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OF

**GOVERNOR ADAMS
OF COLORADO**

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Inaugural Address

OF

Governor Alva Adams

TO THE

Fifteenth General Assembly

OF THE

State of Colorado



1905
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The uncertainty of recent events have^s delayed the writing of this message until the last hour, and as no department of the State government has sent the incoming Governor a copy of its report, it will not be possible at this time to speak intelligently of the business affairs of the State. My words must therefore be suggestive only, and not as full and definite as they should be. Later, when time has been given to the investigation of the finances of the State, I will ask the privilege of sending you a second message with such recommendations concerning income and expenditures as may seem fit and proper.

Six years ago to-day I gave to the Legislature an epitome of the financial affairs of the State. A comparison will show that in that brief period the taxes collected and spent have doubled, without a corresponding increase in population or wealth. When a business man's expenditures double without adding to his capital, it is time he changed his methods. While a state may not become insolvent, it is not exempt from those inexorable financial laws that regulate the business fate of the private citizen. As leg-

islators and officers, it is our duty to exercise the same care and economy in spending the funds of the people as with our own.

To enact good laws, to see that they are administered with justice and impartiality, and to collect and spend the money of the tax-payer with wisdom and integrity, are the sacred duties of government.

To tax and to please is a power never yet given to man. Since the Roman Caesar, two thousand years ago, sent out the command to "tax all the world," taxes have been the penalty of civilization. At best, the growing institutions of a new state demand much, but our constituents should not tolerate extravagance. Every Legislature in Colorado's history has spent the full limit of taxes allowed by the Constitution. Let the Fifteenth General Assembly make a new record in legislative annals. Let us be just to the tax-payer before we are generous with his money. The assessed valuation of property is nearly twice as great as in 1897-98-99-00; and yet the levy remains at 4 mills. Every Legislature spends every dollar the law allows. A careful scrutiny of appropriations should enable us to maintain our institutions in a respectable manner, and yet reduce the levy. There is little encouragement to the property owner to raise the assessed value while the levy remains at the maximum. In any movement you may take along this line and looking to an easement of the burdens of the tax-payer, you may be assured of my earnest co-operation. We may differ politically, but should be in accord upon all measures for the betterment of the State. The oath of office which we have taken was not partisan—there is no politics in the Constitution, and there should be none in the Statutes; and if there were, the best service would be the best politics. Colorado is gaining a wide reputation for high taxes and lawlessness. This kind of fame is not attractive to the stranger seeking either a home or an investment. Resolutions and words will avail little. If public sentiment does not force city, county and State officials to observe and uphold the law, and to be parsimonious rather than prodigal with the public fund, then a page in a Governor's

message will be as useless and harmless as an arrow shot at the sun.

Colorado is a great estate; you are its moral and material guardians. The first bill introduced, as well as the last, should recognize this responsibility. Do not wait until the last days of the session to economize. The earliest hour is the best hour for doing right.

Law-breaking, disregard for the Statutes, is the heaviest tax that can be imposed upon industry, labor or property. Good government requires but two things—first, a good code of laws, and then a people who will uphold and abide by them. I have firm faith that existing laws fairly administered will be adequate to right every wrong. Adherence to the law is the best cure for most of the evils that can infest a state. Where official and citizen respect the law, there can be no necessity for extra constitutional measures to preserve peace and order.

During the past two years Colorado has had many incidents to regret, many deeds to deplore, but much of our evil fame is due more to our own exaggerations than to facts. The truth has been bad enough without partisan color. Lies need no press agent. It is not true that half the voters of Colorado are dynamiters and anarchists, nor is it true that the other half are shylocks and oppressors. We can not complain if the world takes us at our own estimate. Hereafter, when we paint our own picture, let us use a brush that will not hide all our virtues and intensify our faults. Nowhere is there a higher standard of manhood and womanhood than in Colorado. From the best of every land and every state has come the splendid citizenship of this imperial commonwealth.

The annals of several counties have been stained by strikes, lockouts, martial law and outrage. These are poor testimonials of free government.

While strikes may not be forbidden, we may dream of the reign of justice, we may hope for conditions and laws that will make strikes unnecessary. First among those enactments in obedience to the expressed mandate of the people should be an

honest eight-hour law. This both parties promised the people. Let that promise be kept.

Next, an amendment to the arbitration law requiring a compulsory submission of any grievance or difference between employer and employes. This is not compulsory arbitration, nor does it lead to a compulsory decree, but it does compel a conference, and where the parties to an industrial conflict honestly confer, a settlement is almost certain. Such a measure would clip the power of an arbitrary superintendent or manager to order a lockout without reason, or of an equally arbitrary walking delegate to incite a strike without justification.

John Mitchell said "that in the coal industries there had never been a strike where the parties had conferred before the strike had been ordered, and that there had never been a strike except where either employer or employe had refused to confer." If this be true in the coal industries, it will be no less true in other avenues of productive labor. If peace and harmony can be secured by a conference of conflicting interests, the public welfare makes it the duty of the State to compel such conference.

There is seldom difference enough between the parties to an industrial dispute to justify the wide-spread disaster that often follows a conflict. It is not infrequently the case that obstinacy or pure selfishness precipitates labor troubles that affects not only the few hundred directly concerned, but many thousands in collateral industries. In Colorado we have had labor difficulties that have affected the welfare and prosperity of at least one-half the entire population of the State. The rights of these hundreds of thousands of non-combatants are certainly entitled to respect and protection, and if all interests can be protected by compulsory submission, it becomes the imperative duty of our law-makers to investigate and enact.

The election scandals in Denver, Teller, Pueblo, Huerfano, Las Animas and some other counties indicate a needed change in our election laws, and demand the enactment of an honest and efficient primary law. No assault upon free government is as serious as a corrupt ballot. The pure ballot is the very heart of

our governmental system, and where that fails, democracy is a failure, and a free republic a delusion.

In framing your election laws see that their meshes are strong enough to hold the big election thief as well as the small. The ordinary ballot crook at the polls is bad enough, but back of him, and responsible for him, is some one infinitely stronger and more dangerous. Those who furnish the money, brains and organization for corrupting elections are greater enemies of the State than their agents who, for pay, do their bidding.

The vast amount of money that is now deemed necessary for the conduct of an election is one of the strongest indictments that can be made against prevailing political methods. The State chairman of one political party made oath that he spent at the recent State election nearly a dollar and a half for each vote his party received. The other State chairman also testified to a large expenditure. Other interests deeply concerned in the campaign, but not compelled to publish their expenditures, must have spent two or three times as much as the chairmen—to this add the amounts spent by the chairmen of the fifty-nine counties—the city chairmen—the various local committees and the personal expenditures of the hundreds of candidates, and we have an amazing total—certainly amounting to five dollars for every vote cast in the State.

When we deduct the very large majority of Colorado voters who can not be influenced, directly or indirectly, by campaign money, and divide the cost among the comparatively few who are influenced by financial agents and organizations, we have an outlay for each such vote that rivals the record of some of the elections in the rotten parliamentary boroughs in England that shamed the British Empire a few years ago.

There was spent in Colorado politics during the past year nearly as much money as the cost of the first campaign that made Abraham Lincoln President of the United States. The boast of our country has been that the poorest citizen could aspire to any office within the gift of the Republic. Is it true to-day? Often the candidate must barter his influence, com-

promise his character or sell his manhood to save himself from defeat at the polls. Is it not time that the public conscience and the law-maker cried "stop"? Colorado is not venal—her people are not corrupt, but they have been careless and indifferent, and it seems my duty to ring an alarm, knowing that they have but to awake to the realization of the danger to see the forces of evil fade and vanish like a summer cloud upon the mountain side.

This has not been a pleasant chapter to write, but states like men must know their sins and confess before they can be saved. There is no sense in weeping over the past; it can be of value as a warning guide to a better future. The evils are but a symptom and not a disease. If the flames of ambition, greed and selfishness have scorched the temple let us collect the insurance, if any there be, and rebuild fairer and stronger than before.

I take this occasion to record my personal and official regret at the untimely death of Senator Buckley. He was a loyal, able and devoted citizen of Colorado.

We would also pay our tribute of regard and appreciation to the memory of Governor Eaton. When Colorado writes her history the name of Benjamin H. Eaton will stand high among the list of her most valued citizens. He was one of the founders of Colorado, the prophet of irrigation and our greatest farmer; he proved the wealth of our soil, and from it garnered a large fortune. He planted grass where barrenness had reigned; he made trees grow where none had grown before; he built fences; he dug ditches; he carried water over the thirsty plain and made the primeval desert bloom with fertility. The world is better, richer and happier because Ben Eaton lived in it.

With you I deplore the loss of Representative White. He was a highly respected citizen, holding the confidence and esteem of all who knew him.

The Supreme Court having announced that until the Legislature acts the State Board of Canvassers may go behind the returns and, if so willed, may declare whom they please elected to the Legislature, and as such power carried to its ultimate would enable a set of State officers to perpetuate themselves in office,

you should follow the intimation of the court and pass a law making clear, definite and limited the power of the Board of Canvassers.

To introduce many bills and to place many laws upon the statute book is not the highest duty of a legislator. To amend or repeal bad or unjust laws, and to prevent the passage of unnecessary legislation is often the higher service. I commend to you the words of Cromwell when he wrote to Parliament: "Correct the laws, and if there be any law that makes many poor to make a few rich, that suits not a commonwealth."

During the past two years, Colorado has often held the center of the stage; she has filled many columns in current literature; notoriety, if not fame, has been her portion. To-day as I look with hope and confidence into the glad new year, I repeat for Colorado the hope expressed by Gallatin to Jefferson when about to enter the White House: "May your administration make no history."

Men of peace have no Plutarch. Short are the annals of peaceful states.

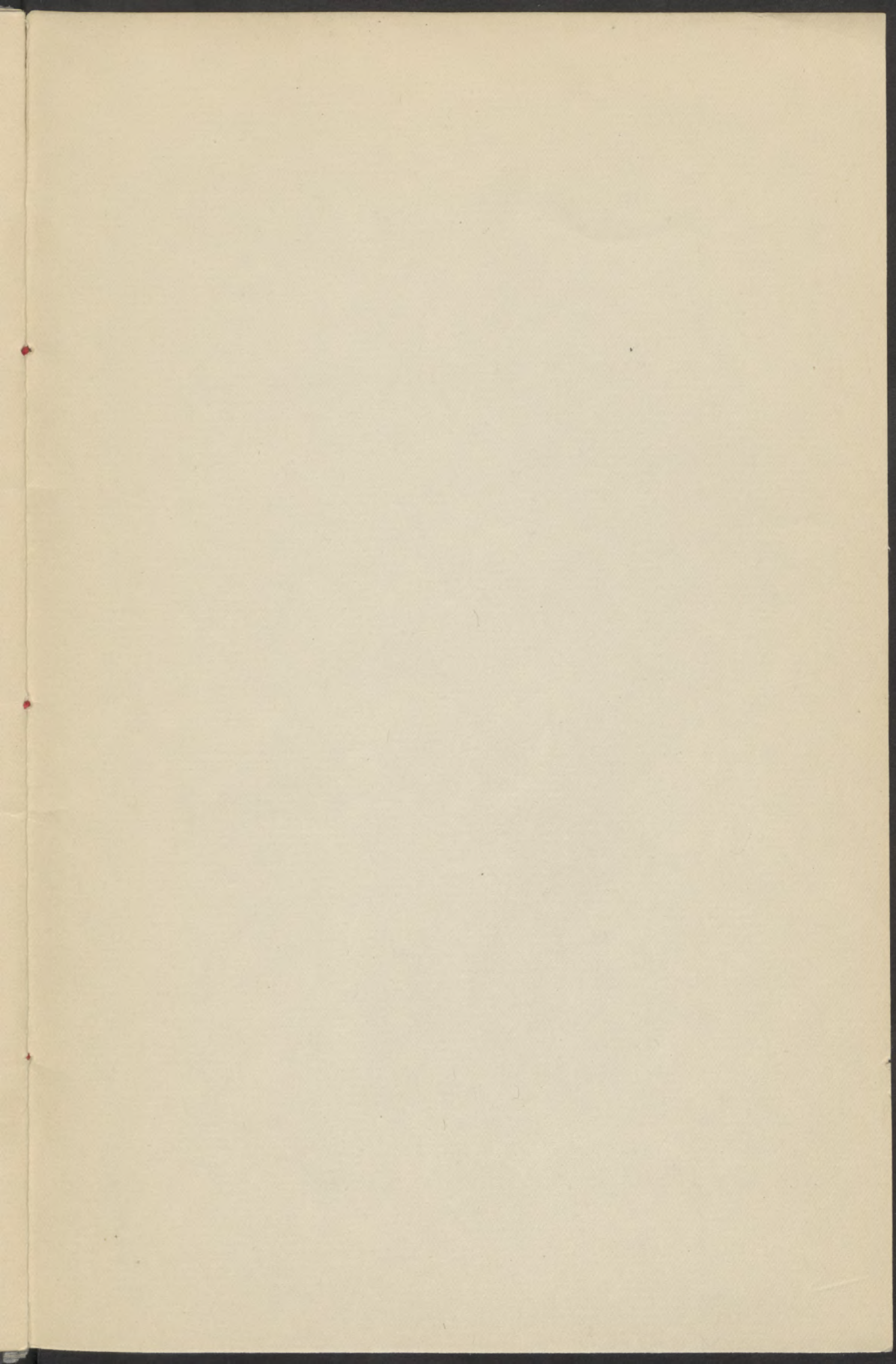
So, for the next two years, my prayer is that Colorado will make no history, save that which is written in the hearts of a contented, a prosperous and a peaceful people.

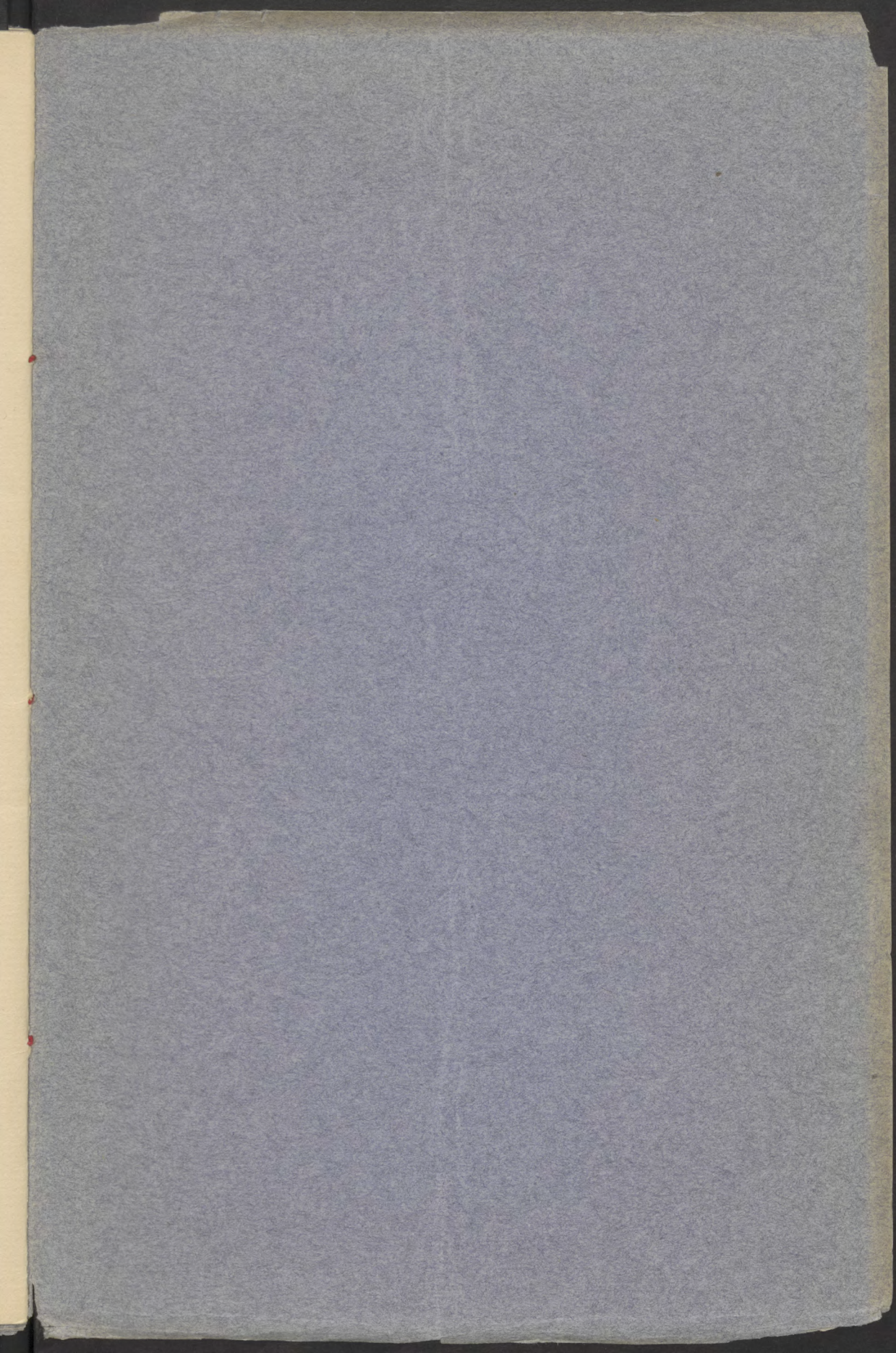
No state has more reasons to aspire to leadership than Colorado. Geography, climate, resources, people, all will contribute to the making of a perfect commonwealth. Let the troubles and turmoils of the past be forgotten as we turn our faces to the future and press forward to a certain and a splendid destiny. The shaping of that destiny depends upon the citizen. Free government rests upon the responsibility of the individual. Colorado will be what her citizens make her; her character will be the added character of every man and woman. As citizen and official, you and I must make Colorado noted as a State for wise management of State institutions, just and fair expenditure of the peoples' tax, equity and justice in our courts, integrity and ability in official, patriotism in citizen, purity in the elective franchise, virtue,

honesty and loyalty everywhere, religion respected, education universal, civic righteousness the daily thought.

As I assume for the third time the grave responsibilities of the governorship, I repeat the prayer of Solomon when God offered him any gift for which he might ask: "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people," and in the doing of the work and duty that lies before me, I ask the God of Solomon to give me the wisdom to know the right and the courage to do it.

ALVA ADAMS.





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