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Inaugural Address

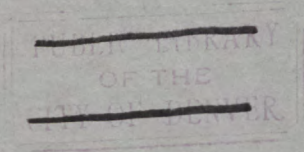
of His Excellency

Hon. William H. Adams

Governor of Colorado

Before the

*Twenty-eighth General Assembly
at Denver, Colorado*



January 13, 1931

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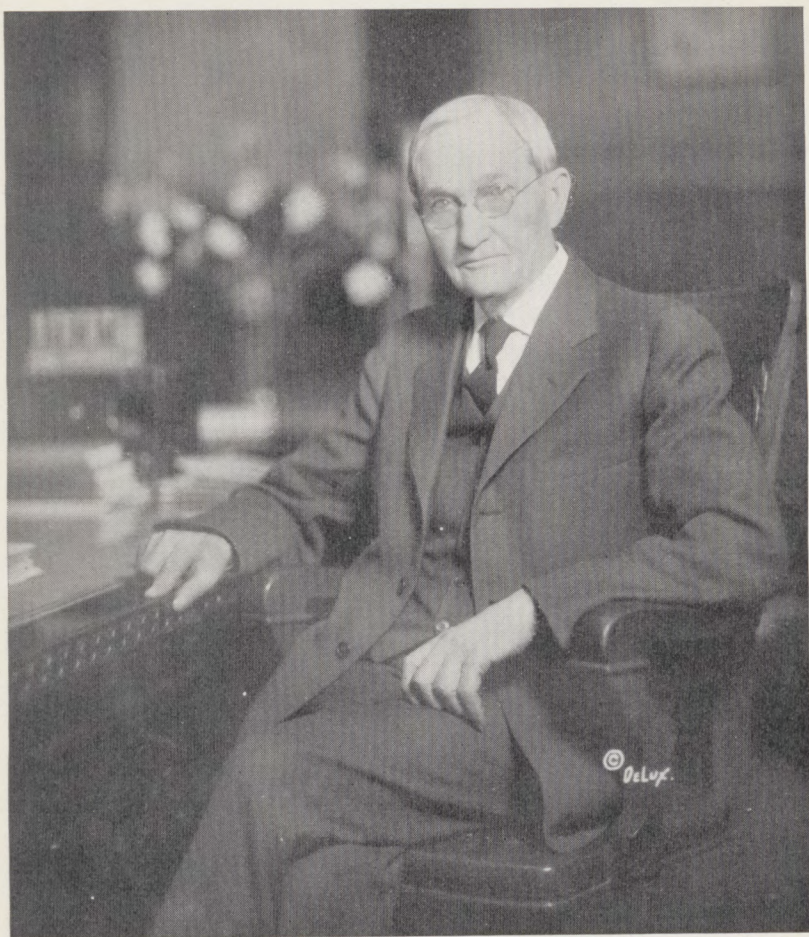
Governor of Colorado

Before the

*Twenty-eighth General Assembly
at Denver, Colorado*



January 13, 1931



Fifty years—a clean half-century of uninterrupted service to the people of Colorado—is the record of William H. Adams, now serving his third term as chief executive of his state. Rumor—a rumor which he neither affirms nor denies—has it that he was first elected to public office before he was of legal age. In any event he held in the early stages of his career the unique distinction of occupying three elective offices at one time—mayor of the town of Alamosa, commissioner of Conejos county and member of the state house of representatives. Certain it is that he served one term in the lower house, 11 terms in the senate and is now entering his third term as governor, and has never been defeated. He is in every sense Colorado's first citizen. For a half-century and more political honors have come to him unsolicited, and today his hold upon the confidence and the affection of the people is stronger than ever.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

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

I enter upon a third term in the office of Governor with a deep and sincere consciousness of the obligations placed upon me by the voters of Colorado and am grateful and appreciative of the great honor conferred and the expression of continued confidence.

I pledge again to the people of Colorado my best and utmost efforts to the faithful performance of the duties of the office of Governor.

Notwithstanding general business conditions have been less favorable than during preceding years the financial condition of the state shows marked improvement. In place of a deficit such as has so often existed at the close of the fiscal period this fiscal period will close with all bills paid, all appropriations met by revenues, and a substantial surplus. In the accomplishment of this unusual and greatly to be desired result I have had the hearty and consistent cooperation and support of the other elective officials of the Executive Department. My contacts with these officers have been marked by friendship and harmony. I do not recall a single occasion when the action of the various boards composed of these officials has not been unanimous. There has been no attempt to play personal or partisan politics at the expense of the state or to the prejudice of fellow officials. I confidently look forward to equally friendly and harmonious relations and cooperation during the coming two years and shall en-

deavor to so conduct myself and my office as to contribute my part to the maintenance and continuance of this most desirable condition.

While the state is not confronted with a financial crisis as during some recent years there is still a very urgent need of sound economical policies on the part of both Legislative and Executive Departments.

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.

Certain aspects of a period of depression and unemployment may be temporarily relieved by governmental expenditures but permanent relief can only come through the creation and maintenance of a fundamentally sound financial and economic condition in state and nation. Artificial stimulants can no more produce a condition of sound and permanent health in the economic life than in the life of an individual.

FINANCE AND TAXATION

While the proportion of the total tax burden upon our people due to state taxes is relatively small, yet any reduction which can be effected should be made. In addition, through your power over all the various local agencies which levy taxes and expend public moneys you are able to compel economies and consequent tax reductions which could be very substantial. There is much that is wasteful and needless in the organization and operation

of nearly all such local agencies. This is also true in the case of the state as I have tried to point out in former messages. I commend to your study and consideration the possibilities of economies in these fields.

There is reason for dissatisfaction with our taxing methods. The burdens of government fall unfairly. They can and should be more equitably distributed but you should not yield to those who under the pretense of tax reform are in fact but seeking to increase the total taxes upon the citizens through the devising of new taxes on new subjects of taxation without corresponding reduction in taxes now levied.

I feel sure that you will take special care to see that legislative appropriations do not exceed the income of the state. Excess appropriations bring a multitude of troubles upon the state in addition to violating the plain requirements of the Constitution.

The requirements 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 repeat what I said two years ago upon this subject:

“Bills are frequently passed in the early days of the session carrying an appropriation for some good purpose but one not vital. The Governor approves of the purpose of the bill and not knowing what other appropriations will be passed and assuming that the Legislature will keep within the limits fixed by the Constitution, signs the bill. As the session approaches a close the Legislature realizes that after deducting the appropriations al-

ready made there does not remain enough of the estimated revenue to provide for the absolutely essential expense of the state for the next two years. Now, too late, it becomes clear that some of the earlier appropriations should not have been passed and the Legislature is faced with the alternative of refusing to appropriate enough to properly run the state or to make an over-appropriation and hope for some financial miracle to save the situation.

"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 appropriation 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."

The necessary expenses of the state government must be provided for. The state institutions must be properly supported. I commend to you especially, greatly needed appropriations for the proper care and housing of the unfortunates in our charge at the State Hospital at Pueblo.

All essential, state activities should be adequately financed but there should be no waste or avoidable expense.

In my opinion the income which the state has been receiving is fully adequate to care for its various interests and activities when judiciously and economically administered.

I am fully convinced that by a continuance of the policy of strict economy it will not be necessary to levy any additional tax for General Fund purposes. 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.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

In both of my 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.

To give you an illustration, the State Game and Fish Department collects over \$300,000 each year which great sum that department handles and expends without control or direction from either Legislature or Executive. I raise no question as to the manner in which this fund has been managed in the past, but am clearly of the opinion that this fund and every other similar fund should go into the State Treasury to be paid out only as the Legislature shall direct.

I am sure that such a change will help rather than harm the interests of those interested in our fish and game and that protests from hunting and fishing groups are either the result of agitation or of failure to comprehend the financial principles involved or of misunderstanding of the consequences of the change. No fisherman or hunter has reason to fear that the legislature will fail to give proper consideration to his interests. There is no reason why the Fish and Game Department or any other department should be permitted to constitute an independent state within the state.

Similarly, the State Insurance Department receives into its funds over \$800,000 each year. This Department is undoubtedly economically operated, but as I have said it is wrong in principle to leave to any department the expenditure of its fees without control or direction from the Legislature.

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

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.

THE PENITENTIARY

The situation at the State Penitentiary has been very unsatisfactory and distressing not only to me but to the people of the State. The attention of the public was focused upon this institution by the riot of October, 1929, with its loss of life and the consequent disclosure of deplorable inefficiency in its management and demoraliza-

tion and low morale among both employees and inmates. I submit herewith for your information the reports made by a committee composed of Messrs. W. W. Grant, Jr., Henry McAllister, and B. C. Hilliard, appointed by me to investigate the riot, its causes and the general conditions of the penitentiary. The State of Colorado is in debt to these able gentlemen for the efforts and the sacrifice of time which they made in this investigation. I wish now publicly to thank them and express my appreciation of their services which were rendered in a high-minded spirit of public service. Their reports deserve your most careful consideration.

I will not attempt to repeat or comment upon the reports further than to specifically recommend—

- (1) That the two-man cell be eliminated;
- (2) That effective segregation be made of hardened criminals or repeaters, first-termers, and trusties;
- (3) That employment be provided for prisoners;
- (4) That consideration be given to legislation looking toward further use of convicts on public road work;
- (5) That a prison farm policy be adopted and developed on as broad a scale as is compatible with the welfare of the State and the prison.

The State should establish and maintain a prison farm upon land now owned or to be acquired for the purpose, in a suitable location, of adequate extent and proper character. Upon this farm suitable accommodations should

be constructed for the housing of prisoners during all seasons. If a prisoner has earned and deserves the confidence of the prison management so as to be made a trusty there seems to me to be no reason for requiring his return within the prison walls at the end of the farming season, if adequate housing and reasonable occupation can be provided on such a farm. Such a farm would give wholesome occupation to several hundred prisoners under surroundings better adapted to stimulate higher ideals and purposes than the close and often idle confinement in the penitentiary. Such a farm could easily be made self-sustaining if not actually profitable. Moreover, a farm with such housing accommodations would to a great extent relieve the congested condition in the penitentiary.

I very strongly urge that you make every necessary provision to carry out this recommendation.

I further recommend that you revise and amend the law as to good time allowances and paroles so as to eliminate the present confusion and uncertainty in these matters.

I have appointed three outstanding citizens upon the Board of Corrections who undertake, at my request, and with no motives save those of good citizenship and in response to a call to public duty, the burdens of this very trying service. They are entitled to your confidence and support and that of all good citizens. The difficulties which they face are greater than most realize and some time will be required to correct the condition of demoralization which seems to pervade that unfortunate institu-

tion. I therefore ask for them a reasonable degree of patience on the part of the people of the State confident that progress will be made just as fast as is humanly possible under such adverse conditions.

The Board of Corrections and the Wardens of the Penitentiary and Reformatory should be taken from the classified Civil Service lists and made directly responsible to the Governor. The necessity for this has been too plainly and too often demonstrated to require further comment.

I recommend a separate non-salaried board to have control of the State Hospital at Pueblo.

ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Special efforts are being made toward the construction and maintenance of good roads. More work will be done during the current year than in any previous year and the work will be begun earlier and prosecuted more vigorously than ever before. This should be of material assistance in meeting our unemployment problem. Provision has been made to secure and use all Federal Aid Road funds available to Colorado. The total funds available for road work in Colorado for the present year will reach nearly ten million dollars, all of which, it is hoped and expected will be expended in an efficient, businesslike manner to the substantial advancement of the interests of our State.

The present period of unemployment may be a propitious time for the construction of needed improvements, having due regard to the already heavily burdened and distressed taxpayer, but it is not proper at this or any

other time to expend public money for constructions that are not absolutely needed.

In order to avoid unduly extending my remarks I omit a number of matters to which I think you should give attention but I may take occasion at another time to bring such matters before you.

You will at all times be welcome in the Governor's office. I hope to see much of you during the session and shall always be eager to receive advice and information from you and shall feel free to communicate to you as a body or as individuals any views I may have on public questions.

I am sure that we are all animated by a common desire to promote the public welfare and that we will not permit any personal, partisan, or sectional interest to interfere with the faithful performance of our full duty to our State.

I sincerely trust that Colorado and its people may enjoy peace, happiness, and prosperity during the coming years, and that we may as individuals and as public officials contribute to these ends our full share.

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