

**State of the State
Governor Roy Turner
January 2, 1951**

*Mr. Lieutenant Governor,
Mr. President of the Senate,
Mr. Speaker of the House, and
Members of the Joint Session:*

In compliance with the duty imposed upon me by our State Constitution, I bring you this report on the condition of the state.

Detailed reports have been filed by state departments with both houses of the legislature.

These reports – and the one I am about to make – reflect four years of progress and achievement for Oklahoma. This progress and this achievement have been possible only because our Twenty-first and Twenty-second Legislatures – and the extraordinary session of the Twenty-second Legislature – rendered outstanding public service in the performance of their constitutional duties.

I am deeply grateful for the consideration and support accorded me by the legislatures convening during my term of office. I am also grateful for the hard work and unstinting co-operation I have received from other elected state officials and from appointive officials.

All who have worked so hard, so long, and so well in the public interest deserve recognition and credit for our state's accomplishments.

BUDGET OFFICE

There is a balance of \$508,000, which is available to the Twenty-third Legislature to meet emergency needs. It is estimated that by June 30, 1951, the current general revenue surplus will be approximately \$12,000,000., which will be available for appropriation by the legislature in meeting expenditures for the next biennium.

The Twenty-first legislature enacted the Budget Control Law, which created in the Executive Department the Division of Accounts and the Division of the Budget. The purpose of this legislation was two-fold:

1. To enable the chief executive to exercise allotment control over the budget after it had been adopted by the legislature, in compliance with the budget balancing amendment of 1941.
2. To provide an executive budget system which would be correlated with the accounting function to insure more adequate preparation of the budget to be presented to the legislature, as well as its execution after legislative approval.

The accounting division has established one of the most complete and modern budgetary accounting systems in the nation and has current and accurate records reflecting the State's resources, expenditures and obligations.

CORPORATION COMMISSION

Of far reaching effect is a recent United States Supreme Court decision affirming the authority of our corporation commission to fix prices of natural gas at the well head as a means of preventing waste and protecting correlative rights.

The corporation commission order, fixing the price of natural gas at seven cents per thousand cubic feet in the Guymon-Hugoton field, was made effective on January 1, 1947. As a result of the order, Texas County royalty owners will receive approximately \$200,000 in additional payments, covering the four-year period during which the case has been in litigation.

Through its gross production tax, the state is due to receive approximately \$800,000 for the same period. This is over and above the state's estimated \$12,000,000 surplus previously mentioned.

Over the life of the Guymon-Hugoton field, it is estimated that the decision will add approximately \$200,000,000 to the value of natural gas produced there. Of this amount, Texas County royalty owners would receive one-eighth, or \$25,000,000 and additional state revenue would total approximately \$10,000,000.

The application of this decision in Oklahoma gas field will be an important factor in state financing.

COMMON SCHOOL EDUCATION

Two outstanding chapters in common school education were written by the Twenty-first and Twenty-second Legislatures. The Twenty-first pruned 1100 dead school districts from the administrative structure, and created the Legislative Council and the Interim Committee on School Finance. The Council and the Committee, through combined and cooperative efforts, presented their studies and reports to the Twenty-second session which enacted into law a complete School Code.

The Oklahoma School Code is so well written and has been so favorably accepted by the people of our state, that very few court interpretations have been necessary and no case to date has been brought before the Supreme Court.

In 1946 there were more than 4400 school districts in the state, 1100 of these were not maintaining any home school. By annexation and consolidation of school districts the number has been reduced to approximately 2100, and a more equitable system of school financing has been achieved.

School districts not providing twelve years of instruction for pupils within the district are now required to make more nearly the same effort required of districts maintaining high schools, in order to provide twelve years of instruction for the pupils within their district.

The appropriation for State Aid was increased from \$15,600,000. for 1946-47 to \$26,000,000 for the fiscal year 1949-50, and \$24,000,000 for the fiscal year 1950-51. The salaries of the teachers in the schools of the State receiving State Aid have been increased approximately \$800 annually.

There have been substantial increases in the amounts provided for maintenance and transportation. Basic Aid has been increased from \$7.50 to \$12.50 per pupil.

A Revolving Fund of \$200,000 was created for the purchase of school buses by the State, to be rented to school districts unable to provide needed transportation equipment. All school districts are required to purchase their transportation equipment from an approved list and not to exceed prices approved by the State Board of Education.

Appropriations were made for the purchase of Audio-Visual Aids, for special education of handicapped children, and tuition for orphaned children.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Our colleges and universities have been hard pressed to meet student demands following World War II. Enrollments in our state-supported institutions have grown tremendously, from 19,000 students in 1946, to approximately 40,000 in recent totals. Our veterans have been served well. Not one, who qualified on the college level, was refused facilities as was the case in some states.

During the post-war emergency, and during the period of very high enrollments, the student living facilities were temporary dormitories acquired from war surplus sources.

Thereafter, self-liquidating bonds were issued, at no expense to the state, to provide permanent dormitories and other greatly needed facilities.

Emergency repairs and construction needs of college and universities are now being met through appropriations from the \$36,000,000 bond program approved in 1949.

Standards of our institutions of higher learning are at their highest level. Since 1946, ten of our institutions, including Langston University, have been added to the accredited list of the North Central Association, the recognized accrediting agency for this area of the United States. Our school of medicine is now classified as a Class "A" institution by the American Medical Association.

Medical School facilities have been expanded to accomodate a class of 80 this year compared to 54 in the 1946-47 term. The facilities will accomodate 100 new students for the next fall term.

TEACHER'S RETIREMENT

The Teachers' Retirement System was seven years old on June 30, 1950. Its membership has grown to more than 25,000. There are 719 retired members receiving monthly payments.

During this administration the legislature has improved the monthly retirement benefit by placing a floor under the prior service payment, which is based on teaching service rendered in the state before the establishment of the system. A disability benefit was also provided for members who become permanently incapacitated.

An immediate problem of the Retirement System, however, is actuarial solvency. Legislative study of this problem is desirable.

FREE TEXTBOOKS

Oklahoma's present investment in the free textbook program stands at \$2,333,000. The program will not be considered complete until free texts are available through twelve grades. Additional appropriations will be necessary to achieve this end.

As it stands now, the program is about two-thirds complete. In view of the fact that no financing method was provided in the constitutional amendment providing for free texts, we have made good progress in carrying out the program.

There has been some public misunderstanding of the program based upon the fact that school supplies are not included in the distribution of free texts. By supplies, I mean such items as pencils, pens, ink, tablets, paper and consumable books.

The only item included in the free textbook program are basic texts. Some school districts now charge a fee through which supplies are furnished at a saving to patrons.

The state buys school texts at wholesale or the lowest cost anywhere in the United States. After including administrative costs, a saving of approximately 17 percent of the retail price is made.

The program is designed ultimately to provide free texts through twelve grades at a cost of approximately \$2.25 per pupil. Three major factors will contribute to this economy:

First, wholesale purchasing at prices as low as those quoted to any state in the union.

Second, adoption of texts for a period of six years so that books will be used until they are worn out.

Third, operation of a bindery for free textbooks at the state penitentiary so that expensive texts can be rebound at a minimum cost when necessary as is now provided for by law.

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

During the years 1947-1950, Oklahoma's National Guard consisting mainly of units of the world famed 45th Division, was undergoing a rigid organization and training program.

In addition to the units already organized a Heavy Tank Battalion and an Anti-Aircraft Battalion were federally recognized to add overall strength to the Division.

In recognition of the highly advanced organization and training of the 45th Division, the Division was, as in 1940, again one of the first four National Guard Divisions of the United States called upon for induction into the federal military service. The Division was inducted into federal service September 1, 1950, with station at Camp Polk, Louisiana. Composition of the Division at the time of induction was 114 Divisional Units.

The 143rd Engine Treadway Bridge Company, a Non-Divisional Unit of the Oklahoma National Guard was inducted into Federal Service September 20, 1950. A portion of the Oklahoma National Guard consisting of the 125th Fighter Squadron, the 125th Utility Flight, the 125th Weather Station, Detachment "A" 237th Air Service Group, Headquarters Detachment 137th Fighter Group was inducted into Federal Service October 10, 1950.

And, an additional indication that the world situation is affecting Oklahoma, authorization has been granted the state to organize the 124th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron and the 180th Military Police Battalion.

During the period 1947-1950 fifty-four state owned armories and numerous leased buildings were maintained. All state owned armories, hangars and other military property are being properly cared for and kept in readiness, against the time when the National Guard units are returned to state duty.

ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

For nearly four years the Department of Highways has operated under an eight-member highway commission, created by House Bill 1 of the Twenty-first Legislature. Highway commissioners receive no salaries and serve staggered terms. Each of our present congressional districts is represented. The commission programs all construction and direct the allocation of road and highways funds.

The record plainly shows that our eight-member highway commission has provided Oklahoma with more and better roads than any preceding commission. Furthermore, allocations of funds have been made equitably throughout the state.

General public satisfaction with work of the commission was forcefully demonstrated in our last general election by the overwhelming defeat of a proposed constitutional amendment, which would have changed the system.

The highway commission has undertaken and carried out the largest and most progressive highway improvement program in the history of our state. Furthermore, the first supplement of the 1951 program calls for a record-breaking \$53,000,000 worth of improvements.

Construction has been completed on more than \$21,000,000 worth of contracts let by the preceding commission.

Construction has been completed on more than \$72,000,000 worth of projects on highways and farm-to-market roads under contracts let by our present commission.

As of November 30, 1950, the commission had more than \$35,000,000 worth of projects under construction.

During the last four years, improvements have been made on 3,199 miles of roads on the state system.

Three hundred eighty-nine new bridges have been built, and 126 bridges have been reconstructed.

Nearly \$60,000,000 has been used in the construction of 2,465 miles of high type paving, according to first class, permanent standards and under specifications equal to, or better than, the national standards established by the American Association of State Highway Officials. Oklahoma now is well ahead of the national average in all phases of the Federal Road Program and constantly is pulling further ahead.

Nearly \$19,000,000 has been used on farm-to-market projects, providing 2,157 miles of roads. Of this total, 274 miles were paved, and 1,769 miles were graveled. The program includes 281 new bridges and 31 reconstructed bridges.

House Bill 35, passed by the Twenty-second Legislature, has had a most vital and stimulating effect upon the maintenance of our 10,000 miles of State highways. This bill establishes axle load limits for trucks and provides stiff penalties for violators.

The bill has accomplished a most substantial reduction in the number of illegally weighted trucks and consequently has reduced highway maintenance costs. In affecting this reduction, the bill has made more funds available for allocation to new construction – funds which otherwise would have gone to maintenance.

Enforcement of such a law as House Bill 35 is difficult, requiring proper recognition of hardship cases in minor deviations. However, the law is good. Oklahoma needs it, if we are to provide adequate maintenance for our highways.

THE TURNPIKE

The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority – created by the Twenty-first Legislature and extended by the Twenty-second has completed financing and has started construction on the turnpike, which will provide Oklahoma with one of the most modern and one of the safest highways in America.

The project has been privately financed by sale of bonds to private investors. These bonds do not constitute a lien against the state. Bonds and interest must be paid, and the turnpike must be maintained and operated, with funds derived from tolls charged turnpike users.

Barring unforeseen delays, the turnpike should be open to the public sometime in 1952.

SCHOOL LAND COMMISSION

The primary objectives of this Department have been to preserve and increase permanent school funds and public building funds; to operate as economically as possible without jeopardizing efficiency and to realize the greatest possible monetary return from bond investments and other revenue producing sources without imperiling, through injudicious investments, the funds belonging to the youth of Oklahoma.

Departmental assets have increased approximately \$16,000,000 to a new high of more than \$84,000,000; bond holdings increased to almost \$44,000,000; a gain of more than \$12,000,000 over 1946; more than \$7,000,000 was distributed to state schools and colleges; and \$650,000 was transferred to the State Treasury to be used in the erection and maintenance of public buildings. The School Land Department has also saved our agricultural land owners many thousands of dollars through its farm loan plan, closing 1350 loans, for a total of more than \$3,000,000 during the last four years.

Departmental income from oil and gas royalties and bonuses during the four year period beginning July 1, 1946, has amounted to almost five and one-half million dollars. These receipts have been credited as provided by law, to permanent school funds and invested in government, state and county bonds, and in first mortgage farm loans. Earnings have been apportioned to our schools.

MENTAL HOSPITALS

In September, 1949, a \$36,000,000 building bond issue was approved by vote of the people. It was provided that these bonds would be paid off by using a portion of our present cigarette tax for that purpose. At the extraordinary session of the Twenty-second Legislature, provision was made for the purchase of the bonds by the State Treasurer, a procedure which eliminated all interest costs – estimated at \$9,000,000.

The bonds were voted for modernization and new construction at all institutions, but the greatest need for building improvements was recognized as existing at our mental hospitals.

Forty-one institutions have shared in allocations made by the legislature, but by far the greatest proportionate share has gone to our six mental hospitals, which received \$15,775,000 of the total.

In addition to this, federal aid on mental hospital projects will exceed \$2,600,000. There also is an allocation of \$500,000 to the board of regents for higher education for a neuro-psychiatric ward at the state medical center – a project which is a definite part of our revitalization mental health program. Federal aid on this project amounts to more than \$800,000, of which approximately half is to match bond funds.

Nearly all construction contracts for mental hospital improvements have been let, and most of the work will be completed during the coming year.

The projects will relieve over-crowded, hazardous and unhealthful conditions at these institutions; will provide employee housing, which should enable the state to obtain services of skilled, technical personnel for which no housing now exists, and will provide many patients with treatment rather than mere custodial care.

It is significant that Oklahoma has been acclaimed before the National Committee for Mental Hygiene as instituting the greatest mental hygiene reform movement in the nation.

This acclaim was voiced before the bonds were voted and was based upon the establishment of our mental hygiene board and upon liberalized legislative appropriations for operation of our mental hospitals.

In connection with the bonds, I shall point out that total federal aid on hospital and other public health projects has been set at more than \$4,000,000. The funds will supplement the \$36,000,000 voted by the people, and will bring the total building improvement program to more than \$40,000,000.

Of this total, more than \$23,000,000 (including federal aid) has been appropriated for institutions under jurisdiction of the State Board of Affairs, the remainder having been appropriated for institutions of higher education.

There is an unappropriated balance of \$141,325 in the bond fund. An appropriation of \$200,000 has been made for the unoccupied institution at Helena, but the present board of affairs has not contemplated the re-opening of that institution and has not contracted any bond funds allocated to it.

PENAL AND CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Penal reforms instituted during the last four years have done much to overcome the effects of unfavorable national publicity pertaining to our penitentiary.

We have eliminated the practice of permitting trusties to roam outside prison walls without guards.

Promiscuous leaves of absence for prisoners have been abolished.

A complete, daily, running inventory of expendable prison property is maintained, and prison canteen accounts are audited daily.

A classification system has been adopted, through which young first offenders are relieved from association with hardened and habitual criminals.

Vocational training for prisoners has been instituted as a means of rehabilitating prisoners and preparing them for occupations after their release.

The prison at Granite has been converted into a reform school, emphasizing training rather than punishment. Youthful offenders confined there go to school and upon completion of regular course receive highschool diplomas.

The boys training school has been removed from Helena to Stringtown, where better facilities for training exist. The Helena institution is now identified as an annex to the Enid State school but is still unoccupied.

The Girls Training School at Tecumseh has instituted an improved system of vocational training, and the physical properties of the school have been greatly improved.

The overall purpose of our penal and correctional system has been revised to emphasize teaching and rehabilitation rather than harsh confinement and punishment.

CLEMENCY

Clemency abuses have been abolished, and there has been no hint of scandal attached to clemency action during the last four years.

Under the system now followed by our Pardon and Parole Board, every prisoner serving a term in our penal institutions has a clemency hearing when one-third of his sentence has been served.

Those serving life terms are granted hearings after serving fifteen years of their sentences. This action is automatic and there is no exception or discrimination.

The system has had a salutary effect upon prison morale, but more important, it has resulted in a very high percentage of successful clemencies.

Results of the system have brought acclaim to Oklahoma from the convention of the National Probation and Parole Association as well as from federal prison officials.

AGRICULTURE

I shall not attempt to report on the voluminous legislation enacted by the Twenty-first and Twenty-second Legislatures in behalf of agriculture. I shall merely say that more constructive legislation in this field was passed by these two sessions than by any other two legislatures in the history of Oklahoma.

I shall point out, however, that this legislation provided for vastly expanded training program in vocational agriculture, a program involving the doubling of F.F.A., and 4-H Club activities.

The boys and girls participating in these programs already have justified the action by continuing their triumphs in national competition and by continuing to raise the standards of Oklahoma farming and stock raising.

Since 1946 F.F.A. chapters have increased from 165 to 317, and membership has increased from 8,000 to 14,000.

Since 1946, 4-H Clubs have increased from 1,812 to 2,214, and membership has increased from 53,000 to 77,000. Club members have doubled their winnings in national competition during the last four years.

SOIL CONSERVATION

On January 8, 1947, there were 69 Soil Conservation Districts in Oklahoma, 35,000 Oklahoma farmers had conservation programs on their farms, and 85 percent of the state was in Soil Conservation Districts.

Now, there are 83 Soil Conservation Districts in operation with 65,000 farms practicing conservation measures, and more than 98 percent of the state is in Soil Conservation Districts.

During the past four years, 32,000 miles of terracing have been constructed on farms in Oklahoma. During the same time, 145,000 farm and ranch ponds have been constructed.

The above accomplishments are great, but to my way of thinking the greatest accomplishment made by Soil Conservation Districts during the last four years was the seeding back to grass of 527,000 acres of crop land that had become so eroded that it was no longer worthy of farming.

Very little grass seeding had been done prior to 1947. The success in the planting of grass seed was made possible by state apportionment of funds to soil conservation districts. These funds provided special grass drills and planters.

Conservation Districts obtained seed by harvesting native grass. They did such a good job that Oklahoma established a world record on the harvesting of native grass seed in 1948 when more than three million pounds were harvested. During the four years 6,022,731 pound of native grass seed have been harvested in Oklahoma; more than was harvested in the entire world prior to 1947.

Soil erosion control features are included in all new construction projects for our highway system.

GAME AND FISH COMMISSION

Fishing is a \$60,000,000 industry in Oklahoma. Because of increased hunting and fishing license fees provided by the Twenty-second Legislature the Game and Fish Department's income now approximately of \$1,300,000 annually.

The Department now holds titles to 148,000 acres in 26 tracts compared to 42,700 acres two years ago. Very little of the land acquired came off the tax rolls. It will be used for game management and public hunting development.

Three and one-half million game and fish are released annually in Oklahoma waters. The state game farm produced 140,000 quail and 13,000 pheasants for stocking Oklahoma hunting fields in 1949 and 1950, and hunters have enjoyed their first pheasant seasons in many years.

Increased production at our state game farm and fish hatcheries, stricter enforcement of our game hunting laws, research, and wider dissemination of conservation education and publicity have been maintained to promote public interest in wildlife resources.

PLANNING AND RESOURCES BOARD

The Oklahoma Planning and Resources Board has been charged with the responsibility of a national advertising campaign to point out industrial advantages offered by Oklahoma. The campaign not only has received national recognition for its quality, but already is paying dividends in the form of new industries. Employment in manufacturing is at the highest peak since our post-war economy began.

An intensified education program has resulted in the best relationship that has ever existed among industrialists and operators of oil producing properties concerned with keeping our rivers, lakes, streams and underground water resources free from pollution.

The state has entered into a compact with New Mexico and Texas regarding the waters of the Canadian River. The compact will become binding when it shall have been ratified by the Legislatures of each state and approved by the Congress of the United States.

Underway is the Red, Arkansas and White River Basin Survey which is an important step toward a long range and permanent plan designed to obtain maximum development of our soil and water resources.

The Division of Forestry has expanded its fire protection activities and 3,418,000 acres of forest land now receive protection from fire. This is 1,348,000 acres more than was protected four years ago. The Division is also cooperating with eighty-seven volunteer fire fighting clubs as compared with only four in 1946.

Four and one-half million forest tree seedlings have been produced and distributed to farmers and timberland owners in the seventy-seven counties.

Two Farm Forestry projects have been established to give assistance in tree planting and management.

Legislative appropriations and self-liquidating bonds have been used for the improvement of recreational facilities at all state parks.

The largest single project – financed with \$800,000 in self-liquidating bonds, which do not constitute a lien against the state – is Lake Murray Lodge. This installation, together with its ultra-modern cabins, gives Oklahoma one of the finest projects of its kind in the United States.

PUBLIC HEALTH

The Twenty-first and Twenty-second Legislatures enacted much constructive public health legislation. These laws included: a requirement for the enrichment of flour, bread and rolls by the addition of certain vitamins; provisions for the rehabilitation of persons afflicted with spastic paralysis, and provision for sanitary conditions in our public bathing pools.

The Twenty-second Legislature set up minimum standards in the production and sale of milk and milk products.

During the last four years, the incidence of and deaths attributable to preventable diseases such as typhoid fever, diphtheria, malaria and tuberculosis have continued their dramatic decline. Maternal and infant death rates have declined.

Approximately 1,350 hospital beds have been added in state hospitals, making 3,400 beds available for general and specialized patients.

These hospitals are sharing the \$36,000,000 building program.

In line with our present national emergency, the State Department of Health has been charged with the responsibility for developing plans and procedures to provide for medical services for civil defense. Work is being done in preparing to reduce fatalities should any point in our state be attacked.

PUBLIC WELFARE

Four years ago there were 96,421 recipients of old age assistance. The rolls now carry 99,982. Maximum grants have increased 29 percent – from \$45.00 to \$58.00 monthly. Thirty-seven percent receive more than \$50.00 maximum set by the federal government.

In December, 1947, 23,443 families received aid for 57,244 dependent children.

The average allotment per family amounted to \$35.92 with \$24.00 for the first child and \$15.00 for each additional child.

There are now 21,483 families receiving aid for 55,102 children. The average allotment per family has increased from \$35.92 to \$51.56. Maximum payments now amount to \$27.00 for the first child and \$18.00 for additional children.

In December, 1946, there were 2,214 recipients of Aid to the Blind. The average grant was \$42.86 monthly.

There are now 2,708 recipients who average \$47.39 monthly. Forty-four percent receive more than the fifty dollar maximum set by the federal government.

The State Department of Public Welfare has set up administrative machinery for handling social security for state employees, and for employees of 74 counties, 139 municipalities, and four county hospitals. This program became effective as of yesterday.

The State Board of Public Welfare, with a reduced number of employees, is now serving more than twice as many destitute and unemployable persons as were being aided prior to January, 1947. The average monthly payment made prior to 1947 was \$9.56. The average payment now is \$13.39.

This department has done a creditable job in handling the \$3,000,000 worth of surplus commodity food items donated by the federal government and utilized by the schools and institutions of the state.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

The strength of the Highway Patrol has been increased by approximately 100 men. Due to this and to the enactment of Act 4 and part of Act 5 of the Uniform Traffic Code, Oklahoma is currently among only four states in the nation which have succeeded in reducing their 1950 traffic tolls under those for 1949.

The patrol placed first in Group 3 in traffic law enforcement in 1949 and was granted the Superior Award in High School Driver Education in 1950. The increase in driver license examiner personnel and installation of a driver improvement section have served to strengthen the driver license division's control over drivers.

The division was awarded first place in the midwestern group in 1949 and is now acknowledged by national safety experts to be the leader in its field.

New patrol headquarters have been built at McAlester and Durant at no cost to the state, and headquarters at Lawton and Enid have been enlarged. The department now is beginning to change its communications system from AM to FM.

The Safety Responsibility Law is meeting a great need for requiring motorists to demonstrate their financial responsibility when involved in motor vehicles accidents by providing compensation for those suffering injury of damage to property and by removing reckless and financially irresponsible drivers from the highways.

SURPLUS PROPERTY AGENCY

Operating with a revolving fund of \$200,000, appropriated by the Twenty-first Legislature (and reduced to \$100,000 by the Twenty-second Legislature) the State Surplus Property Agency has acquired buildings and other property valued at more than \$22,000,000.

This property has been allocated to 18 state institutions of higher education, to 638 highschools, and to 11 other state institutions.

At the end of the first year, June 30, 1950, the balance in the revolving fund was nearly \$140,000.

Oklahoma has been cited for having the best warehouse arrangement of any of the five states in the Fourth Army area and for excelling in the business-like manner in which records are kept and in which disposition of property is made.

INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION

The State Industrial Commission composed of a staff of five Commissioners and seventeen employees has had a tremendous work load. As of December 1, 1950, more than 68,000 notices of injuries and more than 30,000 claims have been filed. More than 34,600 orders have been entered by the Commission of which 18,000 required the taking of testimony before the Commission.

During the past three years and eleven months, a total of more than \$17,000,000 has been paid to claimants pursuant to orders by the Commission.

Individual Commissioners have held 495 dockets in 70 court towns outside Oklahoma City. A quorum of three Commissioners is in attendance at the Capitol at all times.

BANK COMMISSIONER

This Department supervises one hundred eighty-five State banks, two trust companies, twenty-nine state chartered building and loan associations, one hundred fourteen small loan licensees and forty-one credit unions.

Regular and special examinations are periodically made of these businesses. Although operating with a limited complement of personnel, economies have been effected during the past four years and fees collected amount to within five thousand dollars of the annual state appropriation.

GRAND RIVER DAM AUTHORITY

Addition of the steam plant to hydro-electric facilities of the Grand River Dam Authority will mean much to the industrial growth of Oklahoma. Now concentrated there are hydro-electric power firmed up by steam, almost unlimited quantities of both raw and treated water, process steam, plant sites, trackage, fire protection and sanitation facilities.

Before acquisition of the steam unit GRDA's firm energy production amounted to 180,000,000 kilowatt hours annually. It is now more than \$400,000,000 kilowatt hours.

INTERSTATE OIL COMPACT COMMISSION

During the past four years, the membership of the Interstate Oil Compact Commission has grown from 17 member states to 20 member states and one associate member. The work of the Commission has been outstanding in furthering the principles of oil and gas conservation. Oklahoma has provided the headquarters office of the Commission with new office space and furniture.

One of the outstanding accomplishments in the Commission was the adoption of a form of oil and gas conservation law which is now being considered by officials in several states where conservation statutes have not been adopted.

It has been my honor and privilege to serve as Chairman of the Commission during 1950.

STATE INSURANCE BOARD AND COMMISSION

Substantial progress has been made in the enactment of needed insurance legislation and in the administration of regulatory laws by the State Insurance Board and the Insurance Commissioner. An Accident and Health Code now provides protection to persons buying accident and health insurance. A new life insurance law permits the use of a modern mortality table. A fire and casualty rating law now provides for a more effective control of rates charged insurance buyers.

During the last four years the State Insurance Board has saved the insurance buying public several millions of dollars reducing the rates on workmen's compensation, automobile liability, automobile physical damage, general liability and residence fire insurance.

Particular attention is called to an approximate 16 percent reduction in workmen's compensation rates even though benefits to insured employees were substantially increased and are now generally higher than in adjoining states.

WHITAKER STATE HOME

Extensive improvements have been made at the Whitaker State Home for orphans at Pryor, not only in the physical plant of the institution, but also in the general care and curriculum provided for the children.

The construction of a new and very modern nursery building was one of the first improvements undertaken. Very extensive building improvements are now under way as a part of the bond program approved in 1949.

The home's vocational training program has been greatly expanded, and young exhibitors from the orphanage are now winning prizes at leading stock shows of the nation.

INSTITUTIONAL FARMS

Farms at our state institutions are now paying a higher return than ever before. Land, buildings, equipment and livestock on these farms are valued at approximately \$3,000,000.

The farms have been showing a net return of approximately \$600,000 a year. This goes toward the reduction of operating costs at our institutions. This amount of money would have to be appropriated for institutional operations – over and above what is now appropriated – if the farms were not producing.

TAX COMMISSION

The tax commission has handled the heaviest volume of business in its history and at the lowest proportionate cost in history.

During the fiscal year 1949-50, collections by the commission totaled nearly \$150,000,000, which represented 86.84 percent of all collections by the state, and was nearly \$40,000,000 more than collections made by the commission during the fiscal year 1946-47.

During the four-year period administrative cost decreased from 1.3 percent to 1.2 percent, and revenue produced per dollar of expense rose from \$76.70 to \$81.79.

CONCLUSION

New services, such as free textbooks, a national advertising campaign, and others – plus expansion and improvement of existing services – cost money. We have been fortunate in having sufficient funds with which to carry out our program.

I would like to point out and emphasize the fact, however, that we have not resorted to tax rate increases in order to balance our expanded budget. In this respect, Oklahoma is unique among all the states in the nation.

While all other states have had at least one round of tax rate increases – and many of them have had two or three – Oklahoma has financed the greatest program of governmental advancement in its history and has reduced tax rates at the same time.

It is true that our tax rates now raise more revenue than they did four years ago. This is due to inflationary factors which have caused proportionate increases in state operating expense. It is also true that other states have had revenue gains based on the same factors, but still have found it necessary to raise tax rates.

Part of Oklahoma's financial problem has been solved by the closing of tax loopholes and a general curtailment of tax evasion.

Oklahoma has had an unprecedented era of progress and achievement – both in government and in economic development.

We have obtained many new industries, and more are on the way. After 15 years of population losses, we have reversed the downward trend, and – for the last five years – the trend has been upward. Our people now have a higher percentage of the national wealth than ever before.

We have developed a sense of state pride, a competitive spirit, which will strengthen and stimulate us in our future progress.

Again I wish to emphasize the fact that this report on the state of the state would not have been possible without the whole-hearted teamwork of all state officials – our legislatures, our

elected officials, and our appointive officials, many of whom have served well and faithfully on a basis of public service and at a very genuine personal sacrifice.

To this, the Twenty-third Oklahoma Legislature, I wish to extend my very best wishes for a most successful and constructive session. It is my sincere hope that the incoming governor will receive from you the same kind of teamwork and support that the Twenty-first and Twenty-second Legislatures accorded me.

What has been done in our short 43-year span of statehood is but a prelude to a greater destiny for our state – a destiny made bright by our position in the heart of America's rich and dynamic Magic Circle. We have but to utilize our God-given intelligence in the development of our God-given resources to realize this greater destiny.

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.