricultural land and still greater areas adapted to the uses of the livestock industry. Her mountains are seamed with minerals. Few states equal the richness, extent, and quality of her coal deposits. She enjoys a climate unequalled for comfort and health. Her beauty of scenery is unsurpassed. In fact everything to promote the welfare of our citizens and to attract the stranger exists within the borders of our great state.

That economic disaster and paralysis, with accompanying want and distress, should afflict us in this rich land is in part at least due to erroneous policies and deficiencies of our governments—local, state, and national.

I am sure that in cooperation with all the branches of the executive department of the state you can do much to enable our state and its people to realize and enjoy the opportunities which are so readily available; to lessen the load of taxes now crushing the taxpayers and to equalize and more justly apportion the lessened tax burdens; to restore prosperity to farmer and stock raiser; to encourage and stimulate business and manufacturing and to revive our mining industry; to bring new residents to our state to develop and participate in our resources and to induce tourists, sportsmen, and all those in search of pleasure, health, recreation, rest, and the beauties of nature to visit our marvelous state. These most desirable ends can be effectively advanced and promoted by a properly organized and designed state government under wise laws.

Knowing well most of those who will compose and direct the legislative and executive branches of our state government during the next two years, I look forward with hope and confidence to great accomplishments and to the inauguration of an era of helpful development.

It is the right and duty of the Chief Executive to make such suggestions and to outline such policies as in his judgment will be for the general good, but at the same time I have always recognized the fact that the final responsibility for the policies and laws which shall govern our people rests upon the legislature whom the Constitution has vested with the power of determining the policies of the government and the enactment of laws.

It is not my place or my intention to attempt to recommend to you an entire or complete program for your consideration. This will doubtless be done by the incoming governor. There are, however, some matters which I feel I should call to your attention. In messages to preceding legislatures I made many recommendations on various subjects which seemed to me to deserve consideration. A portion of these recommendations were accepted and enacted into law, though during none of my three terms as Governor have I been so fortunate as to have had a legislature

in complete sympathy with the recommendations I had made. Some recommendations which I regard as important did not secure the approval of the General Assembly. A part of these with a few other suggestions I now desire to bring to the consideration of the present General Assembly.

FINANCE AND TAXATION

My views upon finance and taxation were set forth in previous messages. In my inaugural message to the 28th General Assembly I said:

“The tax burdens of our people are heavy. I am convinced that excessive taxes were an important contributing factor in creating the present economic depression and that a lessening of these burdens will aid in the restoration of better times.”

“There is reason for dissatisfaction with our taxing methods. The burdens of government fall unfairly.

“This is certainly not the time to add to the burdens of an already tax-ridden public. High property taxes are already impairing the prosperity of our state. They should be lowered, not raised.”

I am very glad to be able to report that the aggregate mill levy for state purposes has been reduced from 3.84 in 1927 to 3.49 in 1932.

This reduction has been accomplished in spite of a reduction in the assessed value of the State from \$1,565,290,666.00 in 1927 to \$1,280,548,980.00 in 1932, which has resulted in lessening the amount of taxes collected for state purposes from \$6,010,716.13 in 1927 to \$4,469,116.00 in 1932.

Notwithstanding this reduction in assessed valuation due to the great decline in property values much of the property in the state is still over-assessed and further reductions in assessed valuations should be made.

The headway that has been made in keeping the expenditures of the state within its income is evidenced by the fact that

already funds are in sight to pay all first and second class appropriations and with six months receipts yet to come in, it is highly probable that funds will be available to pay all third and fourth class appropriations by the end of the fiscal period on June 30, 1933. The amount yet required to fully pay these classes is but \$320,000.

EXCESS APPROPRIATION

Some of the most serious problems that confront a state administration arise because of legislative appropriations in excess of income. On this important subject it was said in the same message:

“Excess appropriations bring a multitude of troubles upon the state in addition to violating the plain requirements of the Constitution.

“The requirement of the Constitution that the Governor must act upon a bill within ten days of its passage impairs greatly the power of the Governor to prevent over-appropriations.”

“ I therefore recommend an amendment to the Constitution which will give the Governor a sufficient length of time within which to pass on all appropriation items—with the exception of appropriations to meet real emergencies—so that he may have before him at one and the same time all of the legislative appropriations and also the measures for the raising of revenue and thus be in a position to determine the effect of each upon the general financial situation in place of forcing him to pass upon all appropriations except those made during the last days of the session without knowledge, either of the amount of revenue to be provided, or of the total of the appropriations to be made by the Legislature.

“ In the meantime, I suggest to you that insofar as possible you withhold from final passage all appro-

priation items until you are in a position to estimate with some degree of accuracy both the total revenue and the aggregate of appropriations to be made so that the Governor may have before him at the same time the measures passed for the raising of revenue and the measures passed for the expenditure of revenue, and thus can know the effect upon state finances of each appropriation bill presented to him.' ”

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

In preceding messages I have recommended, and I again recommend the repeal of all Continuing Appropriations. This does not necessarily mean that the activities supported by these appropriations be cut off or even curtailed, but it is contrary to the spirit and intent of the Constitution to permit one legislature to appropriate for legislatures to follow. In other words, when you meet at this time to make appropriations for state purposes, you discover that already more than a half million dollars has been appropriated from the general fund of this fiscal period by preceding legislatures. This is unfair to you and is bad in both theory and practice. Each legislature is responsible for its own expenditures, yet if this system of Continuing Appropriations is permitted to continue in effect, you are held responsible for appropriations in which you did not participate and had no part in passing.

ALL FEES IN STATE TREASURY

With the same fundamental thought that each legislature should control the expenditures of the state government for the biennial period, I repeat also the recommendation made to preceding legislatures that legislation should be enacted requiring all moneys collected by departments and boards from fees, licenses or other sources to be turned into the state treasury and prohibiting the expenditure of any moneys by any department or board for any purpose or in any amount not provided for by legislative appropriation. You are sent to the legislature by the

citizens of the state to represent them and to lay out the plan of governmental expenditures for a period of two years. You are responsible to your constituents for your acts. This being true you are not justified in leaving to others the control and expenditure of the moneys of the state in any substantial amount. It is no answer to say that such cash funds are honestly and efficiently administered. The principle is wrong and should be corrected, and I am firmly of the opinion that such action on your part will be greatly to the benefit of the state.

Bills were drafted and introduced in the last legislature designed to put into effect the recommendations I had made in regard to Continuing Appropriations and fee and cash funds. These bills after passing the House were killed without consideration in the Senate by a majority group of Senators who in some incomprehensible manner conceived the idea that these bills which had only the good of the state as their aim involved some partisan purpose or would result in credit for some opponent. It may be noted that every one of this group of senators who presented himself for re-election at the past election was defeated.

The change made in the fiscal period of the state in accordance with recommendations previously made has proven of benefit by removing confusion in our financial affairs, eliminating the period of uncertainty and financial disorder and irregularity which formerly existed between the end of the biennial fiscal period and the passage of the short appropriation bill and avoided the evils inherent in a hastily considered bill to cover the expenses of this period.

CLASSIFICATION ACT

The existing statute as to the classification of legislative appropriations and fixing their respective rank or order of payment should either be observed or repealed. It is in my judgment improper to allow this act to stand and then to insert in individual appropriation bills provisions seeking to evade or annul the provision of the general classification act.

CIVIL SERVICE AMENDMENT

I have had no occasion to change my opinion in regard to the Civil Service Amendment from that expressed in my message to the last General Assembly in which I said:

“From my experience and observation as a member of the State Senate and as Governor, I am fully convinced that the public service would be greatly bettered if the heads of departments and administrative boards were taken from the classified Civil Service list and made responsible to and removable by the Governor or other official in whose office or under whose direction they are employed. This would promote harmony and efficiency. Numerous instances might be cited of cases where a state official is held responsible by the public for the policy and operation of his office but who has been wholly unable to adopt or carry out his policy because of complete lack of control over those upon whom he must depend and through whom he must act. I therefore strongly recommend that you cause to be framed and submitted to the voters at the next election an amendment of the Civil Service provision of the State Constitution to accomplish this change.”

Such amendment should also take from the classified civil service list the Wardens of the State Penitentiary and Reformatory.

REORGANIZATION OF STATE GOVERNMENT

Much can be done to promote efficiency and reduce the cost of State government by reorganization and modernization. In my message to the General Assembly on January 8, 1929, I said:

“A very considerable saving can be effected in expense and a great increase in the efficiency of the state government secured by a practical and intelligent reorganization of the several departments of the state government. I think steps should be taken to this end.

The plan adopted in New York probably would not entirely fit our state but much can be learned from it."

Other states, notably Virginia, have made great advances in this direction. It is also possible to similarly promote efficiency and economy by a reorganization of our county governments.

CENTRAL PURCHASING AGENCY

It is my opinion that a very substantial saving could be effected in state expenditures if a central purchasing agency were established through which all purchases of supplies for the various state departments and institutions could be made and I commend this suggestion to your consideration.

COLORADO INDUSTRIES

I wish to repeat and emphasize what I said in my inaugural address of six years ago in regard to Mining, Farming, and Stock Raising:

"Not many years ago mining was our principal and most prosperous industry, and we should now do everything possible to bring it back, and I strongly favor any proper legislation that will in any way help the industry."

"Farming is among our most important industries, and the one upon which, more than any other, our entire foundation rests. Without prosperity in the rural districts, we cannot have permanent prosperity in the city and, while I realize that all the troubles and ills of the farmer and stockraiser cannot be cured by legislation, yet I am sure that much can be done and especially through Federal help and I therefore recommend that you give this subject your most serious consideration and that you also urge upon the national congress the necessity of giving this great industry every possible assistance, and the relief to which it is justly entitled."

HIGHWAYS

A greater mileage of highway has been constructed than during any preceding biennial period and the roads in the state have been maintained in better condition than ever before.

The highways completed, improved, and under construction have given work to a large number of men and thereby aided materially in meeting the unemployment situation in Colorado, while the materials used have also helped toward the support of Colorado merchants and manufacturers.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

The present law regulating busses and trucks is very unsatisfactory. It should be amended to more adequately and justly meet the problems arising from this rapidly growing form of transportation.

Better designed regulations should be enacted controlling weight and size of these vehicles for the protection of our roads and other traffic upon them and when enacted, such regulations should be enforced.

I take this occasion to express my gratitude and appreciation to Messrs. Thomas A. Duke, Bishop Irving P. Johnson and Ralph J. Wann, for the exceptional services they have rendered the State of Colorado as members of the Colorado Board of Corrections.

Without compensation these gentlemen have devoted a large portion of their time to the affairs of the three institutions under their charge. The improvement that they have made in the physical conditions, business management, and morale of these institutions especially the State Penitentiary is remarkable.

The State of Colorado is fortunate indeed in having had the benefit of their able and valuable services and owes to them a genuine debt of gratitude.

I hope the members of the General Assembly will take the time to read the reports setting forth the details of the operation of these institutions.

While I have by reason of special circumstances made individual mention of the members of the Board of Corrections, I do not forget or overlook the way other individuals and boards to whom the thanks and gratitude of the state is due for faithful and efficient service, but it is obvious that individual mention cannot be now made of all of them. I do wish, however, to take this occasion to express to those who have served with me, my sincere appreciation of their help and assistance, and my pleasure and enjoyment in their friendship and association.

As reports of the various departments of the state government will be printed and copies thereof furnished to the members of the General Assembly and further information as to state finances will be provided in the report of the Budget and Efficiency Commissioner it is not necessary to incorporate such detailed information in this message.

To you as members of the 29th General Assembly, I extend a most hearty welcome as you enter upon your service. You have my most sincere good wishes that your period of service may be a pleasant and agreeable experience to yourselves and that the result of your deliberations may be of great profit and advantage to your state, and that you may return to your homes deserving and receiving the honor and gratitude that is the just reward of faithful, efficient and honorable public service.

And now my work as Governor is nearly done. On next Tuesday I shall lay down the cares of office and bid you farewell. I have served my state as a public official for more than fifty years, two years of which was in the House of Representatives, forty years in the State Senate, and six years as Governor.

I have enjoyed my public service. Through it I have made many friends whose friendship I cherish and whose aid and support I have esteemed and appreciated. I hope my service has been to the profit and advantage of my state. I know I have given to that service the best that was in me.

I leave office with a deep sense of gratitude and affection for the citizens of Colorado for their many favors and repeated kindnesses and their continual evidences of confidence in me. Out of office as in, Colorado may ever count me devoted to its welfare and eager to be of service.

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