

State of the State
Governor Roy Turner
March 6, 1951

MR. LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR,
MR. PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
MR. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AND MEMBERS OF THE JOINT SESSION

In appearing before you for the second time during this session, I want to make clear that my reason for being here is one of choice rather than of necessity. I come not to criticize, but rather to praise and commend your Honorable Bodies for the fine progress that you have made in the discharge of your duties up to the present time.

Without intending to exclude any of your other member committees from the bountiful praise which is due them, I want to pay special tribute to the committees on appropriations and revenue and taxation in both the Senate and the House. These committees have been confronted with the herculean task of undertaking to apportion the resources of the State in an equitable manner among departments, groups and institutions, nearly all of whom are making requests for demands which, if granted, would far exceed that which is available to appease them.

Please pardon my diversion from the seriousness of the subject to give to you in a lighter vein an illustration of what you are confronted with.

“During one of the war years 15 people gathered at an Oklahoma City hotel for a business luncheon. There was a shortage of everything, food, clothing, materials and help, and in this particular case a specific shortage of silver. A middle-aged untrained lady had been assigned to wait on this luncheon party. She served these people the best she knew how the 15 plate lunches and a like number of cups of coffee. There also were 15 knives, forks and spoons.

When all had finished their plates the waitress carried away the empty plates, knives and forks, leaving only the cups and saucers and spoons. After clearing the table, she served each person with a slice of brick ice cream. When the last dessert had been served, she noticed that no one started to eat and she hesitatingly asked, “Was there anything wrong.” When informed that each person was waiting for a fork with which to eat the ice cream she hurried to the kitchen, returning directly with the 15 forks from the luncheon plates, unwashed, in her hands and she laid them in a neat pile on the table. When she had finished she looked at the diners and said, “We have no other silver; you will just have to work it out among yourselves.” Of course the diners understood and ate the ice cream with what they had left – the coffee spoons.”

I am hoping that by this time all of the tax spending agencies of this State have begun to understand that except for that which lays upon the table and for that which they can see with their own eyes, we have no other silver and no place to get any other silver if we are going to remain consistent to our promises and to our pledges to the tax-payers of Oklahoma.

One has but to look at the groups haunting these corridors, or to listen at the meetings of your committees to know and understand of the tremendous pressure being exerted by groups who, I regret to say, permit their selfish desires to prompt them to make demands not within your power to grant.

In holding the line and in carrying out the wishes and demands of 645,000 Oklahoma voters who voted on November 7th for no new or increased State taxes, you have made admirable progress, and I want to compliment you individually and collectively for that

beginning. These things were directed to your attention in both of my previous messages, and I now reiterate and repeat, we must stay within the budget, and we cannot retain our personal and political self-respect if we permit the imposition of new taxes or raise taxes upon the shoulders of an already over-burdened public.

I told you in my first message that it would be my purpose to make the voice of Mr. Tax Payer articulate in this State House. I have not receded from that position, and Mr. Tax Payer has thus far shown his gratitude in multiplied thousands of letters that have crossed my desk indorsing and commending this stand in his behalf. The voice of the public press can be heard from the farther most corners of the State speaking in clarion tones in behalf of this program. Thoughtful people from all walks of life, the plain folks of Oklahoma are grateful now to you and me for the progress we have made and we must not let them down.

At the outset I sought with what I deemed was forceful language to impress upon you the fact that I was not urging the passage of a host of new laws. I deemed it unnecessary then, and I deem it unnecessary now. My recommendations of specific legislation, as you know, have been few and far between. I am satisfied that the statutory enactments in Oklahoma measure reasonably well with the legislative standards of other States, and the critical condition of National affairs and the distressed state of the public mind is in no condition to justify radical changes or new innovations in our governmental system. Again I emphatically repeat, the fewer laws this session finds it necessary to pass the better off the State of Oklahoma will be.

The pattern of my program was fully stated in the messages I have heretofore delivered. I have not sought to hand you stereotyped copies of individual Bills and say to you, "Here, make this the law, because it is my will." In carrying out the ideas, I have sought and I still seek to invoke and be guided by legislative discretion. There are a few specific items and matters to which I am going to make more or less detailed reference in this message. The first among them is:

APPROPRIATIONS

To be able to keep within our estimated income and revenues it seems to me that no bills carrying an appropriation should be passed within either House until the same have been referred to and cleared by the committees on appropriations, and even then I do not think that separate and independent appropriation measures should be passed and sent to my office until your general appropriation bills have been finally and definitely agreed upon.

I have noted a tendency to pass bills for a few thousand dollars here and a few thousand there, and I have begun to worry that these bites out of the State revenues are going to finally add up to a much greater figure than is apparent to the casual observer. As we enact these bills, somebody has to stand by with an adding machine to tell us when we have reached the limit beyond which we cannot go. I am sure that you will lend your cooperation for this purpose. Let me repeat here that I do not look with favor upon special appropriations and particularly those which would have for their purpose the addition of branches or facilities to the State government or its institutions which will constitute an added and recurring expense in the years to come. Our State expenditures have reached the saturation point from which point at this time they have no place to go except down. We are now bumping our heads against the ceiling of Oklahoma's financial structure.

While on the subject of appropriations, I think we should pay some attention to the requests being made by all our institutions and departments.

The Legislature with my approval has started an investigation, and I hope it is a thorough one, to inquire into the operation of the executive branch of the Government, with a view to curtailing employees, effecting economies, and to make consolidations wherever practical. In order that we may be permitted from an unbiased point of view, I am going to suggest to the leaders in the Legislature that they examine minutely the manner in which the money appropriated for all our institutions and departments is being expended. So much of this money is appropriated in lump sums, that the public never knows exactly what use is made of the money. They are, of course, entitled to know and I am penetrated with a conviction that this field should be explored to the utmost, believing that many economies and curtailments can really be accomplished without impairing the efficiency of these institutions.

Of course, if, upon complete investigation, we find that this cannot be done, or if the amount of good that can be accomplished is insufficient, and that the efficiency of all the institutions may be to some degree impaired, then as a *last* resort, it may become necessary to consider the necessity for operating some of our institutions on a full scale basis and suspending and closing others during the present national crisis. It is conceded by everybody that a great shrinkage is taking place in the student bodies of schools, for example, due to the demands of the national defense. Can we justify, in the eyes of the taxpayers, the maintenance of full scale operating staffs in all institutions, when our student bodies have become so depleted that there is only enough for a few institutions? These are serious questions and should be given the most serious consideration. When the crisis is removed, the institutions could then be reopened on a full scale basis. I now suggest that you look into the problems of all institutions and departments and give me the benefit of your best judgment.

COMMON SCHOOLS

I have frequently declared my strong adherence to a better and a stronger educational policy in the State of Oklahoma. The citizens of the future are depending upon us today. We have done well by them thus far, and can in the years to come I am sure do better. It never has been, and it never will be my policy to retard the advancement of education. Momentarily, however, it is apparent to me, to you, and to everyone else that we have reached the limit of our ability to finance the common school program from a State level, and that other factors must be invoked to do as much as can be done under present economic conditions to eliminate whatever distress exists.

Much has been accomplished through re-organizations and much more can be accomplished by this process. Between the years 1946 and 1950 the number of school districts were reduced from 4,450 to 2,177 as of September 1, 1950.

During the school year 1949 and 1950 there were 123 elementary school districts in the State with an average of less than 13 pupils in daily attendance. These schools have been declared isolated and were not annexed to other districts, but they should be. There were 21 school districts maintaining a high school with an average daily attendance of less than 25 in grade 9 to 12, and were 182 high school districts with an average daily attendance of 25 to 49 inclusive, and 237 with an average daily attendance of 50 to 99 in grades 9 to 12, inclusive. Only 238 high school districts had an average daily attendance of 100 or more in high school grades.

From the above statistical data it can be seen that Oklahoma still maintains a number of small expensive schools and that much better educational opportunities can be afforded at a

much lower cost than is now being provided through further consolidation and reorganization of administrative and attendance units.

I have noted that a good many bills have been introduced which have for their purpose rendering this program much more difficult. This type of legislation should be discouraged. We should maintain the benefits gained, and do all within our power to accomplish further economies in this general direction. It is common knowledge that adequate facilities and equipment cannot be maintained to give a thorough high school, or foundation, education to a pupil in these smaller units.

I have repeatedly pointed out to those interested that gross inequities exist in this State, in the methods of assessing property for taxation at the County and School District levels. This is not so much the fault of our laws as it may be attributed to human imperfections and human frailties. Our County Assessors, although obliged to assess properties at their fair cash value are not doing this but are rather following too far too great a degree a policy of political expediency. They must run for office every two years. I am not condemning them, and more or less sympathize with them, but even so, something must be done about it because it is at this level, i.e., the County and School District level, where the greatest portion of the trouble exists. I have recommended, and now recommend the passage of legislation which will have for its purpose as nearly as we are able to conceive, prescribing a method of assessment that must be uniform and from which no deviation can be made for political reasons or otherwise.

In a meeting a short time ago of most of the State's County Assessors I found a fear on the part of some of them that if they raised the valuation of property in their respective counties they could not be re-elected.

One of them, who I can well imagine might have been speaking for others said he had, through his deputies, visited each and every farm, farm home, City home and every building in his County and that working with the owners he had set up a complete file of equalized values. He stated under my questioning that 92% of his county citizens had signed their names signifying their acceptance of the equality of the assessment on their property.

I then talked with a number of property owners in another county, one a lawyer, one a newspaper man, one a dairy operator and one a federal employee. The lawyer told me his home had cost him \$14,000 four years ago and that it was 20 years old. The newspaper man told me his home was 15 years old and that he had been offered \$55,000 for it. The milkman had paid, six years ago, \$11,000 for his home on the day it was completed. The federal employee was living in a house 16 years old that he had bought two years ago for \$10,000.

Now, let's look and see about their taxes; all have homestead exemptions. The lawyer pays \$155.00 per year, the newspaper man pays \$52.00, the milkman \$60.00 and the federal employee pays \$6.60. All are in the same county within four miles of each other.

I have prepared a bill which I believe will, when the mechanical bugs are removed, set a yardstick for the equalization of property values that the schools might be financed properly from the local level, and this bill will shortly be available for your consideration.

There is noted also a growing tendency upon the part of many school districts to make expenditures for administrative purposes that are very much out of line percentage-wise with the salaries paid to the teachers. Abnormal administration expense, of course, reflects itself in lower salaries for teachers, and anything you may do to bring this to the attention of the school districts and patrons alike will be beneficial to the school system generally.

The resultant increase effected by proper assessments at the local level, plus the equalized adjustment between administrative, maintenance and classroom teacher costs, plus a more reasonable teacher-pupil ratio, will insure a more equitable pay level for our richly deserving classroom teachers in keeping with our commitment to them.

THE HIGHWAY PROGRAM

You have already pending before you legislation which represents the extent and the limit to which we can go under present circumstances in carrying forward the highway program of this State. I hope you members of the House will concur in it, as have the Senators.

Through there is some postponement, I am quite sure that due to the scarcity of materials and other economic limitations it will give us as big a program as we can reasonably expect to carry on and complete during the oncoming biennium. Many states have practically abandoned construction and are having a serious difficulty in maintaining what they have. We should consider ourselves, indeed, fortunate to find that we will probably be in a position to complete our outlined program suffering only a delay in its ultimate consummation rather than having to abandon it in its entirety or some large portion thereof. For your information, the Federal Bureau of Roads has assured us by letter that there is no diversion of funds and we will not be penalized.

EAR-MARKING AND REVENUE DIVERSION

My conception is that ear-marking, like lump sum appropriations is not sound governmental policy. The taxes collected from all sources should be accumulated in the general treasury and apportioned therefrom by a legislative body in accordance with the general needs of the government, giving preference where preference is deserved rather than ear-marking a tax, or some portion thereof, for some specific purpose.

You have bills pending before you which undertake to do this identical thing. One of which as I recall will be a tremendous bite of about \$400,000.00 per year from the general revenues of this State. A few like that, and there won't be any General Revenue left, and so I am urging upon you a complete recession from the ear-marking practice as nearly as it can be accomplished and sincerely hope that you do not pass any legislation which has this for its purpose.

REVENUE AND TAXATION

Without undertaking to describe specific legislation, I know you are confronted with some bills which have for their purpose changing of our present system of taxation by allowing exemptions or by reducing the amount of tax, or by destroying or eliminating the source from which the tax is gathered. The whole economic structure of the State Government is dependent upon the tax structure presently existing. If any part of it is eliminated, reduced, or the source of the revenue outlawed by legislation then you are left with the alternative to undertake or attempt to reduce State Government expenses by a like amount. Look well into this type of legislation and ponder with deliberation its results before you pass it. It is my hope that once we have been successful in leveling off the state tax bite on the pocketbook of Mr. Tax Payer, we can then look into the future and ponder *the reduction of his over-all load for all time.*

DEATH BENEFITS UNDER THE PRESENT COMPENSATION ACT

On the 21st of February, the Attorney General of Oklahoma, for whose opinions I hold great respect, advised the Speaker of the House that the Amendment to the Constitution adopted by the people on July 4, 1950 authorizing and permitting the extension of death benefits under the Workers' Compensation Act was exclusive, and that the remedy cannot be elective.

While I had previously recommended the enactment of a statute making the remedy elective, I must confess that both by a more analytical reading of the Amendment and by the perusal of the Attorney General's opinion, I am impelled to belief now that the remedy must be exclusive.

I have not attempted to say to you in words and figures what kind of a bill you should pass. Of course we want any bill that you pass to be valid and constitutional. A majority of the people of Oklahoma have spoken on this subject and they certainly don't want us to hand them an unconstitutional law.

I have indulged the hope and still indulge the hope that employer and employee, labor and industry will join in a sincere effort to agree upon the kind and type of legislation that should be passed and that out of your counsels with them and their representatives there will be forthcoming a satisfactory bill written within proper constitutional limitations.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Heretofore you have kindly set up a joint committee to study the feasibility of combining or eliminating overlapping boards and commissions. Such a consolidation should salvage much unnecessary expenditure of money that could, to a much better advantage, be utilized in our school system. Since its organization and since I appointed a chairman and vice-chairman as directed and authorized, some progress has been made but care should be exercised to avoid combining scientific and vocational boards. I want this committee to meet with me that I might offer my help and suggestions. In this particular field let us not forget the meaning of the term expediency. All I want and all I desire is an efficient business-like survey, the kind that any good business man would conduct in his own business affairs.

For my part I have already taken steps to accomplish, as far as I can, many of the things that it is in my power to do – without additional legislation.

All the departments under my direction have been instructed to clear with my office before hiring any new employees or filling vacancies created by normal turnover. I expect them to consolidate duties and reports and to be ever on the lookout for overlapping of functions which might tend to require wasteful use of Mr. Tax Payers dollars. Naturally, some may grow nervous when I seek to ascertain who the State's employees are, what they are paid and, more important, what they do for the money they receive.

I wish to assure you and them, however, that I have no revolutionary ideas or wholesale dismissals except for cause. As I have demonstrated, the tremendous state payroll of upward of 22,000 employees at an annual cost of 42 million dollars, grew slowly and by evolutionary process over a period of many years and, naturally, must be reduced by the same process. To do otherwise could cause serious disruption in carrying on the normal and necessary functions of government.

Senator Raymond Gary has drawn a bill designed to classify employees as to qualification; that a more systematic method of hiring might be set up; – such a system should certainly tend to avoid the placing of square pegs in round holes and should hasten the day when

we will see more men and women looking down the career road to a reward similar to that of all three of our present tax commissioners and the Secretary of the Land Office.

If there seems to you any inequities in his bill, let him know and help him work them out. He is human and does not therefore attempt to arrogate unto himself the ability to do all the thinking. For my part, I favor the principal, as explained to me, of his bill unless I am convinced by someone that it will not inure to the benefit of the State as a whole. I would certainly be against any bill that would have for its purpose the establishment of a system where the head of a department could not be the boss of that department.

CIVIL DEFENSE

This program, although started only in the Session, seems to have been retarded due to indecisions on the National level. I feel reasonably sure, now, that our committee will soon have this legislation ready for passage and I urge its consummation as soon as possible so that we may get the program under way and thus keep abreast of our sister states.

As far removed as we are from the devastation of war, we seem unable to awaken ourselves to the reality of its proximity. We should not let ourselves be lulled into a false sense of security. The danger of war is real, imminent and impending, and anything less than all out effort on our part to be prepared for its contingencies will amount to wanton negligence.

OLD AGE ASSISTANCE

Of all the matters that have come to the attention of this administration and of these Honorable Bodies, I am sure that most perplexing and disturbing one is the question of Old Age Assistance.

I fully realize at the outset the political repercussions that are going to be set off by the things I am about to say. I have calculated this, and I am willing to assume full responsibility for the risk. I have measured my study and my thought by plumb line of rectitude, righteousness and common sense, and political expediency to the contrary notwithstanding, I can arrive at no other conclusion. There are many factors involved which I think should be most forcefully directed to your attention and to the attention of every thinking citizen in the State of Oklahoma.

In the first place, it is apparent that the term "Old Age Pension" so often used in a misnomer. Oklahoma does not pay old age pensions but has made provisions for the assistance of the aged who by reason of infirmities and dependency are no longer able to provide for themselves. Old age benefits are also provided under the Social Security setup, and many thousands of our citizens have recently been able to secure the right to participate in these benefits at the appropriate time.

Oklahoma has been most liberal and most kind to its aged and dependent citizens far beyond and degree and the amount that the average citizen realizes. Statutes have been enacted and a department set up to administer this program. This department has naturally been subjected to criticism by many people. Some of this criticism may be based upon a firm foundation. I am beginning to realize, however, that a vast amount of it is the result of misunderstanding or unwillingness to understand the proper function or operation of the law and of human nature. I am not willing to crucify and destroy this department of our State Government on this class and type of criticism. I hope and I know that in your deliberations as an investigating body you will weigh the evidence that you find, separate the wheat from the chaff and deal fairly with all parties concerned.

In my efforts to find out the real truth, I have uncovered some astounding figures, and I want to give you the benefit of them now. Did you know that in the two-year period from 1948 to 1950 that the expenditures made for public welfare including unemployment compensation increased from \$88,600,000.00 to \$98,400,000.00? An increase of approximately 10 million dollars in two years. This does not look like your State of Oklahoma has adopted a penurious attitude toward its dependents.

But let's go further back than that. In the beginning of this program, and during its first year of operation, 1936-1937, in Oklahoma the cost of the Old Age Assistance program alone was \$6,500,000.00. At the end of the fiscal year 1949-1950, the cost had risen to \$60,500,000.00. This means that in that short span of years Old Age Assistance benefits has risen 1,000 percent.

Did you know that 35c out of every dollar raised for taxation in Oklahoma goes to the support of the public welfare program, and that Oklahoma today ranks *number one* in the nation in the proportion of State expenditures that go for public welfare? This simple question propounds itself. What more can we do? How much more is expected? Where is the limit?

Until the last two years Oklahoma had the greatest number of persons receiving Old Age Assistance for each 1,000 persons over 65 years of age of any State in the United States. At the present time approximately 600 out of every 1,000 persons in Oklahoma over the age of 65 are receiving Old Age Assistance checks. To say that this is occasioned because of the actual disability of that many persons out of every 1,000 in the full meaning of the term "disabled or dependent" is a statistical monstrosity. It can only be justified upon the premise that Oklahoma is applying its laws in this regard in a most liberal manner.

The rates for neighboring States at the present time for the same purpose are as follows:

Arkansas	564
Kansas	211
New Mexico	374
Arizona	357
Texas	507
Colorado	488
Tennessee	313
Missouri	327

In the State of Oklahoma there are an estimated 170,000 persons over the age of 65, which represents approximately 7.7% of the total population.

Now let us see what we are doing for these people in a financial way. In 1949 Oklahoma ranked 36th in per capita income, but at the same time the cost per person for supporting the welfare program in the State of Oklahoma was the highest in the Nation.

For the fiscal year 1950 it cost each person, man, woman, child and baby in the State of Oklahoma an average of \$35.71 to support Oklahoma's public welfare program. During the same year the average cost per person throughout the United States was \$14.14. The neighboring States' cost per person to support their own welfare programs is as follows.

Missouri	\$22.08
Arizona	\$16.54
Arkansas	\$13.97

New Mexico	\$12.07
Georgia	\$10.45
Florida	\$18.05
Kansas	\$16.12
Texas	\$13.85
Tennessee	\$11.85

The lowest cost per citizen in the United States was in Virginia. In the Old Dominion we find that the cost per person was only \$3.20.

Now let us see what these dependents are getting. The average grant for each old-age recipient in Oklahoma at the present is \$45.17 per month. There are 99,351 persons on the Old Age Assistance rolls receiving approximately \$4,500,000.00 per month. The average grant for the United States at the present time is \$43.79. The States of Missouri, Florida, New Mexico, Texas, Arkansas, Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee all pay lower grants than Oklahoma. In fact, Oklahoma ranks 23rd in the nation.

As stated before, the large number of persons receiving Old Age Assistance in Oklahoma does not mean that Oklahoma's population is at an economical disadvantage. At least 12 States rank lower in the average income per person. The answer is that the eligibility requirements in Oklahoma are extremely liberal at this time. A person over 65 who has a cash resource of \$350.00, or a couple who have a cash resource of \$500.00 may, in addition to this, own property in the form of a home and still be eligible for assistance. As you know, there is no legal requirement that children shall support their parents, but we all know that every law of God and common decency demands that they should contribute toward this. I am very much afraid that this practice has been to some extent discouraged by a too liberal method of getting on the old-age assistance rolls.

Now let us see what does it cost to administer this program? I am happy to inform you that at this time Oklahoma ranks 45th in the nation. Only three States have a lower ration of the cost of administration of assistance payments; the average for the United States is 5.1%, while in Oklahoma the cost is 3.4%.

You now have before you legislation which attempts to further liberalize the method of getting on the old-age assistance rolls. I do not believe that it is proper for us to undertake to legislate our aged citizens into a state of dependency. Dependency would depend upon the condition of the individual. It cannot be a state of mind, a mathematical certainty, or a legislative declaration. To undertake, by legislative exemptions, to make more people eligible for Old Age Assistance can only result in one thing, they will all get less and then the wrath of all of them will descend upon the heads of those who made it possible. I want to discourage the passage of this type of legislation.

This department needs a back-log of some kind upon which it can depend in cases of emergency. How much of a back-log is necessary I believe can best be judged by the Board. I also want to sound this warning on the present state of affairs, I do not believe that the sources of revenue coming to this department will continue to maintain the high standards of productivity that they have heretofore enjoyed. The buying power of the people is daily growing less, and when we feel the full impact of the burden of Federal taxation it is my considered judgment that the revenues for this purpose are going to show a great shrinkage. Wouldn't it be better to keep this small surplus to meet this type of contingency rather than spread it all out now and find ourselves in the dilemma of being faced with want, with nothing to use for its alleviation?

In passing from this subject, I do so with the full realization that there will be many who will dislike to face these cold, barren, and ruthless facts. They nevertheless exist and they must be faced some time, some place. I am sure that the great composite of all the people whom I have termed "Mr. Tax-payer" will appreciate this revelation and that he is not going to condemn you nor me for telling him the unvarnished truth. I am sure that the average tax-payer does not know that out of every dollar that he puts in 35c of it is being passed out in welfare payments. I am likewise certain that Mr. Taxpayer, though kind and benevolent to the nth degree is going to call a halt one of these days on what he might possibly be justified in believing to be a reckless and wanton handling of his money.

I ask every citizen of this State, and particularly the tax-paying citizens of this State, to ponder these facts and let you and me both know what they think about it, and what they think ought to be done in the premises. Your investigations, now in process, should reveal information which will prove invaluable to you. After all, money which we give out in a public welfare program comes from the citizen who is not dependent and who works for it and struggles for it and earns it. He is the man who should be given at least equal consideration when it comes to spending it. He, as well as the recipient, is the man to whom we should also look for comment and advice, for approval or disapproval of our actions.

Twenty-nine of our forty-eight states have recovery lien laws, and nearly all the rest have pending legislation, designed to reimburse the state, at least in part, after the expense of the last illness and funeral of the Welfare recipient has been paid. Such a law has been advocated for Oklahoma at various times.

Although I make no recommendation at this time, I raise the question to encourage the views, for and against, of you, the state press and of all the people.

I do, however, recommend the enactment of laws designed to prevent the fraudulent transfer of property in order to bring a person within the category of dependency. My attention has been cited to many flagrant cases of this type, and it must be stopped.

At this point, however, I want to hasten to assure every single one of the aged citizens of this State who are honestly and justifiably receiving the benefits of Old Age Assistance, that they have nothing to fear from this Administration. To those who, by reasons of true dependency are receiving these benefits, we owe this obligation. They have toiled and struggled and helped to build our Oklahoma. Through the vicissitudes of fortune they are now placed in a position where they cannot care for themselves. Oklahoma will show its gratitude to them as far as is possible within its ability and its resources.

My attention has also been called to the apparent laxity of law or regulation, as the case may be, in invoking the benefits of our Public Welfare Program in case of child dependency. I favor liberality in this regard. The child is always the innocent victim and suffers for the sins and the defaults of its parents, and in many cases, suffers by reason of the tragic misfortunes of its parents. But I do recommend to you that you place limitations upon the number of illegitimate children that can be placed upon these dependency rolls by any one person. Human error can be forgiven at least once. But when giving birth to illegitimate children becomes a habit, rather than the result of a misstep, there must be a place to call a halt.

During this Administration it must be the policy of this department to scrutinize with great care all applications for any type of assistance, and I shall expect, in the interest of justice, that a careful review be made of the existing rolls, with hope and belief that by the elimination of those who are unjustly receiving benefits that we can effect a savings that may be used for the

purposes of protecting and increasing the payments for those who are lawfully and rightfully entitle to receive them, and thus enable us to fulfill our promise to them.

I wish to pay tribute to Reverend Ben Sturdivant, Chairman, and the members of his Board – They are, conscientious in their work and are trying to serve the best interests of the citizens of the state. They seek and need your encouragement, suggestions and help in their almost thankless and difficult duties.

NEW INDUSTRY

A bill has been prepared and will be before you for your consideration dealing with the problem of encouraging new industry. I believe that it is adequate to meet the situation. It will provide for an “in lieu” tax, as is done in many cases by law in Oklahoma at this time; as for instance, to gross production, intangible, money and motor vehicle “in lieu” taxes. I feel that this bill will give immediate solution to the problem, and we may thus be spared the delay and expense of an election to amend the constitution.

At the same time, many industries are looking toward Oklahoma and, I feel reasonably sure, will avail themselves of an opportunity to come here and become a part of us. Our economic situation makes industrial expansion one of our major problems and I, therefore, commend this bill to your most earnest consideration at the earliest possible moment.

During the past two months, contracts for the construction of several large plants, furnishing labor to many of our people, have been signed. Let us welcome these new industries and continue to invite others.

OUR 45th DIVISION

As the days pass and the finger that writes the history of this great State and this Nation moves on, there appears indelibly written in unforgettable language, the contribution of the glorious 45th toward this Nation’s welfare and its defense. In retrospect we read of its bravery, its courage and its sacrifices. And with glowing pride we remember that this Division of our National defense has brought honor and glory to the localities from whence they came. Now they are about to be sent to service in foreign lands; service that will permit you and me, if God wills it, to continue to live with the blessings of peace about us, our homes intact, and our shores protected against the onslaughts of an inhuman barbarian enemy. Let us not forget these boys in our daily prayers, and I urge you to remember them by appropriate commemorations. Though our language and our words are but feeble instruments with which to express our pride and our appreciation, they can be made to stand as a monument to be read by future generations that they may remember our loved ones who were a part of the 45th Division. My particular good wishes and thoughts go with our own beloved members, Representatives Russell and Collins and Shoemaker.

CONCLUSION

From the first declaration that I ever made, until this good hour, I have said that this administration would be and is a “Plain Folks” Administration. From my correspondence, I am convinced that many well-meaning people misinterpret the meaning and true definition of the term “Plain Folks.” “Plain Folks,” as I interpret the word, may be a millionaire or a sharecropper, a scientist or a mechanic, an executive or a common laborer. “Plain Folks” are those kind of people, who with clean hands and honest hearts seek not to enrich themselves at their brother’s expense, but only to have the privilege to live, to earn, and to enjoy untrammelled

and unmolested the privileges and immunities which belong to them. They both toil and spin and they earn the living which God gives them the right to enjoy, and they do not believe that the Government, under whose laws they live and whose laws they obey, should be made an instrumentality by which any bloc or group should be allowed to enrich itself or to obtain, by political pressure or otherwise, preferences or advantages that they do not deserve, or that would inure to the disadvantage of all "Plain Folks."

"Plain Folks" are the type of people who have given up many of their liberties by virtue of the growing processes of regimentation and socialization. They are becoming tired and disgusted, and by listening carefully, we can find that although they have been a sleeping giant, we can hear the rumble of an awakening. I have enlisted myself in a crusade to help these people retain what few liberties and privileges they have left, and to help them to recover as many of those which have been taken away as it is possible to bring back to them.

When this Nation was in its formative stages, my history teaches me that those men who nursed and nurtured it and gave it strength and courage did not approach the problems of their times armed with ping pong sticks and boxing gloves. They fared forth to battle with swords and battle-axes; met their problems face to face and determined them with courage, wisdom and without reproach.

I say to you now that we have aimlessly permitted ourselves to wander far too close to the precipice of oblivion and destruction. We must and we will rid ourselves of civic lethargy. We cannot longer afford bit by bit to surrender and appease for the sake of political expediency or otherwise, the encroachment of the forces that would rob us of our individualism or initiative and make of us cogs in a state machine. Let us take off the gloves, roll up our sleeves and meet our problems and face them squarely. If we do this, and enter the fray clothed in the mantle of truth and justice, the gates of our fort will stand against the onslaughts of selfish groups, and the rights and privileges of the "Plain Folks" of Oklahoma will remain sacred and intact.

Let us keep our liberty and freedom; by teaching our children the necessity for honest work and the necessity of careful living and the necessity of saving for the day when they shall be incapacitated by old age.

Here in this statehouse our job is to create the governmental and political atmosphere for our children and our people that they might have an opportunity to work honestly, live decently and feel unafraid of the future.

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.