

GO 34.2 / INI / 1955

c.1
COLORADO STATE PUBLICATIONS LIBRARY



3 1799 00175 2302

INAUGURAL MESSAGE
of
THE
HONORABLE ED. C. JOHNSON
GOVERNOR OF COLORADO
Delivered to the
Fortieth
COLORADO LEGISLATURE
in Joint Session



AT DENVER JANUARY 11, 1955

~~DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY~~
DOCUMENTS DEPARTMENT

INAUGURAL MESSAGE
of
THE
HONORABLE ED. C. JOHNSON
GOVERNOR OF COLORADO
Delivered to the
Fortieth
COLORADO LEGISLATURE
in Joint Session



AT DENVER JANUARY 11, 1955

DEC 31 1955

~~DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY~~
DOCUMENTS DEPARTMENT



HARRIS O. EWING

Thirty-two years ago, I began my long public service in this very Chamber. I sat in the back row, one seat removed from the aisle. I thought it a great honor then—and I think it a great honor now—to serve in the Colorado General Assembly. I am most grateful to the voters of Colorado for the privilege of being back here working with you.

We have a big job to do together. I have full confidence that we will do it well. The happiness, the progress and the prosperity of the people of Colorado is our common objective. We may have minor differences as to the details and the procedures, but it should not be difficult to determine a course of action since what is best for the people of Colorado is our goal.

I am not here to dictate to you or to high pressure you. My job is to advise with you and assist you in your difficult task. In turn, I invite your full cooperation and counsel. I hope most earnestly that the next two years may be an era of good will in Colorado.

While I am urging full cooperation in solving the people's problems, I have too much respect for you to desire or anticipate any goose-stepping or rubber-stamping by anyone. Neither do I ask an end to debate. I hope, to the contrary, that debate in these halls will be vigorous and spirited. Only through the friction of minds can the wheat be sifted from the chaff and reasonable decisions made. However, a sense of responsibility must be assumed by each of us. May no one ever be given justification for charging the General Assembly and the Governor with irresponsibility. Nevertheless, constructive criticism of the people's public servants, when taken seriously by those serving, is this democracy's most dependable guide.

It is true that 95 per cent of the work of this General Assembly has to do with revenues and expenditures. I have reached some tentative conclusions with respect to the budgetary problems of the state's institutions and the state's other activities, but I want to double check everything and eliminate every possible error in my calculations before I present them to you. Therefore, in a few days, I shall send up a message for your consideration dealing with finances. Today, I shall content myself merely with a general reference to such matters.

The State Capitol is not a place for Simon Legrees or galley slaves, but neither should it be a rendezvous for loafers and

shirkers. I am told that in one department employees who "hit the ball" are frowned upon. Such an attitude is contemptible disloyalty and must be dealt with severely. Every employee of the state should be devoted to the state's best interests and he should put his shoulder to the wheel and give his best at all times. Nothing less than that will be acceptable. Mine is to be a business-like administration in the highest conception of that term and every effort will be made to weed out the loafers.

The people require and have requested additional services but additional services will necessitate additional funds, and additional funds call for higher taxes. One must be weighed against the other. Fortunately, our State Constitution does not permit deficit spending. Before the General Assembly spends, it must provide the revenue. Cutting taxes and increasing appropriations simultaneously just will not work out. No one will be happier than I, if we can keep taxes at their present level or lower, but that is up to the General Assembly's Appropriation Committees. After you have finished with the session's appropriations will be the time to reduce taxes if then taxes can be reduced. Let's not get the cart before the horse by reducing revenues now before we reduce expenditures.

In the realm of national affairs, Colorado makes an extremely heavy contribution to the Federal Treasury each year and receives a portion of it back for the various cooperative programs which Congress sponsors. What Congress gives Colorado came originally from Colorado taxpayers. We do not complain, but we want it understood that we pay our way. In international affairs, we repeat the sublime and loyal sentiment and words expressed by Stephen Decatur, "In dealing with other nations, may our country always be right; but, right or wrong, our country!"

With respect to school room facilities and operational costs the public school problem from the kindergarten to a master's degree in college has reached the crises stage in Colorado. Enrollments everywhere are making phenomenal increases. While it is comforting that the demand for knowledge is so high, yet, its terrific and sudden impact on the public purse strings has caught us all flat-footed. But there is no escape. The greatest weakness in our military defenses is the extreme shortage of scientists and engineers. It requires 16 to 20 years for the

school rooms to produce these technicians so vital to civilization's survival. We dare not fail to meet this absolutely indispensable military and civilian requirement.

Two or more of Colorado's east and west highways from Utah to Nebraska and Kansas should be built to the high standards which have been adopted for the Interstate System of Major U. S. Highways. A tunnel through the Continental Divide is essential to adapt such highways to all weather service. I shall press for the construction of such a tunnel now.

Last November Colorado voters authorized a bond issue of \$35,000,000 for building Colorado highways. It is my conviction that interest-bearing borrowed money should not be used except to match federal funds. If there is anything needed to be done by the General Assembly to clear up provisions of the \$35,000,000 bond issue, it should be done now. Soon we should know the details of the President's huge highway building program and what Colorado will be called upon to do with respect to it. Colorado should be made ready to strike when the "iron is hot." There is almost no limit to what Colorado should do in the way of highway construction.

During my previous administration, the "Courtesy Patrol" was created. I regret that its official name was changed to State Patrol shortly after I left office. To me it will ever remain the "Courtesy Patrol" with emphasis on courtesy.

However, I do not want any courtesy shown to motor traffic law violators. To save the lives of careful law-abiding motorists, speedsters, reckless and drunken drivers must be dealt with severely. Fines are not enough. Jail sentences should be imposed. Driving motor vehicles on public highways is a privilege and not a right. Suspension of this privilege for stated periods for violators should be required by law. I plead most earnestly that our statutes make such punishments mandatory.

Colorado must declare war on all traffic violators. Not a war of empty threats, pious resolutions and high sounding slogans, but an all-out war with certain and severe punishments for the law violators who persist in making our highways bloody ribbons of death. Doubtless, more patrolmen must be added but when they are added our highways must have more effective supervision.

It is a serious mistake to require by law that the superintendents of the state's mental hospitals be physicians. True, the patients at these institutions need the very best of medical care possible, but to require that the administrators be physicians narrows the field without rhyme or reason and makes it difficult to find suitable heads for our mental hospitals and training schools.

The Thirty-Eighth General Assembly declared it to be the policy of Colorado not to discriminate in employment on account of race, creed, color, national origin, or ancestry. This stated policy is in harmony with Colorado's traditional concept of equal opportunity for all. But our present statute and its administration are not effective. I urge that both be strengthened.

The protracted and severe drouth which has caused such loss and hardship upon the farmers and ranchers of the western semi-arid states, will have served one useful purpose, if Colorado as a state does something constructive to stabilize its very limited water resources. There need be no halt in the progress of any section of the state if we do this.

The unfortunate controversy between the Eastern and Western slopes must be resolved constructively. Colorado should seek a solution which would benefit both slopes and injure neither. It can be done. It must be done.

Colorado's ground-water resources need to be explored to the fullest extent by competent technicians and these precious resources need to be protected by law with respect to the private and public equities and against abuse and waste. The Colorado Water Conservation Board must get on top of this problem with firm and aggressive determination at once and give the General Assembly its views as to whatever legislation is required to protect the public interest. An extensive and cooperative groundwater exploration with the U. S. Geological Survey should proceed unhampered by lack of necessary state funds.

Outside of the distress caused by the long drouth and the economic upsets caused by the closing of the coal mines and the lead and zinc mines in certain areas, business is very satisfactory. Industry appears to be on the threshold of greater and greater expansion and growth and the tourist trade is improving all the time. Colorado is facing a tremendous expansion all along these lines.

However, we do need more industry in the long-suffering mining areas. Mississippi and other southern states have been able to attract industry by building and renting plants and facilities built to industry specifications. The rent paid by industry amortizes all costs in an orderly way. If enabling legislation is provided by the legislature such Colorado communities as Trinidad and Walsenburg, where a dependable labor supply prevails, should become very prosperous again.

I find much to admire in governmental procedures since my previous terms as Chief Executive. The new parole system is splendid. I am especially enthusiastic about the Legislative Council, your own research agency. Their reports on the careful explorations of the vital public problems facing Colorado point the way to orderly and realistic solutions. The trouble is that many of these very well developed proposals have difficulty being written into law.

Congress has found a way to have reorganization proposals approved without abridging the legislative processes. The Congress enacts enabling legislation authorizing the President to submit specific reorganization plans to Congress. After these plans are submitted to both Houses, under the terms of the enabling act, each House has 60 days to veto or reject the proposal. If either House by affirmative vote rejects the proposal it is defeated. If neither House rejects the proposal within the 60 day limit the proposal becomes law. Such a system if adopted here would enable Colorado to write into law many sound reorganization proposals.

Each of us must put our State ahead of our own personal interests and ahead of our respective political parties. Let us, therefore, stand together as loyal and dedicated Coloradoans ready and anxious to do that which should be done to keep our beloved State progressing on every front. Onward and forward in all things will give rich meaning to our services here. I am not promising an adventurous or spectacular administration but I will strive with all my might to give Colorado a sound, solid, devoted and alert administration. With God as my guide, I have no fear.

RECEIVED

MAR 01 2019

**STATE PUBLICATIONS
Colorado State Library**