

State of the State
Governor Roy Turner
January 14, 1947

Mr. Lieutenant Governor,

Mr. President of the Senate,

Mr. Speaker of the House of Representatives and Members of the Joint Session:

We have been chosen by the people of Oklahoma to formulate and enact a governmental program. In electing us to places of leadership, the people of Oklahoma have honored us with an expression of their confidence, and they have conferred upon us responsibilities commensurate with those honors.

To those of you who were members of the Nineteenth and Twentieth legislatures, I wish to extend my compliments and my sincere commendation for the enactment of sound legislation, which has been of benefit to our state. We have now come to our Twenty-first legislature, and our opportunities to act in behalf of the welfare of Oklahoma are even greater than they were two years ago or four years ago.

We are facing a period of transition from war to peace, a period which calls for courageous leadership and forthright action. Legislative and executive unity is needed for the achievement of objectives that will further the advancement of Oklahoma. The people of Oklahoma look to us for courageous leadership, sound decisions, and definite action, which will achieve our governmental objectives.

Under our constitution responsibility for enactment of legislation rests entirely with you. More than eight months ago, I stood on a platform in Sulphur and said:

(Quote) "I would like to call attention to a pertinent fact. Most changes advocated by candidates for governor will call for changes in our laws. Please permit me to be the first to recognize the law-given right of our duly elected legislature to pass upon the greater part of any program submitted by any governor." (End quote)

Today, as governor, I stand before our duly elected legislature, the legislature which will pass upon a program that has been carried to our people through the press, on the radio and on the stump during three of the most vigorous campaigns in the history of our state. It is my belief that because of the vigor with which these campaigns were conducted, our people are better informed on my objectives than upon any other program ever advocated by an incoming governor. They are also informed of my responsibility to recommend this program to you, the lawmakers of our state. And they are also informed of your responsibility to enact, reject or compromise this program.

Accordingly, full credit for the achievements of this administration will accrue to you as members of the legislature. Yours will be the responsibility, yours will be the actual work, and to you should go, and will go, the credit.

for progress and prosperity. We all know that this is true, and because it is true, it is our duty to produce unity of purpose and action that will transcend small considerations.

We are fortunate in having at hand the report and recommendations of the joint legislative taxation committee of the Twentieth Oklahoma legislature. In this report, we have for the first time, a factual analysis of our tax structure. This report shows us where we are, and it makes definite recommendations as to which way we should go.

I recommend this report for your most earnest study and consideration.

The revision of our tax laws, ably and effectively started by preceding legislatures, must be continued. The community property law of 1945 was, in effect, a tax measure. Upon continued revision depends the ultimate success of any program designed to produce full benefits for agriculture and industry in Oklahoma.

Specifically, I ask enactment of legislation effecting income tax reductions recommended by the committee.

I also recommend specifically the enactment of legislation providing for uniform tax exemptions both in agriculture and industry.

The legislative committee on taxation has recommended the enactment of a comprehensive state, budget law, which provides for establishment of a state fiscal control board. I concur in this recommendation and ask that the budget law be enacted promptly as a means of placing state government on a sounder business basis.

In urging tax legislation, I am mindful of the fact that we must have revenues sufficient to meet functional obligations.

However, I take the position that stimulation of industry and agriculture through tax adjustments ultimately will produce tax revenues, which will more than offset losses incurred by reason of revisions and reductions.

If our present industry and agriculture are to prosper, and if we are to obtain new industrial and agricultural opportunities for our state, we must create an attractive tax climate that invites investment and production. Oklahoma business men, farmers and ranchers must be in a position to compete with business and agriculture of neighboring states. A tax system, which destroys our ability to meet competition is a governmental luxury we cannot afford. The penalties of such a system far outweigh the benefits we can buy with the tax revenue it produces.

In drafting tax legislation, I ask that you consider its long range effect on business, agriculture and revenues, rather than its immediate possibilities as a producer of revenue.

It is my duty as governor to make recommendations on state expenditures and it is also my duty to state the sources of revenue from which these expenditures are to be made. We are fortunate in having a surplus which should reach Fourteen Million Dollars by the end of this fiscal year.

Demands for additional appropriations, if granted, promiscuously, would more than wipe

compensating for reduced tax revenues. Therefore I can not emphasize too strongly the necessity for judicious use of our surplus funds.

As the basic industry of Oklahoma, agriculture is entitled to full consideration in the preparation of any legislation, which directly or indirectly affects our rural families. Your action on legislation affecting taxation will be vital to agriculture. Although the immediate effect of lower tax rates may appear to be solely a bid for new industry, it is far more than that. It is a bid for the establishment of farm markets, which, in other states have proved to be a boon to the economic stability and welfare of farmers and stockmen.

The welfare of our rural families is bound with roads and highways, public education, electrification, and improved production methods. Our state agencies will be charged with responsibility for improving production. Electrification of farms can move forward under our present laws.

This legislature is immediately concerned with roads and highways and with public education – not only as they affect rural communities – but also as they affect towns and cities.

Foremost on your agenda is a reorganization bill affecting the state highway department. This bill is designed to give Oklahoma long-range highway program. It calls for an eight member highway commission, with one member to be named from each congressional district. The purpose of this provision is to give every section of our state representation in the formulation and execution of a long-range road and highway maintenance and construction program.

The bill also calls for long staggered terms for commissioners. The purpose of this provision is to eliminate the handicaps that result from a complete turnover in highway department personnel and policy, which has been occurring at least every four years, and I am informed that turnovers have been occurring on an average of 27 months.

Under provisions of the bill, commissioners will serve without salary. This makes it mandatory for the governor to appoint members who are willing to serve on the commission as a matter of public service. Commissioners will employ a Director of Highways, who must be a competent engineer and executive. It will be the duty of the Director of Highways to draft a state highway and road program, which will be subject to approval by the commission.

I am not blind to the facts of life. I know that members of this legislature, as members of other legislatures, will be under constant pressure from constituents to obtain road and highway improvements for their districts. One purpose of the highway reorganization bill is to free senators and representatives, as much as possible, from this pressure. The proper place for this pressure to fall is upon commissioners, and these men will be charged with building roads on a basis of need rather than upon a basis of political expediency.

Now is the time for senators and house members to transfer this burden, once and for all to the highway commission. We shall have hit or miss highway and road construction just as long as projects are approved on a basis of which particular part of the state can raise the most hob with the highway department.

We need a long-range program, and, having drafted one, we need to see it carried forward without the delay and confusion that results from interference.

sound business methods, we can more nearly obtain a dollar's worth of highway construction for every highway dollar we spend.

Under provisions of the highway department reorganization bill, we have an opportunity to achieve the results we need. We must not muff this opportunity.

Recent publicity has left the impression with the public – and perhaps with this legislature, that we are entering the year 1947 with approximately \$14,000,000 available for highway construction.

The cold, hard facts are these:

Nearly all of our highway funds are already obligated or must be counted as anticipated recoverable funds for the coming year.

The estimated unencumbered cash balance in our state highway construction and maintenance fund as of January 31, 1947, is a little more than \$600,000.

The estimated unencumbered cash balance in our farm-to-market fund as of January 31, 1947, is approximately \$3,300,000.

However, the highway department has ready for immediate construction 83 farm-to-market projects in 42 counties, totaling approximately \$3,000,000. This leaves us a little more than \$300,000, which will be available as of January 31, for allocation to other farm-to-market projects.

Therefore, unobligated funds available to this administration as of January 31, 1947, will include only \$600,000 in our state highway construction and maintenance fund and \$300,000 in our farm-to-market fund a total of approximately \$900,000 – which falls far short of the widely publicized figure of \$14,000,000.

I wish to make it clear that in submitting these figures, I recognize the fact that during the next twelve months, our estimated recovery of federal aid funds advanced by the state is estimated at \$6,122,000.

However, this money is not now at hand, and we must realize that if we are to continue our highway program on its present basis, we must have money on hand to complete and pay for all projects before we can recover federal participation. Therefore on this basis, federal funds, on which we anticipate recovery, in reality constitute a revolving fund, not now available for use.

In order to match all federal funds available to Oklahoma during the next two years, and in order to continue operations of the highway department on the same basis as during the last two years. we shall need a net total of approximately \$39,000,000.

This brings us face to face with a crucial highway financing problem. Those of you who were members of the Twentieth legislature will recall that diversion was a most serious problem during that session and that you overcame it by agreement with the Public Roads Administration, whereby you enacted House Bill No. 72, providing for the total surplus from the general fund as of June 30, 1946 – estimated at \$10,000,000 – to be appropriated for highway construction and

The problem of diversion is still with us, and I wish to quote the following from a recent letter to the highway department from the federal commissioner of public roads:

(Quote) "Consequently, the provision made by the legislature with respect to meeting the diversion issue is only temporary and will not extend beyond December 31, 1946. Thereafter, the State, on the basis of its present laws, will revert to the status of diverting its road user revenues to non-highway purposes, and unless the legislature at its 1947 session shall enact further legislation which will adequately meet the situation it will be necessary to consider the question of reducing the State's apportionment of Federal-aid road funds as required by section 12 of the act of June 18, 1934. In the meantime and until proper measures are adopted to stop the diversion of road user revenues, it will not be permissible under the Federal statutes after December 31, 1946, to make any advance to the State for any purpose, not even for a revolving fund under section 6 of the Federal-aid Highway Act of 1944." (Unquote).

Section 12 of the Federal Highway Act provides that the administrator of the federal works agency may reduce the total annual allocation of any of the several states permitting diversion by one-third. In the case of Oklahoma, this would mean a loss of federal aid road funds of approximately \$3,400,000 annually.

In view of the fact that \$4,600,000 of our diversion went to common schools, and the remainder to the general fund, you can see the financial problem posed.

As governor, I shall work with you in the solution of this problem. I am confident that we can solve it with out penalizing our schools or highway department. In due time I shall place information before you, which, I believe will enable you to enact legislation that will place us in a sound position.

The attention of this legislature also is immediately required in the field of public education. It is now the responsibility of our senators and representatives to vitalize the free textbook and school financing amendments adopted by our people at the last general election.

In regard to textbooks it is my wish to see this amendment made completely operative within the shortest possible time consistent with legal ramifications and financial considerations. It is my hope that free text books can be furnished, in whole, or in part, by next September.

It is imperative that textbook legislation be carefully drawn to eliminate any possibility of waste, favoritism or political manipulation.

From the Twentieth legislature's committee on taxation we have received some timely recommendations pertaining to school legislation. I urge that these recommendations be given full and earnest consideration, especially as they refer to reorganization of school districts, annexation of "all transfer" districts, central purchasing of school transportation equipment, inclusion of the 15-mill ad valorem tax levy in the minimum program income in computing state aid, and the use of net enrollment figures in determining appropriations under provisions of the \$42 per pupil amendment.

We have an opportunity to improve our public schools and to provide a measure of economic security and stability for our educators. By acting wisely now, we shall be able to assure the children of Oklahoma competent instruction and full school terms.

I favor incentive state legislation, which will encourage local districts to do their part in supporting their schools.

In the field of public education we have a very definite obligation to our Negro citizens. By every mandate of justice they are entitled to a fully accredited college institution. The establishment of a fully accredited Negro college was favored without reservation in the Democratic party platform. I herewith make a direct appeal to this legislature to carry out this party pledge. I favor expansion of our vocational educational program in both Negro and white schools.

In considering appropriations for our institutions of higher learning, I ask this legislature to view institutional requests and recommendations of the state budget officer from the standpoint of maintaining or improving the standards of our university and colleges.

Some of our colleges have lost their accredited ratings. We need all of our colleges now to care for unprecedented enrolments, and in fairness to students who must attend our smaller colleges, we must seek to regain lost accreditations. We must consider it one of our duties to bring our colleges up to standards prescribed by the North Central Association and the American Association of Teachers' Colleges.

During this session we shall receive requests from Veterans' organizations, seeking special legislation for veterans. I believe there are enough veterans of both wars in this legislature to assure the fullest consideration of these requests. I further believe that senators and representatives who are not veterans will be sympathetic and in full accord with every practical measure that will enable our veterans to recover the educational and economic advantages they lost while in service.

Our two largest veterans organizations, the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, have prepared comprehensive legislative programs for submission to this legislature. I ask that these proposals be referred immediately to appropriate legislative committees together with any proposals that may be submitted by other veterans organizations. I ask that our legislative committees work closely with representatives of veterans organizations in drafting laws that will vitalize every practical and reasonable request designed to improve the position of our veterans.

I do not wish to recommend that this legislature place the party program ahead of requests made by veterans organizations. Therefore, my specific recommendations for veterans legislation will await the joint recommendations of our legislative committees and veterans' representatives.

I ask this legislature to consider quickly and favorably the request of the Veterans Administration for permission to buy four and a half acres of state land in Oklahoma City on which to construct a general hospital for veterans.

Federal law now authorizes maximum old age assistance payments of \$50 per month. We have not reached this maximum, and it is a goal toward which we should work. I do not favor higher tax rates or new forms of taxation to accomplish this purpose.

It is my belief that administrative economy is the key to liberalizing our treatment of aged citizens.

(Quote) "It is therefore recommended by the committee that the legislature act to consolidate all public welfare activities under the Oklahoma Public Welfare Commission, thereby relieving the general revenue fund of demands totaling approximately two million dollars for each of the next two years.

"It is further recommended that the appropriations committees of the house and senate study carefully the possibilities of further economies through functional consolidations in other governmental activities as they consider budget requests during the legislative session." (End Quote).

I am definitely opposed at this time to the diversion of any portion of our sales tax now ear-marked for old age assistance. Adequate financing of this function of government depends upon a sustained volume of sales tax revenue.

This revenue will fluctuate with business conditions. Therefore, it is urgent that this legislature give full and earnest consideration to every possible measure that will effect administrative economies.

I urge that this consideration be directed toward consolidation of all public welfare activities. Once again, I wish to invite the attention of legislature to the fact that a well devised tax program will encourage investment and employment in Oklahoma. This investment and this employment will be reflected in sales tax revenue ear-marked for old age assistance.

Recommendations pertaining to gravely needed improvements in state mental hospitals will be submitted to this legislature. I ask that budget requests of these institutions be given careful and liberal consideration to the full limit of the state's ability to bear the expense without seriously crippling other governmental functions.

I shall recommend changes in commitment laws designed to relieve these institutions of unnecessary and unfair burdens.

My position in regard to these institutions is that they are hospitals for the care and treatment of persons who are afflicted by genuine mental illness. I hold that they were never meant to be institutions for the imprisonment of the non-criminal unwanted.

I shall ask for legislation to prevent selfish individuals or families from making the state a party to such unwarranted imprisonment.

Machinery for the development of a tremendous state resource can be set in motion by this legislature. Within a short time, simple, but far-reaching, proposals for improvement and development of our recreational facilities, will be submitted for your consideration and action.

With our great natural recreation facilities, and with our new dams, which have backed up very sizeable lakes in nearly every section of the state, we have almost unlimited opportunities to foster – not only a vast recreational program – but also a vast new industry for Oklahoma.

Our sportsmen and our business men are vitally concerned with the action the state takes

be on a completely self-sustaining basis and should be producing a huge volume of business and tax revenue.

It is my duty at this time to invite this legislature's attention to Article 24, Section 2, of the State Constitution, which provides that each 20 years the legislature will permit the people to decide whether they wish a constitutional convention. It has been 40 years since a constitutional convention was held.

It is also my duty to invite the attention of this legislature to Public Law No. 15, which, in the opinion of many insurance men and attorneys, drastically affects our state insurance department. In order to insure our control of the state insurance department and to preserve our insurance revenue, it is imperative that this legislature take full cognizance of all legal aspects involved.

In presenting these matters to you, it has been my purpose to suggest only what I consider to be the most pressing phases of our legislative program. There are other matters, which will require your consideration and I shall deem it my duty to place them before you from time to time.

It is appropriate that I set forth a brief summary of the legislation I have just requested.

On taxation: Reduction of individual and corporation income taxes, establishment of uniform tax exemptions for industry and agriculture, and enactment of a state budget law.

On highways: I have outlined our financial position and problems and have asked enactment of a highway department reorganization bill.

On public education: Vitalization of constitutional amendments on school finances and free text books and establishment of a fully accredited college institution for Negroes. Support of tax committee recommendations on school district annexations and consolidations and for central purchasing of transportation equipment. Expansion of vocational education. Maintenance and improvement of our college standards.

On veterans: Enactment of a legislative program based upon joint recommendations of veterans' organizations and members of our legislative committees.

On old age assistance: Protection of revenues now earmarked for old age assistance plus economies in administration, through which this program can be liberalized.

On mental hospitals: Sufficient appropriations to start a greatly needed improvement program and revision of our commitment laws.

On development of recreational facilities: I shall submit to you proposals designed to improve these facilities for enjoyment of our citizenry, together with a development program through which a new tourist industry can be established.

On a constitutional convention: I have cited the provisions of the State Constitution.

On insurance legislation: Any necessary revision of our insurance laws to insure state

A great deal of very hard work will be entailed in considering the legislation just summarized. We know that there are many other matters, which will claim your attention during this session. With so much work at hand, it is obvious that we must immediately establish unity of purpose and action if we are to succeed in the achievement of our objectives.

In closing, I wish to say that it is my desire to establish a close and productive relationship with the members of this legislature. I know that it is within the power of this legislature to make history – good history – for Oklahoma. As representatives of the people of Oklahoma you are entitled to – and you will have – the full service and complete cooperation of the man our people have elected governor.

The governor happens to be a man of simple tastes, who has lived his entire life close to the soil, resources and people of Oklahoma. So I ask that there be a minimum of formality and protocol. I shall be deeply grateful for your views and recommendations on every subject bearing upon the welfare and progress of our state and of your particular districts.

I want you to feel that your districts are also my districts. I know and respect each of your districts. We have mutual friends there. It is my duty, and it will be my pleasure, to serve the people of your districts just as you desire to serve them. Therefore, the governor's office will be open to you and the people you represent at all time.

As governmental leaders, elected by our people, the destiny of Oklahoma is in our hands. Let us proceed now to underwrite that destiny. Let us write the record expected of us – a record bright with progress and achievement. Together we can, and we will, do a good job for Oklahoma!

Upon motion of Senator Porter, the Inaugural Address of Governor Roy J. Turner delivered on January 13, 1947, was ordered incorporated in the Journals of the respective Houses, the Address being as follows:

INAUGURAL ADDRESS – JANUARY 13, 1947

ROY J. TURNER, GOVERNOR OF OKLAHOMA

My Fellow Oklahomans:

The gratitude that I hold in my heart today transcends everything except my deep sense of obligation to the people of my native state.

We, the people of Oklahoma, stand on the threshold of a new era – a transitional era – during which our advancement will be measured by our ability to recover from the wounds of war and to move forward into a fruitful and progressive peace.

Each of us has our individual and our family problems, and these problems are bound, directly or indirectly, to the performance of our government. It is important, therefore, that we regard our government as a necessity – not as a luxury. Government must seek a maximum of well-being for the people and a minimum of burden to the people.

Any loss of integrity by a public official can only add to the peoples' burden.

state above all personal ambition or avarice. The honest and faithful performance of public duty will be required of every state employee.

We have cause to face the future with high hope and full confidence. The members of our legislature have come to this session fired with a sincere desire for progress and accomplishment. Our legislature is well-balanced. Among its members are young and vigorous veterans, whose zeal and hope for the future have been tempered in the crucible of battle. Serving shoulder to shoulder with them are legislators whose wisdom has been acquired during long years of experience and public service. These are the law makers to whom we shall look for progressive legislation and for sound legislation. We have every reason to look to them with confidence.

The legislation, which I shall propose, will be designed to vitalize the program of governmental advancements; which I advocated as a candidate for this office. This program was placed before our people through the press, on the radio, and on the stump in three vigorously contested campaigns. Once it received a plurality of votes and twice it received majorities. In view of these events, I believe we can reasonably assume that our people want these improvements.

The revision of our tax structure is the keystone of our entire program. Oklahoma is a young state and has not amassed a huge cash surplus or reserve. However, due to the accomplishments of past administrations, Oklahoma is debt free and is operating on a cash basis, and we do have a small surplus. We are now in a position to move forward under a lighter burden of taxation.

The complete report of our interim legislative committee on taxation is now in the hands of our legislature.

This report represents a comprehensive and factual presentation of our actual tax situation.

It makes specific recommendations for revision of our tax structure. I commend the members of the committee upon completion of an arduous task, and I urge that every member of the legislature and every state official be fully prepared to give earnest consideration to the committee's recommendations.

The community property law of 1945 is, in effect, a tax measure and a good one. We are now ready for other measures. I shall support tax reductions, revisions and adjustments, which will not jeopardize necessary functions of state government.

Chief among the reductions, which I shall recommend, will be a cut in our income tax rates as they affect both individuals and businesses. Reduction of taxes and enactment of laws providing for uniform tax exemptions – both in industry and agriculture – will do much toward attracting new industry – industry to employ our labor in manufacturing enterprises as well as industry that will provide cash markets for our farm and ranch products.

Agriculture is the basic industry of our state, and any program bearing upon the welfare of Oklahoma must place heavy emphasis on agriculture. As our farms and ranches prosper, so prosper our towns and cities.

I regard the maintenance and construction of rural roads as a vital factor in the attainment of agricultural prosperity. I shall not favor any highway program which ignores, or slights, our farmers in the matter of rural roads.

During this administration, our system of public education is due for considerable improvement. These improvements definitely must include our rural schools.

Through privately owned utilities and the rural electrification administration, electricity has been brought to nearly half the farm homes of Oklahoma. The Grand River and Denison dams have added to our sources of electrical power. The expansion and development of our rural electrification program is a matter of prime importance to our farm families and will be wholeheartedly and enthusiastically supported by this administration during the next four years.

State agencies will foster soil conservation and soil research as a means of increasing production of present crops and as a means of developing new income crops.

Taxation, farm-to-market roads, and soil conservation and research have a definite bearing upon the establishment of year around cash markets for farm and ranch products.

Processors are building plants near the sources of the raw products they need.

These plants provide cash markets for farmers and stockmen, and they produce local payrolls and steady employment in our towns and cities.

Our climate and our products lend themselves to the purposes of farm processing plants. We have not had our share of these plants in the past.

But with a more favorable tax climate, with a dependable and adequate road system, with assured production, and with the application of the enterprise and perseverance that has built Oklahoma, we shall be in a position to obtain this very profitable business.

The development of this program will depend to a large extent upon our farmers. They must be able to guarantee enough products to stock the plants continuously. Our state agencies will give every possible assistance to farmers and stockmen in helping them to increase present production and to develop new products.

I feel that the markets can depend upon our farmers – now and in the future. No better criterion of our future in agriculture can be cited than the achievements of our 4-H members, our Future Farmers and our Future Home Makers. Every year, they bring national honor and acclaim to Oklahoma. These programs will receive my personal and official support.

Oklahoma has many natural assets which have not been exploited. In this inauguration audience are representatives of California's great motion picture industry. They are here to make a study of Oklahoma's possibilities as a motion picture producing state. New techniques in color picture production, require direct sunlight, unobscured by haze. Oklahoma is blessed with that kind of sunlight. Pictorial effects require colorful spring and autumn landscapes and fleecy white clouds. Oklahoma is blessed with these, too. The motion picture industry wants a wealth of natural scenery, and we have that.

We have another great undeveloped asset, which I have mentioned frequently during the last nine months. It is our new system of man-made lakes. Now that we have them, we must make them fit not only for our own pleasure and enjoyment, but also for the pleasure and enjoyment of the many thousands of out-of-state visitors who will find a vacation paradise in

Oklahoma. The development of these facilities will be high on the agenda of this administration, and here again private enterprise will have an opportunity to pioneer a new frontier of industry in Oklahoma.

Other states are already profiting from industrial decentralization, and we have every reason to believe that this decentralization will continue at an accelerated pace. If Oklahoma is to share in the prosperity that comes with the establishment of new industries, we must strike, and we must strike now.

In bringing new industry to Oklahoma we have a two-fold job. First, we must establish a favorable tax climate. Second, we must sell our natural resources and economic advantages. Our suits, seeking equalization of freight rates, are set for hearing before the United States Supreme Court in February.

New sources of cheap electric power have been developed and within our borders. We are rich in minerals and other raw products of many varieties. We have an abundance of labor, and much of it is highly skilled. It is significant that there was no work stoppage in Oklahoma during the recent coal strike, which paralyzed so many sections of the country.

Our fires still burned with oil and gas. Our climate is conducive to good living conditions, good working conditions, and good flying conditions.

In view of all these factors, Oklahoma is entitled to an industrial future, and we shall have only ourselves to blame if we fail to realize such development. Through tax revision and through a sound selling job we can obtain factories, refineries, aviation investments, textile mills, glass plants and other forms of industry that will produce employment and new wealth for our people.

Tax revision is a legislative matter. Part of the selling job may require nominal state appropriations. Another part of the selling job will depend upon the enterprise and activity of local communities. Good teamwork is required, and I shall do my utmost to produce that teamwork.

During the Democratic primaries and the general election campaign, it was my privilege to visit and talk with the people of every county in the state.

Wherever I went, it was made very clear to me that our state highway and road program was foremost in the thinking of our people. The highway and road program I advocated then is the same highway and road program I advocate now.

Accordingly, I shall ask for an immediate reorganization of the state highway department. I shall not attempt to change or interfere with the completion of the many millions of dollars worth of highway projects undertaken by the present highway commission.

In advocating reorganization of the highway department, it will be my purpose to give

and coordinated highway program over a long period of years until this situation is changed. Every section of our state should be represented in the formulation of a statewide road and highway program.

Therefore, I shall ask the legislature for very early action in authorizing the appointment of an eight-member highway commission, one member to be appointed from each congressional district, with all members serving staggered terms, so that members ultimately will serve eight years. In appointing these commissioners, I shall seek the services of men who are willing to serve their state without compensation as a matter of public service. We have such men in Oklahoma, and we should make use of their ability and leadership in the conduct of our government.

Under the plan I advocate, the commission will employ a full-time Director of Highways, who must be a fully qualified executive and highway engineer. The Director of Highways will be responsible for the planning, maintenance and construction of roads and highways subject to the approval of the commission.

No highway and road program will find complete fulfillment within the life of a single state administration, but a program, which will survive changes of administrations will ultimately give us the results we need. Such a program will attain the balance necessary to assure maintenance and construction of our rural roads and will provide safely for our inter-city traffic.

Last November our people approved four public school financing amendments. Although these amendments do not completely solve our school problem, they should assist us in meeting some of our most pressing requirements. If local school districts will now exercise the options given them, every school child in Oklahoma should have a full nine months of education every year.

Our teachers, many of whom have left their profession because of niggardly salary scales, will now see the turning of the tide, a tide that will sweep the teaching profession toward stability and security.

We shall be able to see our way toward keeping our competent educators, and our teacher scarcity ultimately will be overcome.

Operation of our free textbook amendment may be retarded to some extent by legal ramifications and existing contracts. However, it is my wish to see this amendment vitalized within the shortest possible time. Legislation, which will make this program operative, must preclude waste and political manipulation. This legislation must guarantee the people of Oklahoma a square deal on textbooks.

In the field of education, we have a pressing obligation to our Negroes, who are legally and morally entitled to a fully accredited college institution. It is the duty of our state government, and it shall be my objective to see that there is minimum delay in this matter.

I shall also support a broader program of vocational education for Negroes.

The preceding administration has done much to improve our old age assistance program. It is my desire to continue this improvement.

also stated that administration of this department could be conducted without infringing upon the personal dignity of those receiving old age assistance. I expect to see the accuracy of this statement proved in the very near future.

Although the number of persons eligible for this aid will increase during the next four years, it is my belief that our maximum monthly payments can be increased to \$50, and I shall work toward that objective.

Veterans organizations are now at work on proposals for submission to the legislature. Some of these proposals are in line with the program adopted by the Democratic party in its platform. Other proposals go beyond party pledges.

I shall consider it a duty and an honor to see that every proposal submitted by veterans is given the fullest and most earnest consideration. Every reasonable preference legally at the command of the state government should be given veterans. The state should seek to implement the federal program of the Veterans Administration wherever possible and practical.

We, who stayed at home during the war just past, will never fully realize the magnitude of the sacrifices and hardships endured by our fighting men. We must not permit ourselves to forget that we enjoy our present well being because our armed services risked – and sometimes gave – everything for us.

I do not feel that we shall have done enough for our veterans if we merely provide for them to resume the civilian lives they were living when they entered service. Our country has moved ahead during the years they have been away. Our veterans are entitled to move ahead without being penalized for the years they were in service.

At this time, the Veterans Administration is seeking a site near our University Hospital on which to construct a general hospital for our war casualties. The City of Oklahoma City has agreed to sacrifice an urgently needed park in providing part of the land required.

The state government will be asked to sell the Veterans Administration four and a half acres of land now being held for development of a state medical center. I shall recommend most strongly that the state sell this land as requested.

To refuse, or to quibble about it, would delay the construction of this veterans' hospital for months and perhaps years. The veterans who will occupy its wards did not refuse or quibble in the face of danger and horror most of us have never known. Whatever we do for them now is still too little.

Our farmers, our teachers, our veterans, our laborers, our businessmen, and our people who receive old age assistance can look toward the future confidently and hopefully. And there are others who should share in our program of advancement. I refer to the mentally ill in our state hospitals.

The state-wide demand for improvement of conditions at these hospitals undoubtedly will receive full consideration and early and sympathetic action by our legislature. We cannot expect to accomplish everything that is needed this year or perhaps within the span of this administration.

In considering the requests for appropriations that will be presented to our legislature, we must be fair enough to realize that our senators and representatives are law makers-not magicians. The total amount of appropriations they can make will be limited by the amount of money available, and the amount of money available is limited, and in some cases, ear-marked, by measures, which have been directly ratified in state-wide elections.

There are certain to be sincere and honest differences of opinion as to which functions of government should receive preferential consideration.

But we can be very sure that the men and women we have elected to make our laws have a very genuine desire to do the things that will be best for our state. They must weigh the needs of the state, consider the means of meeting these needs, and make their decisions accordingly. I have confidence in their motives, their judgment and their ability.

Wherever there is a difference of opinion there is certain to be criticism. I expect to be subjected to criticism, and I expect that our legislature and our other elected officials will receive their share of it. I believe that I can speak for every state official when I say that we shall welcome constructive criticism – criticism that is given in a spirit of helpfulness – but we shall not be taken in, nor will the people of Oklahoma be taken in, by carping criticism made in a spirit of malice and designed only to destroy public confidence in honest officials.

It is appropriate that I announce at this time that this administration will report its conduct of the people's business directly to the people, not only through the press, but also by radio. A network of fourteen Oklahoma radio stations has graciously offered this administration regular use of its facilities for making these reports.

This radio time has been placed at the disposal of the governor as a matter of public service, and, as governor, I shall be most pleased to accept it.

Twice each month the administration will make reports to the people. These reports will be factual and will reflect the progress that is being made on legislation and in the administration of our state departments.

The topics I have discussed today are the same topics I discussed when I asked our people to elect me governor.

The program on which I stood for election has not been changed or forgotten. Contrary to some rather dire predictions, I stand for the same things since election that I stood for before election.

The program I advocate may seem contradictory in respect to the fact that I stand for certain tax reductions while asking improvements in governmental services. I can assure you that I have not advocated this program without taking this factor into consideration.

In many respects, the program I advocate is interlocking. A reduction in tax rates is an investment which will pay dividends in the form of new business in Oklahoma.

In attracting new business our ultimate gains will more than offset our immediate losses

I advocate a thorough-going soil research program which will enable us to sustain new farm markets.

I advocate a long-range road and highway program, with special emphasis on rural roads, so farm products will have a means of reaching their markets, thus contributing to the prosperity of our farms and our towns and cities. I advocate an improved system of public education with improvements in both urban and rural districts. And it follows that the best rural schools in the world would be useless to our farm children, if they were mud-bound and could not reach the schools. Therefore, our educational and road programs are interlocking.

I advocate development of our new lake system, and this program interlocks with our program to bring new business to Oklahoma, business that will patronize our gasoline stations, our hotels, our tourist courts, our restaurants, our drug stores, our department stores, our sporting goods dealers, our garages and our theaters.

This program for development of our lake facilities also interlocks to some extent with promotion of public health and with reduction of juvenile delinquency. It definitely interlocks with our highway program because we must have highway facilities if we are to build and hold a tourist industry.

Yes, this administration does have a program. It is a sound program, a practical program – and it ties together. The people of Oklahoma can be very sure that we have definite objectives and very real opportunities.

We must depend upon our legislature for the attainment of these objectives and for the realization of these opportunities – and to the legislature will go full and deserved credit for everything we accomplish.

I ask the full support of our legislature. I ask the full support of our state governmental departments. And, I ask the full support of our earnest and progressive people in achieving a program of enduring benefit to the state we love.

I ask the guidance of God in fulfilling the public trust that has come to me.

About Digitizing the Governors' State of the State Addresses

Section 9, Article 6 of the Constitution of Oklahoma provides as follows:

“At every session of the Legislature, and immediately upon its organization, the Governor shall communicate by message, delivered to joint session of the two houses, upon the condition of the State; and shall recommend such matters to the Legislature as he shall judge expedient.”

From statehood in 1907 to present, the state of the state addresses of Oklahoma's Governors have been recorded in pamphlets, booklets, and Senate Journals. One could not foresee the toll that time would take on the earliest of these documents. When these items first arrived at the Oklahoma State Archives, the leather bindings had dried considerably, cracking the spines significantly. Due to the acidity in the paper, many pages have darkened with age. Some of the more brittle pamphlets crumble at the slightest touch.

Thus when we decided to digitize these materials, we faced two challenges: the safety of the original documents and ease of viewing/reading for patrons. Our primary objective was that the unique and historic qualities of the documents should be reflected in the website. However, older fonts would not digitize clearly when scanned and even using a flatbed scanner could cause the bindings to worsen. An image of each page would increase download time considerably and any hand-written remarks or crooked pages could be lost. We decided to retype each document with every period, comma, and misspelled word to maintain the integrity of the document while placing some unique images of the documents online. Patrons can download the addresses quicker and view them clearer as well as save, print, and zoom with the Adobe Acrobat Reader. We have learned much from our efforts and we hope that our patrons are better served in their research on the state of the state addresses of Oklahoma's Governors.