
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

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1929 January 2

Address to the Legislature

STATE OF NEW YORK

MESSAGE

OF

GOVERNOR

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

TO THE

LEGISLATURE

JANUARY 2, 1929



**ALBANY
J. B. LYON COMPANY, PRINTERS
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THE GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE

STATE OF NEW YORK

EXECUTIVE CHAMBER

ALBANY, January 2, 1929

To the Legislature:

I come before the Legislature, not only in accordance with the Constitution to communicate the condition of the state, but also to express the hope and belief that neither you nor I are entering upon our offices with partisan purpose. From the day of our election we become individually and jointly the representatives of all the people of the state.

We are charged with the duty of carrying on the existing functions of the government and also of initiating changes in present laws, made necessary by changing times, and of undertaking also new projects which an advancing civilization make desirable.

The past six years have been an unparalleled era in our state. We have pointed the way of progress to our sister states and we must not allow this progress to flag during the coming year.

Most of our problems are not political: they can be solved by the same kind of cooperation on your part which I as the executive of the state hereby offer to you. A few are matters of an honest difference of opinion; most of these also can, I hope, find practical solution by frank discussion and honest effort to obtain results.

FINANCES

I inherit from my distinguished predecessor a financial balance sheet showing an excellent condition in the treasury, and the prospect of a substantial balance at the end of the current fiscal year. Detailed figures will be submitted to you in a few weeks with the budget for the following fiscal year. From a preliminary examination of anticipated receipts, and of expenditures which are either mandatory or essential for the carrying on of existing business and of authorized projects, I am confident that we can arrive at a balanced budget, or, in other words, keep our expenditures within the figure of our anticipated income.

This does not, however, make allowance for new state undertakings, of which some are vital, nor does it make allowance for readjustment or reduction of certain taxes which now bear too heavily upon portions of our rural population. In spite of previous studies, little progress has been made in the formulation of a plan for a more scientific and equitable distribution of taxation. I urge the appointment of a non-political commission to this end.

AGRICULTURE

I want the agricultural problems studied without regard to partisan politics and it is my hope that through appointing an agricultural commission composed of members of the Legislature, master farmers, representatives of the College of Agriculture, the Grange, the Farm Bureau, the Home Bureau, the Dairymen's League and other farm cooperatives, the Legislature from their recommendations will be able to act favorably and constructively on this most important subject.

It may be that adequate investigation will show that many of the farms abandoned within the period of agricultural depression since 1920 should not be restored to agriculture but should be devoted to growing a future timber supply for the people of the state. Also we do not want the present alarming rate of farm abandonment to continue; we must therefore make special efforts to make it possible for those who are now engaged in agriculture on suitable agricultural land, to continue under more favorable and more profitable conditions.

I hope that this agricultural commission will make a special study and investigation of the whole farm assessment and tax situation in order to obtain a fairer adjustment of the farmers' taxes. The ultimate goal is that the farmer and his family shall be put on the same level of earning capacity as his fellow American who lives in the city.

The problem of distribution of farm products should also be studied to the end that the unnecessarily high differential between what the farmer receives and what the consumer pays may be materially lowered, giving a better price to the farmer for his products and a lower cost to the consumer for what he buys.

WATER POWER

On the subject of the development of Water Power sites, owned in part or in whole by the people of the state, I am con-

vinced of two facts: First, that there is a definite demand for the undertaking of their development—not several years hence but this year; second, that the title and constant control of the power generated at the sources shall remain definitely in the people and shall not be alienated by long term leases. This is one of those questions on which I hope we can reach an agreement.

PARKS

The development of our state-wide Park and Parkway system has, I think, ceased to be a matter of political controversy and will, I am confident, go forward with your assistance.

GRADE CROSSINGS

Of vital importance is the elimination of railroad crossings. I am not satisfied either with the governmental machinery or with the cooperation of some of the railroads, and I hope that we can find means to expedite the work.

PUBLIC WORKS

The policy of placing all state construction in one consolidated Department of Public Works has been justified.

HIGHWAYS

It seems almost unnecessary for me to stress the necessity for the continuation of the present large program of highway construction and reconstruction, the building as rapidly as practical of new roads and the rebuilding of old roads, now worn out or inadequate to meet modern traffic requirements.

There is no doubt that under the present system of distribution of cost between state and counties the burden of completing the state and county highway system and bridges falls in unfair measure on the less prosperous rural communities. The fairest measure should be the actual relative wealth of each community. The whole problem, however, is so involved in the broader subject of taxes and of budget that I will present it to you at a later time.

As both major parties have in their platforms recommended that the whole cost of maintaining state and county highways should be borne by the state, the provision of law requiring towns to contribute \$50 a mile for this upkeep should be repealed. This will add about \$600,000 next year to the state's expense.

CANALS

The past few years have shown greater justification for the maintenance and operation of the Barge Canal, and in view of this it is incumbent on us to continue its operation at the highest possible efficiency. With the canal the state owns a number of useless or unimportant terminal properties, not located on the canal itself. Where these properties are desired by local communities for useful public purposes, this use should be made possible by proper legislation.

OTHER PUBLIC WORKS

Definite progress has been made in designing and placing under construction the liberal programs of hospitals, prisons, armories, office buildings, and other public buildings, and you will, I know, recognize that the Division of Architecture and the Division of Engineering in the Department of Public Works should be given sufficient funds to keep the program up to schedule.

AVIATION

In order to keep abreast of the times and to avoid far heavier expenditures in later years, I am convinced that the state must take steps to encourage the establishment and development of airports under a definite plan and policy. We must give official recognition to air navigation as an established means of communication and transportation.

PAYMENT FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

We need have no idle dreams that when the present program of public improvement is complete, construction by the state can cease for a dozen years to come. Neglect and lack of vision in past years made the present heavy expenditure necessary. A constantly growing population, together with new demands of civilization, will soon require still more buildings to house the wards and the business of the state, and additional expenditures to add to parks, parkways and roads, and to put unused lands to some useful purpose.

With the example before us of highly developed and successful private businesses we can properly differentiate between those improvements which should be paid for out of current state revenues and the more permanent structures built and areas developed

for the use of generations to come, which should be financed by the issuing of bonds backed by the credit of the state. It is worth while to call your attention to the fact that in spite of the bonding of many public improvements during the past few years, the debt of the State of New York is far lower than that of many other states on both a per capita and an assessed valuation basis.

FOUR YEAR TERM FOR GOVERNOR

In the plan for the reorganization of the state government one major recommendation remains unrealized. A constitutional amendment providing for the election in presidential years of a Governor to serve four years met defeat at the polls by an overwhelming vote. It has been claimed by one political party that this defeat expressed opposition to the principle of the four-year term. It was claimed by the other political party that the defeat voiced no such opinion but only a rejection of the proposal to hold the election in presidential years. We are all familiar with the arguments on both sides. It is unnecessary to repeat them here. I want to make it perfectly clear, however, that as long as nothing is done this difference of opinion will exist, and no one will ever know whether the people of this state desire the four-year term for Governor with elections coming in the year midway between presidential elections. The only way to solve this question is to submit it frankly and fairly to the people of the state. If you are unwilling to pass a new constitutional amendment, which is my recommendation, providing for the election in off-years, I ask you in fairness to submit this simple question to the voters by referendum for an expression of their opinion at the next November election. That would seem to be a practical way as well as a course of good faith.

COUNTY AND TOWN GOVERNMENTS

I can see no objection in being anything but frank with you in regard to the business efficiency of our system of town and county governments. In recent years our system of state government has been brought to a high level of efficiency. Why should any of us pretend any longer that our county and town governments do not require the same kind of overhauling which we have given to the affairs of the state? Even the school children know that we maintain many useless offices in our towns, that many func-

tions now exercised by town officials should be assumed by county management, that there is an almost complete lack of budgeting, that there is an equal lack of proper auditing, and, in the final analysis, that the average taxpayer does not know why or where his tax money is being spent. It would be a fine thing if you and I, laying politics and partisanship aside, could take definite steps at this session of the Legislature towards this reform, which everybody knows is so vitally necessary. I am confident that the public will support an honest effort on our part, for I am not enough of a cynic to believe that the public is indifferent to wasteful or outworn governing methods.

LABOR

When I consider the extraordinary progress which has been made in labor and social legislation, I am reminded of the fact that eighteen years ago, when I was a member of the Legislature, any person advocating a large part of the laws which have been enacted in the succeeding years would have been called a dangerous radical. That is the universal history of social progress. While much has been accomplished so far, we cannot stand still, and I recommend to you the following program which I believe to be in accordance with the needs of the day:

1. A real eight-hour day and forty-eight-hour week for women and children in industry.
2. The establishment for them of an advisory minimum or fair wage board.
3. The extension of workmen's compensation to give its benefits to all occupational diseases.
4. The prohibiting of the granting of temporary injunctions in industrial disputes without notice of hearing; and provision for trial before a jury of any alleged violations of injunctions.
5. The immediate study by a commission of experts of the subject of old age security against want.
6. The continuation of such provisions of the emergency rent laws as are necessary.
7. Further elimination of unhealthy living conditions in the congested areas.
8. Declaration by law that the labor of a human being is not a commodity or an article of commerce.

HEALTH

While we have made and are making splendid progress in caring for the general health of our citizens, there are two specific matters in which we can lay the foundations for great public benefit.

CRIPPLES

The first of these is the care of adults and children who, through accident or disease, are so crippled in body that they are unable to lead useful and happy lives. It is estimated that at least 50,000 men, women and children in the state of New York are thus seriously handicapped, and many of them require constant attendance on the part of some able-bodied person. As a matter of good business, it would pay the state to help in restoring these cripples to useful citizenship, and the great majority of them can, with the aid of modern medical science, be so restored. Most of them are, however, not today receiving adequate care or treatment for the very good reason that such treatment costs more time and money than the average family can afford.

But there is an added reason. I conceive it to be the duty of the state to give the same care to removing the physical handicaps of its citizens as it now gives to their mental development. Universal education of the mind is, after all, a modern conception. We have reached the time now when we must recognize the same obligation of the state to restore to useful activity those children and adults who have the misfortune to be crippled. I shall submit to you a carefully worked out program to initiate this much needed care.

SARATOGA SPRINGS

The state has during recent years acquired one of the greatest gifts of nature in the whole world—the mineral springs at Saratoga. I am not satisfied that the program for their development in the past has taken sufficient account of the great benefits to mankind that can be derived from them as medicinal and therapeutic agents. We in this country are far behind Europe in the internal and external use of natural mineral springs for health purposes. The springs at Saratoga should be developed primarily for health purposes, under far more careful medical supervision than we have hitherto attempted. The physical development of the state properties at Saratoga must proceed, and I ask you to

authorize the appointment of a temporary commission of scientific and medical experts, in order that a careful plan may be worked out under their advice.

EDUCATION

The principal mandatory increase in the coming budget will be the additional sum, running probably to nine million dollars, required for the extension of the better education of our citizens. The people of the state are unanimous in support of our liberal policy.

Under the present methods of apportioning state funds to rural school districts, the poorer districts in many instances fail to receive their fair share. The method of apportionment should be simplified and made to conform more closely to the relative wealth of the districts.

JUDICIAL REFORM

While I am confident that the citizens of the state demand legislation aimed to diminish crime and approve the policy of prison reform, still there are many thinking people who believe that we have not yet gone to the root of our troubles. By a long series of piecemeal enactments, covering many years, we have built up a highly complicated system of judicial procedure, both criminal and civil, which does not conform to the ideals of modern efficiency or simplicity. A growing body of our citizens complain of the complexities, of the delays, and of the costliness of private and of public litigation. I do not for a moment believe either that the situation can be greatly improved by minor amendments to the existing system, nor do I believe that a drastic reform can be accomplished in one or two years. It is time, however, that a deeper study of the whole subject should be made by a body of citizens representing the bench, the bar and laymen. After conferring with you, I hope that I can recommend the definite initiation of this at a later time in the session.

"AMBULANCE CHASING"

One of the evils which has grown up in connection with our present administration of justice is the practice of "ambulance chasing." The Appellate Divisions of the First and Second Departments have recently conducted investigations relative to this abuse, and, I understand, will present certain legislation to your

honorable bodies for the purpose of curbing such activities. I urge you to give your most earnest consideration to these recommendations.

MODERNIZATION OF INHERITANCE LAWS

A state commission composed of experienced surrogates, legislators and lawyers has for the past two years been considering the important subject of the reform and modernization of our laws for the inheritance of real and personal property. Many of these laws have remained unchanged for over one hundred years and are out of harmony with modern economic and social conditions.

The Commission will make its report to you at this session of the Legislature.

I approve of the Commission's general recommendations for improvements, particularly those for the greater protection of women in estates and for more simplicity, economy and expedition in estate administration. I know that this important subject will receive careful consideration by you and hope its recommendations will meet with your approval.

ELECTION LAW CHANGES

The recent election showed the need of various improvements in the election machinery, in order to take away all possibility of errors and to remove existing delays. I hope that when you pass legislation to attain this end, you will also agree to the creation of bi-partisan boards of election in all counties of the state, to the limiting of campaign expenditures for all elections and to the publication of all campaign receipts and disbursements before, as well as after election.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS, FEDERAL AND STATE

Also I recommend that you make a part of our fundamental law a requirement referring further amendments to the federal Constitution to the people of the state themselves before the Legislature passes on them.

I strongly favor the right of the people to initiate amendments to their own fundamental law known as the state Constitution, and I ask you to submit this proposal to the voters.

SOLDIERS IN VETERANS' HOSPITALS

There are many disabled veterans of the recent war who by reason of confinement in veterans' hospitals for treatment and cure, are unable to register or vote in elections. I recommend the necessary constitutional amendments and legislative changes to enable these men to exercise their rights of suffrage as citizens.

STATE CENSUS

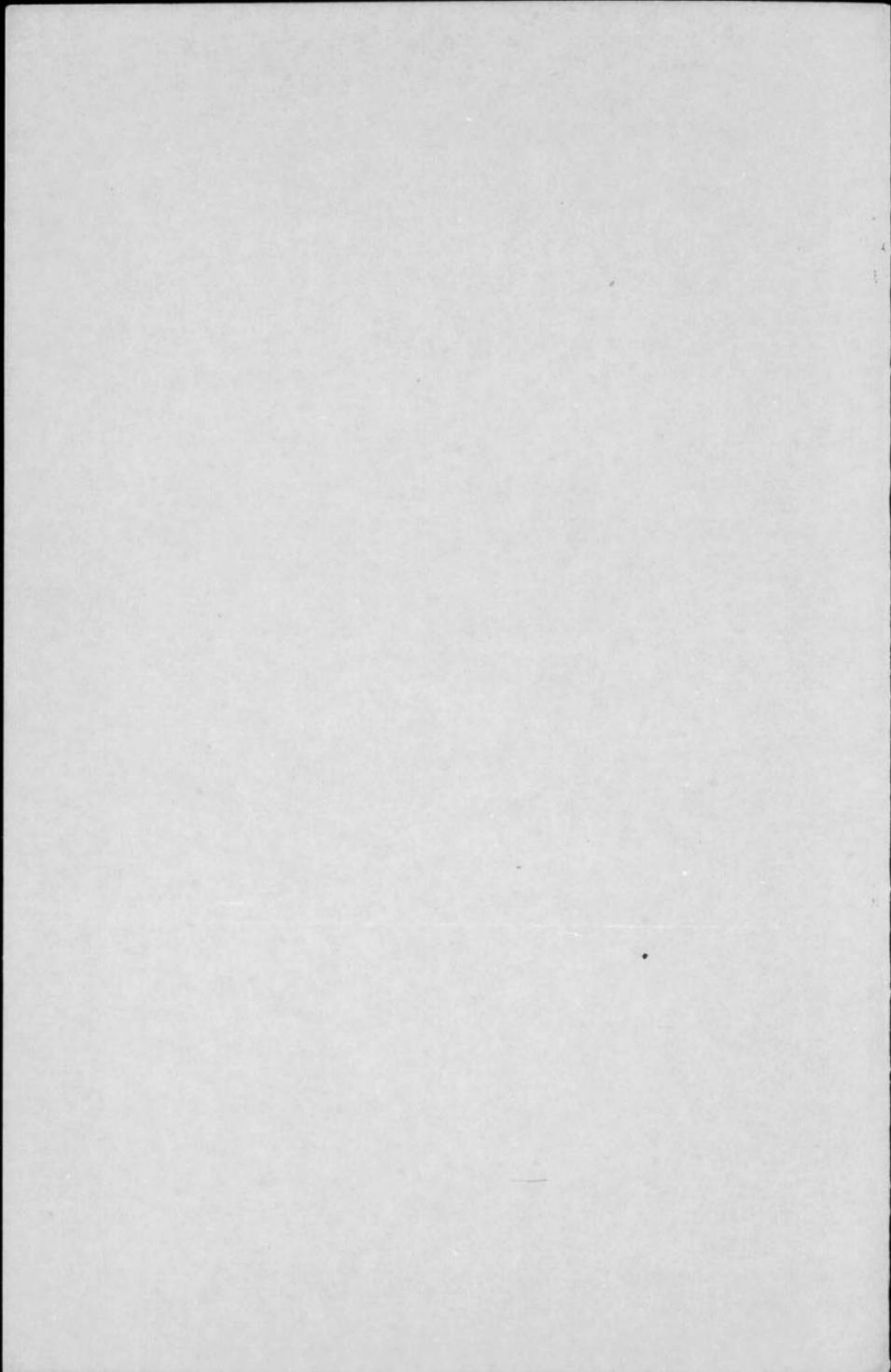
In the interest of common sense and elimination of waste I recommend the abolition of the constitutional provision for a state census, and that the federal census be used for the purposes of state apportionment.

In my inaugural address to my fellow citizens I have already pledged myself to seek no mere personal or partisan advantage in the performance of my duties as Governor. I feel sure that the legislators of both parties will join me in this pledge. He best serves his party who best serves his state.

Let us all at this session rid ourselves forever of that blighting dread of following in the rear guard of another's triumphal procession along the road to better government which has too often in the past prevented any progress whatsoever. It is of small moment who first points out that road. The important thing is, having once seen the proper course, that we should turn towards it, fight for its adoption and march shoulder to shoulder with the others toward the goal.

In conclusion may I urge you all, individually, to come to me with problems, with suggestions, with honest differences of opinion as often and as freely as I hope you will let me come to you. The verdict on our relations that I most desire from you is that I have at least been fair—and reasonable—and friendly. Let a common desire to serve our state unite us in a common friendship.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT



MESSAGE TO THE LEGISLATURE

[Jan. 27] 1929

I come before the legislature, not only in accordance with the Constitution to communicate the condition of the State, but also to express the hope and belief that neither you nor I are entering upon our offices with partisan purpose. From the day of our election we become individually and jointly the representatives of all the people in the State.

We are charged with the duty of carrying on, in carrying forward, the existing functions of the government and also with initiating changes in present laws, made necessary by changing times, and of undertaking also new projects which an advancing civilization make desirable.

The past six years have been an unparalleled era in our State. We have pointed the way of progress to our sister States and this is an added reason why during the coming year we must not allow this progress to flag.

Most of our problems are not political: they can be solved by the same kind of cooperation on your part which I as the Executive of the State hereby offer to you. A few are matters of an honest difference of opinion: many of these also can, I hope, find practical solution by frank discussion and honest effort to obtain results; and where this becomes impossible, I hope that you will agree with me in avoiding further delays by employing the sound American method of submission to an expression of popular opinion by referendum.

F I N A N C E S

I inherit from my distinguished predecessor a financial balance sheet showing an excellent condition in the Treasury, and the prospect of a substantial balance at the end of the current fiscal year. Careful figures will be submitted to you with the budget for the following fiscal year in a few weeks. From a cursory examination of anticipated receipts and of expenditures, which are either mandatory or essential for the carrying on of existing business and of authorized projects, I am confident that we can arrive at a balanced budget, or, in other words, keep our expenditures within the figure of our anticipated income.

This does not, however make allowance either for new State undertakings, of which some are vital, or does it make allowance for the reduction of certain taxes which now bear too heavily upon some of our citizens. In spite of previous studies, little progress has been made on the formulation of a plan for a more scientific and equitable distribution of taxation. I urge the appointment of a non-political commission to this end.

AGRICULTURE (to be submitted by
Henry Morgenthau, Jr.)

On the subject of the development of Water Power sites, owned in part or in whole by the people of the State, I am convinced of two facts: First, that there is a definite demand for the undertaking of their development - not several years hence but this year; second, that the title and constant control of the power generated at the sources shall remain definitely in the people and shall not be alienated by long term leases. This is one of those questions on which I hope we can reach an agreement but failing that, the people of the State are to be given opportunity to express their final judgment so that definite action can be made possible by the next Legislature.

The development of our State-wide Park and Parkway system has, I think, ceased being a political matter and will, I am confident, go forward with your assistance. With this goes hand in hand the elimination of railroad crossings. I am not satisfied either with the governmental machinery nor with the cooperation of the railroads, and I hope that we can find means to expedite the work.

HIGHWAYS AND CANALS

The policy of placing all State construction in one consolidated department of Public Works has been proved a success. It seems almost unnecessary for me to stress the continuation of the present large program of highway construction and reconstruction, the building as rapidly as practical of new roads in farm sections and the rebuilding of old roads, now worn out or inadequate to meet modern traffic requirements. The State has recently lifted from the Counties any expense of building bridges on State highways, and I suggest that as there is little difference between a stream and a railroad as an obstruction, the present share of grade crossing elimination on State roads, now borne by the Counties, should be assumed by the State.

The past few years have shown greater justification for the maintenance and operation of the Barge Canal and in view of this it is incumbent upon us to continue its maintenance at the highest possible efficiency. With the Canal the State owns a number of useless or unimportant terminal properties, not located on the Canal property. Where these properties are owned by the local communities for useful public purposes, this use should be made possible by proper legislation.

The whole cost of maintaining State and County highways should be borne by the State.

OTHER PUBLIC WORKS

Definite progress has been made in designing and placing under contract the enormous program of hospitals, prisons, armories, office buildings, and other public buildings, and you will, I know, recognize that the Division of Architecture and the Division of Engineering in the Department of Public Works be given sufficient funds to keep the program up to schedule.

A V I A T I O N

In order to keep abreast of the times and to avoid far heavier expenditures in later years, I am convinced that the State must take steps to encourage the establishment and development of airports under a definite plan and policy.

PAYMENT FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

We need have no idle dreams that when the present program of public improvements is complete, the State of New York can remain idle for a dozen years to come. Idleness and lack of vision in past years made the present heavy expenditure necessary. A constantly growing population, together with new demands of civilization, will soon require still more buildings to house the wards of the business of the State, to improve connections, and to put unused lands to some useful purpose.

With the example before us of highly developed and successful private businesses we can properly differentiate between those improvements which should be paid for out of current State revenues and the more permanent structures built for the use of several generations to come, which should be financed by the issuing of bonds backed by the credit of the State. It is worth while to call your attention to the fact that in spite of the bonding of many public improvements during the past few years, the bond debt of the State of New York is far lower than that of many other states on both a per capita and an assessed valuation basis.

FOUR YEAR TERM FOR GOVERNOR

In the plan for the reorganization of the State government one recommendation remains unrealized - a constitutional amendment providing for the election in presidential years of a Governor to serve four years or defeat at the polls by a three to one vote. It has been claimed by one political party that this defeat voiced opposition to the principle of the four year term. It was claimed by the other political party that the defeat voiced no such opinion but only a rejection of the proposal to hold the election in presidential years. We are all familiar with the arguments on both sides. It is unnecessary to repeat them here. I want to make it perfectly clear, however, that as long as this difference of opinion exists, no one will ever know whether the people of this State approve of the four year term for Governor with elections coming in the year midway between presidential elections. The only way to solve this question is to submit it frankly and fairly to the people of the State again. If you are unwilling to pass a new constitutional amendment, providing for the election in off-years, I ask you in fairness to submit this moot question to the voters for an expression of their opinion at the next November election.

COUNTY AND TOWN GOVERNMENTS

I can see no object in being anything but frank with you in regard to the business efficiency of our system of Town and County governments. In recent years our system of State government has been brought to a high level of efficiency. Why should any of us pretend any longer that our County and Town governments do not require the same kind of overhauling which we have given to the affairs of the State? Even the school children know that we maintain many useless offices in our towns, that many functions now exercised by town officials should be taken over under County management, that there is an almost complete lack of budgeting, that there is an equal lack of proper auditing, and, in the final analysis, that the average tax payer does not know why or where his tax money is being spent. It would be a fine thing if you and I, laying politics and partisanship aside, could take definite steps at this session of the Legislature towards this referendum, which everybody knows is so vitally necessary, and I am confident that the public will support an honest effort on our part, for I am not enough of a cynic to believe that the public is indifferent to wasteful or outworn governing methods.

L A B O R

When I consider the extraordinary progress which has been made in labor and social legislation, I am reminded of the fact that eighteen years ago, when I was a member of the Legislature, any person advocating a large part of the laws which have been enacted in the succeeding years would have been called a dangerous radical. That is the universal history of social progress. While much has been accomplished so far, we cannot stand still and I recommend to you the following program, which I believe to be in accordance with the needs of the day.

1. A real eight hour day and forty-eight hour week for women and children in industry.
2. The establishment for them of an Advisory Minimum or Fair Wage Board.
3. The extension of Workmen's Compensation to give its benefits to all occupational diseases.
4. The prohibiting of the granting of temporary injunctions in individual disputes without notice of hearing.
5. Trial before a jury of any alleged violations of injunctions.
6. The immediate consideration by a commission of experts of the subject of "old age security against want."
7. The continuation of such provisions of the emergency rent laws as are necessary.
8. Further elimination of unhealthy living conditions in the congested areas.
9. Declaration by law that the labor of a human being is not a commodity or an article of commerce.

HEALTH

While we have made and are making splendid progress in caring for the general health of our citizens, there are two specific matters in which we can lay the foundations for great public benefit.

The first of these is the care of adults and children who through accident or disease are so crippled in body that they are unable to lead useful and happy lives. It is estimated that at least fifty thousand (50,000) men, women and children in the State of New York are thus seriously handicapped, and many of them require constant attendance on the part of some able bodied person. As a matter of good business, it would pay the State to help in restoring these cripples to useful citizenship, and the great majority of them can, with the aid of modern medical science, be so restored. The great majority of them are, however, not today receiving adequate care or treatment for the very good reason that such treatment costs more time and money than the average family can afford.

But there is an added reason. I conceive it to be the duty of the State to give the same care to the developing and perfecting of the physical development of these citizens as it now gives to their mental development. Compulsory education to the mind is, after all, a modern conception. We have reached the time when we must recognize the same obligation of the State to the restoration to useful activity of those children and adults who have the misfortune of being crippled. I shall submit to you a carefully worked out program to initiate this much needed care.

Second, the State had during recent years acquired one of the greatest gifts of nature in the whole world - the mineral springs at Saratoga. I am not satisfied that the program for their development

in the past has taken sufficient account of the great benefits that can be derived from them as medicinal agents. We in this country are far behind Europe in the internal and external use of natural mineral springs for health purposes. The springs at Saratoga should be developed primarily for health purposes, under far more careful medical supervision than we have hitherto attempted. The physical development of the State properties at Saratoga must proceed, and I ask you to authorize the appointment of a temporary commission of scientific and medical experts, in order that a careful plan may be worked out under their advice.

EDUCATION

The principle mandatory increase in the coming budget will be the additional sum, running to seven or eight million dollars, required for the extension of the better education of our citizens. The people of the State are unanimous in support of our present liberal policy.

LAW REFORM

While I am confident that the citizens of the State gave their support to recent legislation which aims to diminish crime and to the policy of prison reform, still there are many thinking people who believe that we have not yet gone to the root of our troubles. By a long series of piecemeal enactments, covering many years, we have built up a highly complicated system of judicial procedure, both criminal and civil, which does not conform to the ideals of modern efficiency or simplicity. The growing body of our citizens complain of the complexities, of the delays, and of the costliness of private and of public litigation. I do not for a moment believe either that the existing situation can be greatly improved by minor amendments to the existing system, nor do I believe that a drastic reform can be accomplished in one or two years. It is time, however, that a deeper study of the whole subject should be made by a body of citizens representing the bench, the bar and laymen. After conferring with you, I hope that I can recommend the definite initiation of this at a later time in the session.

ELECTION REFORM

The recent election showed the need of various improvements in the election machinery, in order to take away all possibility of errors and to remove existing delays. I hope that when legislation to obtain this end, you will also agree to the creation of by-partisan boards of election in all Counties of the State, to the limiting of campaign expenditures for all elections and to the publication of all campaign receipts and disbursements before, as well as after election. Also I hope that you will make a part of our fundamental law a requirement referring further amendments to the Federal constitution to the people of the State themselves before the Legislature passes on them.

F.D.R. Longhand

1929 Jan 2

Message to the Legislature.
Draft and press release.

*D. Roosevelt***EDITORS:**

The following Message to the Legislature of Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt is hereby released at noon, Wednesday, January 2d, 1929, unless otherwise ordered by wire. It must not be quoted from, referred to, or commented upon in any manner prior to that time.

Members of the Legislature of the State of New York:

I come before the Legislature, not only in accordance with the Constitution to communicate the condition of the state, but also to express the hope and belief that neither you nor I are entering upon our offices with partisan purpose. From the day of our election we become individually and jointly the representatives of all the people of the state.

We are charged with the duty of carrying on the existing functions of the government and also of initiating changes in present laws, made necessary by changing times, and of undertaking also new projects which an advancing civilization make desirable.

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Most of our problems are not political: they can be solved by the same kind of cooperation on your part which I as the Executive of the state hereby offer to you. A few are matters of an honest difference of opinion; many of these also can, I hope, find practical solution by frank discussion and honest effort to obtain results: and where this becomes impossible, I hope that you will agree with me in avoiding further delays by employing the sound American method of submission to an expression of popular opinion by referendum.

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Agriculture.

I want the agricultural problems studied without regard to partisan politics and it is my hope through appointing an agricultural commission composed of members of the legislature, master farmers, representatives of the College of Agriculture, the Grange, the Farm Bureau, the Home Bureau, the Dairymen's League and other farm cooperatives, that through their recommendations the Legislature will be able to act favorably and constructively on this most important subject.

It may be that adequate investigation will show that many of the farms abandoned within the period of agricultural depression since 1920 should not be restored to agriculture but should be devoted to growing a future timber supply for the people of the state. At the same time we do not want the present alarming rate of farm abandonment to continue; we must therefore make special efforts to make it possible for those who are now engaged in agriculture on suitable agricultural land, to continue under more favorable and more profitable conditions.

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I hope that this agricultural commission will make a special study and investigation of the whole farm assessment and tax situation in order to obtain a fairer adjustment of the farmers' taxes. The ultimate goal is that the farmer and his family shall be put on the same level of earning capacity as his fellow American who lives in the city.

The problem of distribution of farm products should also be studied to the end that the unnecessarily high differential between what the farmer receives and what the consumer pays may be materially lowered, giving a better price to the farmer for his products and a lower cost to the consumer for what he buys.

On the subject of the development of Water Power sites, owned in part or in whole by the people of the state, I am convinced of two facts: First, that there is a definite demand for the undertaking of their development—not several years hence but this year; second, that the title and constant control of the power generated at the sources shall remain definitely in the people and shall not be alienated by long term leases. This is one of those questions on which I hope we can reach an agreement.

The development of our State-wide Park and Parkway system has, I think, ceased to be a matter of political controversy and will, I am confident, go forward with your assistance.

Of equal importance is the elimination of railroad crossings. I am not satisfied either with the governmental machinery or with the cooperation of some of the railroads, and I hope that we can find means to expedite the work.

**Water
Power.**

Parks.

**Grade
Crossings.**

(2)

Public Works.

The policy of placing all state construction in one consolidated department of Public Works has been justified.

Highway.

It seems almost unnecessary for me to stress the continuation of the present large program of highway construction and reconstruction, the building as rapidly as practical of new roads and the rebuilding of old roads, now worn out or inadequate to meet modern traffic requirements.

There is no doubt that under the present system of distribution of cost between state and counties the burden of completing the state and county highway system and bridges will fall in unfair measure on the less prosperous rural communities. The fairest measure should be the actual relative wealth of each community. The whole problem, however, is so involved in the broader subject of taxes and of budget that I will present it to you at a later time.

Canal.

The past few years have shown greater justification for the maintenance and operation of the Barge Canal, and in view of this it is incumbent on us to continue its maintenance at the highest possible efficiency. With the Canal the State owns a number of useless or unimportant terminal properties, not located on the Canal itself. Where these properties are desired by local communities for useful public purposes, this use should be made possible by proper legislation.

As both major parties have in their platforms recommended that the whole cost of maintaining state and county highways should be borne by the state, the provision of law requiring towns to contribute \$50 a mile for this upkeep should be repealed. This will add about \$600,000 next year to the State's expense.

**Other
Public
Works.**

Definite progress has been made in designing and placing under construction the liberal programs of hospitals, prisons, armories, office buildings, and other public buildings, and you will, I know, recognize that the Division of Architecture and the Division of Engineering in the Department of Public Works should be given sufficient funds to keep the program up to schedule.

Aviation.

In order to keep abreast of the times and to avoid far heavier expenditures in later years, I am convinced that the state must take steps to encourage the establishment and development of airports under a definite plan and policy, and to give official recognition to air navigation as an established means of communication and transportation.

**Payment
for Future
Improvements.**

We need have no idle dreams that when the present program of public improvement is complete, the State of New York can remain idle for a dozen years to come. Idleness and lack of vision in past years made the present heavy expenditure necessary. A constantly growing population, together with new demands of civilization, will soon require still more buildings to house the wards and the business of the state, and additional expenditures to add to parks, parkways and roads, and to put unused lands to some useful purpose.

With the example before us of highly developed and successful private businesses we can properly differentiate between those improvements which should be paid for out of current state revenues and the more permanent structures built and areas developed for the use of generations to come, which should be financed by the issuing of bonds backed by the credit of the state. It is worth while to call your attention to the fact that in spite of the bonding of many public improvements during the past few years, the debt of the State of New York is far lower than that of many other states on both a per capita and an assessed valuation basis.

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**Four Year
Term for
Governor.**

In the plan for the reorganization of the state government one recommendation remains unrealized. A constitutional amendment providing for the election in presidential years of a Governor to serve four years met defeat at the polls by an overwhelming vote. It has been claimed by one political party that this defeat expressed opposition to the principle of the four-year term. It was claimed by the other political party that the defeat voiced no such opinion but only a rejection of the proposal to hold the election in presidential years. We are all familiar with the arguments on both sides. It is unnecessary to repeat them here. I want to make it perfectly clear, however, that as long as nothing is done this difference of opinion will exist, and no one will ever know whether the people of this state approve of the four-year term for Governor with elections coming in the year midway between presidential elections. The only way to solve this question is to submit it frankly and fairly to the people of the state. If you are unwilling to pass a new constitutional amendment, which is my recommendation, providing for the election in off-years, I ask you in fairness to submit this simple question to the voters by referendum for an expression of their opinion at the next November election. That would seem to be a practical way as well as a course of good faith.

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**County and
Town
Governments.**

I can see no object in being anything but frank with you in regard to the business efficiency of our system of town and county governments. In recent years our system of state government has been brought to a high level of efficiency. Why should any of us pretend any longer that our county and town governments do not require the same kind of overhauling which we have given to the affairs of the state? Even the school children know that we maintain many useless offices in our towns, that many functions now exercised by town officials should be assumed by county management, that there is an almost complete lack of budgeting, that there is an equal lack of proper auditing, and, in the final analysis, that the average tax payer does not know why or where his tax money is being spent. It would be a fine thing if you and I, laying politics and partisanship aside, could take definite steps at this session of the Legislature towards this reform, which everybody knows is so vitally necessary. I am confident that the public will support an honest effort on our part, for I am not enough of a cynic to believe that the public is indifferent to wasteful or outworn governing methods.

Labor.

When I consider the extraordinary progress which has been made in labor and social legislation, I am reminded of the fact that eighteen years ago, when I was a member of the Legislature, any person advocating a large part of the laws which have been enacted in the succeeding years would have been called a dangerous radical. That is the universal history of social progress. While much has been accomplished so far, we cannot stand still, and I recommend to you the following program which I believe to be in accordance with the needs of the day,

1. A real eight-hour day and forty-eight hour week for women and children in industry.
2. The establishment for them of an advisory minimum or fair wage board.
3. The extension of workmen's compensation to give its benefits to all occupational diseases.
4. The prohibiting of the granting of temporary injunctions in individual disputes without notice of hearing; and provision for trial before a jury of any alleged violations of injunctions.
5. The immediate consideration by a commission of experts of the subject of old age security against want.
6. The continuation of such provisions of the emergency rent laws as are necessary.
7. Further elimination of unhealthy living conditions in the congested areas.
8. Declaration by law that the labor of a human being is not a commodity or an article of commerce.

Health.

While we have made and are making splendid progress in caring for the general health of our citizens, there are two specific matters in which we can lay the foundations for great public benefit.

Cripples.

The first of these is the care of adults and children who, through accident or disease, are so crippled in body that they are unable to lead useful and happy lives. It is estimated that at least 50,000 men, women and children in the State of New York are thus seriously handicapped, and many of them require constant attendance on the part of some able bodied person. As a matter of good business, it would pay the state to help in restoring these cripples to useful citizenship, and the great majority of them can, with the aid of modern medical science, be so restored. The great majority of them are, however, not today receiving adequate care or treatment for the very good reason that such treatment costs more time and money than the average family can afford.

But there is an added reason. I conceive it to be the duty of the state to give the same care to the restoring of the physical needs of these citizens as it now gives to their mental development. Universal education of the mind is, after all, a modern conception. We have reached the time now when we must recognize

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**Saratoga
Springs.**

Second, the state has during recent years acquired one of the greatest gifts of nature in the whole world—the mineral springs at Saratoga. I am not satisfied that the program for their development in the past has taken sufficient account of the great benefits to mankind that can be derived from them as medicinal and therapeutic agents. We in this country are far behind Europe in the internal and external use of natural mineral springs for health purposes. The springs at Saratoga should be developed primarily for health purposes, under far more careful medical supervision than we have hitherto attempted. The physical development of the state properties at Saratoga must proceed, and I ask you to authorize the appointment of a temporary commission of scientific and medical experts, in order that a careful plan may be worked out under their advice.

Education.

The principle mandatory increase in the coming budget will be the additional \$100, running probably to nine million dollars, required for the extension of the better education of our citizens. The people of the state are unanimous in support of our present liberal policy.

Under the present methods of apportioning state funds to rural school districts, the poorer districts in many instances fail to receive their fair share. The method of apportionment should be simplified and made to conform more closely to the relative wealth of the districts.

2914

Judicial Reform.

While I am confident that the citizens of the state gave their support to recent legislation which aims to diminish crime and to the policy of prison reform, still there are many thinking people who believe that we have not yet gone to the root of our troubles. By a long series of piecemeal enactments, covering many years, we have built up a highly complicated system of judicial procedure, both criminal and civil, which does not conform to the ideals of modern efficiency or simplicity. The growing body of our citizens complain of the complexities of the delays, and of the costliness of private and of public litigation. I do not for a moment believe either that the situation can be greatly improved by minor amendments to the existing system, nor do I believe that a drastic reform can be accomplished in one or two years. It is time, however, that a deeper study of the whole subject should be made by a body of citizens representing the bench, the bar and laymen. After conferring with you, I hope that I can recommend the definite initiation of this at a later time in the session.

"Ambulance Chasing."

One of the evils which have grown up in connection with our present administration of justice is the practice of "ambulance chasing." The Appellate Divisions of the First and Second Departments have recently conducted investigations relative to this abuse, and, I understand, will present certain legislation to your honorable bodies for the purpose of curbing such activities. I urge you to give your most earnest consideration to these recommendations.

Modernization of Inheritance Laws.

A State Commission composed of experienced Surrogates, legislators and lawyers has for the past two years been considering the important subject of the reform and modernization of our laws for the inheritance of real and personal property. Many of these laws have remained unchanged for over one hundred years and are out of harmony with modern economic and social conditions.

The Commission will make its report to you at this Session of the Legislature.

I approve of the Commission's general recommendations for improvements, particularly those for the greater protection of women in estates and for more simplicity, economy and expedition in estate administration. I know that this important subject will receive careful consideration by you and hope its recommendations will meet with your approval.

The recent election showed the need of various improvements in the election machinery, in order to take away all possibility of errors and to remove existing delays. I hope that when you pass legislation to attain this end, you will also agree to the creation of bi-partisan boards of election in all counties of the state, to the limiting of campaign expenditures for all elections and to the publication of all campaign receipts and disbursements before, as well as after election.

Also I recommend that you make a part of our fundamental law a requirement referring further amendments to the Federal Constitution to the people of the State themselves before the legislature passes on them.

I strongly favor the right of the people to initiate amendments to their own fundamental law known as the State Constitution, and I ask you to submit this proposal to the voters.

There are many disabled veterans of the recent war who by reason of confinement in veterans hospitals for treatment and cure, are unable to register or vote in elections. I recommend the necessary constitutional amendments and legislative changes to enable these men to exercise their rights of suffrage as citizens.

In the interest of common-sense and elimination of waste I recommend the abolition by constitutional amendment of the State Census, and the use of the Federal census for the purposes of State apportionment.

In my inaugural address to my fellow citizens I have already pledged myself to seek no mere personal or partisan advantage in the performance of my duties as Governor. I feel sure that the legislators of both parties will join me in this pledge. He

Election Law Changes.**Constitutional Amendments, Federal and State.****Soldiers in Veterans' Hospitals.****State Census.**

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In my inaugural address to my fellow citizens I have already pledged myself to seek no mere, personal, or partisan advantage in the performance of my duties as Governor. I feel sure that the legislators of both parties will join me in this pledge. He best serves his party who best serves his state.

Let us all at this session rid ourselves forever of that blighting dread of following in the rear guard of another's triumphal procession along the road to better government which has too often in the past prevented any progress whatsoever. It is of small moment who first points out that road. The important thing is having once seen the proper course, that we should turn towards it, fight for its adoption and march shoulder with the others to the goal.

In conclusion may I urge you all, individually, to come to me with problems, with suggestions, with honest differences of opinion as often and as freely as I hope you will let me come to you. The verdict on our relations that I most desire from you is that I have at least been fair—and reasonable—and friendly. Let a common desire to serve our state unite us in a common friendship.

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EDITORS:

Newspaper to the Legislature (1)

The following Inaugural Address of Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt is hereby released at noon, Tuesday, Wednesday,
January 2d 1929, unless otherwise ordered by wire.
It must not be quoted from, referred to, or commented
upon in any manner prior to that time.

MESSAGE TO THE LEGISLATURE

62737

1929

Members of the Legislature of the State of New York:

(2)

I come before the Legislature, not only in accordance with the Constitution to communicate the condition of the State, but also to express the hope and belief that neither you nor I are entering upon our offices with partisan purpose. From the day of our election we become individually and jointly the representatives of all the people ~~of~~ the State.

We are charged with the duty of carrying ~~on~~ carrying forward the existing functions of the government and also ~~with~~ initiating changes in present laws, made necessary by changing times, and of undertaking also new projects which an advancing civilization make desirable.

The past six years have been an unparalleled era in our State. We have pointed the way of progress to our sister States and this is an added reason why during the coming year we must not allow this progress to flag.

Most of our problems are not political; they can be solved by the same kind of cooperation on your part which I as the Executive of the State hereby offer to you. A few are matters of an honest difference of opinion: many of these also can, I hope, find practical solution by frank discussion and honest effort to obtain results; and where this becomes impossible, I hope that you will agree with me in avoiding further delays by employing the sound American method of submission to an expression of popular opinion by referendum.

FINANCES

Finances

I inherit from my distinguished predecessor a financial balance sheet showing an excellent condition in the Treasury, and the prospect of a substantial balance at the end of the current fiscal year. Careful figures will be submitted to you with the budget for the following fiscal year, ^{in a few weeks}. From a ^{preliminary} examination of anticipated receipts and ^{of} expenditures which are either mandatory or essential for the carrying on of existing business and of authorized projects, I am confident that we can arrive at a balanced budget, or, in other words, keep our expenditures within the figure of our anticipated income.

This does not, however make allowance either for new State undertakings, of which some are vital, ^{nor} does it make allowance for ^{readjustment or} reduction of certain taxes which now bear too heavily upon ^{particular} ~~some~~ of our ^{taxable} ~~citizens~~. In spite of previous studies, little progress has been made ⁱⁿ the formulation of a plan for a more scientific and equitable distribution of taxation. I urge the appointment of a non-political commission to this end.

Agricultural
Trust

I want the agricultural problems studied without regard to partisan politics and it is my hope ~~now~~ through appointing an agricultural commission composed of members of the legislature, master farmers, representatives of the the Grange, the Home Bureau, College of Agriculture, /the Farm Bureau, /the Dairymen's League and other farm cooperatives, that through their recommendations the ~~Legislature~~ ^{the} ~~Department~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~state~~ will be able to act favorably and constructively on this most important ~~farmers~~ subject.

It may be that adequate investigation will show that many of the farms abandoned within ^{the} ~~period of~~ ^{agricultural} depression since 1920 should not be restored to agriculture but should be ~~especially used for the growing~~ ^{devoted to} a future timber supply for the people of the state. At the same time we do not want the present alarming rate of farm abandonment to continue; ~~nor~~ we must therefore make special efforts to make it possible for those who are now engaged in agriculture on suitable agricultural land, to continue ~~to do so~~ under more favorable and more profitable conditions.

~~This~~ I hope that ~~the~~ agricultural commission will make a special study ~~in and~~ investigation of the whole farm assessment and tax situation in order to obtain a fairer adjustment of the farmers' taxes. ~~The ultimate goal is that~~ ~~the farmer and his~~ ~~shall~~ ~~have a reasonable~~ family receive at the end of each year as much for their labor as if they had been working not on a farm but as skilled workers under the best conditions in ~~any of our great industries~~, so that a New York State farmer will be put on the same level of earning capacity ~~as~~ as his fellow American who lives in the city.

~~The agricultural commission should study~~ the problem of distribution ~~should also consider~~ of farm products to the end that the unnecessarily high differential between what the farmer receives and what the consumer ~~pays~~ may be materially lowered, giving a better price to the farmer for his products and a lower cost to the consumer for what he buys.

(5)

Water
Power

On the subject of the development of Water Power sites, owned in part or in whole by the people of the State, I am convinced of two facts: First, that there is a definite demand for the undertaking of their development - not several years hence but this year; second, that the title and constant control of the power generated at the sources shall remain definitely in the people and shall not be alienated by long term leases. This is one of those questions on which I hope we can reach an agreement, but failing that, the people of the State ~~are to be~~ given opportunity to express their final judgment so that definite action can be made possible by the next legislature.

(6)

Parks

The development of our State-wide Park and Parkway system has, I think, ceased ~~to be a political controversy~~ and will, I am confident, go forward with your assistance. ~~With this goes~~ ^{of equal importance is} ~~in hand~~ the elimination of railroad crossings. I am not satisfied either with the governmental machinery or ~~with~~ with the cooperation of ^{some of the} railroads, and I hope that we can find means to expedite the work.

Rail
crossings

(7)

~~HIGHWAYS AND CANALS~~

Public Works

Highway

The policy of placing all State construction in one consolidated department of Public Works has been ~~justified~~. It seems almost unnecessary for me to stress the continuation of the present large program of highway construction and reconstruction, the building as rapidly as practical of new roads ~~in farm sections~~ and the rebuilding of old roads, now worn out or inadequate to meet modern traffic requirements. The State has recently lifted from the Counties any expense of building bridges on State highways, and I suggest that as there is little difference between a stream and a railroad as ~~a~~ ^{highway} obstruction, the present share of grade crossing elimination on State roads, now borne by the Counties, ~~as far as constitutionally possible,~~ should be assumed by the State.

Canal

The past few years have shown greater justification for the maintenance and operation of the Barge Canal, and in view of this it is incumbent ~~upon~~ us to continue its maintenance at the highest possible efficiency. With the Canal the State owns a number of useless or unimportant terminal properties, not located on the Canal ~~property~~ ^{1514.} Where these properties are ~~used~~ ^{desired} by local communities for useful public purposes, this use should be made possible by proper legislation.

~~The whole cost of maintaining State and County highways should be borne by the State.~~

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Other
Public
Works

OTHER PUBLIC WORKS

Definite progress has been made in designing and placing under ~~constant~~ ^{constantian} ^{liberal} contract the enormous program of hospitals, prisons, armories, office buildings, and other public buildings, and you will, I know, recognize that the Division of Architecture and the Division of Engineering in the Department of Public Works ^{should} be given sufficient funds to keep the program up to schedule.

AVIATION

(10)

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In order to keep abreast of the times and to avoid far heavier expenditures in later years, I am convinced that the State must take steps to encourage the establishment and development of airports under a definite plan and policy, and to give official recognition to air navigation as an established means of communication and transportation.

PAYMENT FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

We need have no idle dreams that when the present program of public improvements is complete, the State of New York can remain idle for a dozen years to come. Idleness and lack of vision in past years made the present heavy expenditure necessary. A constantly growing population, together with new demands of civilization, will soon require still more buildings to house the wards and the business of the State, and additional ~~of~~ ^{and} ~~land~~ ^{and areas developed} ~~to add to parks, parkways and roads,~~ ~~to improve cities,~~ and to put unused lands to some useful purpose.

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FOUR YEAR TERM FOR GOVERNOR

(12)

In the plan for the reorganization of the State government one recommendation remains unrealized, ~~a~~ constitutional amendment providing for the election in presidential years of a Governor to serve four years ~~at~~ defeat at the polls by ~~one~~ ^{an overwhelming} vote. It has been claimed by one political party that this defeat ~~expressed~~ opposition to the principle of the four year term. It was claimed by the other political party that the defeat voiced no such opinion but only a rejection of the proposal to hold the election in presidential years. We are all familiar with the arguments on both sides. It is unnecessary to repeat them here. I want to make it perfectly clear, however, that as long as nothing is done ^{will}, and ~~as~~ this difference of opinion exists, ^{exists}, no one will ever know whether the people of this State approve of the four year term for Governor with elections coming in the year midway between presidential elections.

The only way to solve this question is to submit it frankly and fairly to the people of the State, ~~again~~. If you are unwilling to pass a new constitutional amendment, ^{which is my recommendation,} providing for the election in off-years, I ask you in fairness to submit this ~~same~~ ^{simple} question to the voters for an expression of their opinion at the next November election. That

should seem to be a practical ^{way} as well as the ~~best~~ ^{best} course of good faith.

COUNTY AND TOWN GOVERNMENTS

13

I can see no object in being anything but frank with you in regard to the business efficiency of our system of Town and County governments. In recent years our system of State government has been brought to a high level of efficiency. Why should any of us pretend any longer that our County and Town governments do not require the same kind of overhauling which we have given to the affairs of the State? Even the school children know that we maintain many useless offices in our towns, that many functions now exercised by town officials should be ~~taken over under~~ ^{reform} County management, that there is an almost complete lack of budgeting, that there is an equal lack of proper auditing, and, in the final analysis, that the average tax payer does not know why or where his tax money is being spent. It would be a fine thing if you and I, laying politics and partisanship aside, could take definite steps at this session of the Legislature towards this ~~referendum~~, which everybody knows is so vitally necessary. ~~and~~ I am confident that the public will support an honest effort on our part, for I am not enough of a cynic to believe that the public is indifferent to wasteful or outworn governing methods.

LABOR

(14)

When I consider the extraordinary progress which has been made in labor and social legislation, I am reminded of the fact that eighteen years ago, when I was a member of the Legislature, any person advocating a large part of the laws which have been enacted in the succeeding years would have been called a dangerous radical. That is the universal history of social progress. While much has been accomplished so far, we cannot stand still, and I recommend to you the following program, which I believe to be in accordance with the needs of the day.

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motion
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- R. M. Weller
R. M. Weller*

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(15)

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EDUCATION

117

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~~Enlarge - Rural School - Main, open
continuation & off-farm schools~~

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The method of apportionment should be simplified and made ^{to conform more closely to the relative} wealth of the districts.

(18)

Judicial Reform

While I am confident that the citizens of the State gave their support to recent legislation which aims to diminish crime and to the policy of prison reform, still there are many thinking people who believe that we have not yet gone to the root of our troubles.

By a long series of piecemeal enactments, covering many years, we have built up a highly complicated system of judicial procedure, both criminal and civil, which does not conform to the ideals of modern efficiency or simplicity. The growing body of our citizens complain of the complexities, of the delays, and of the costliness of private and of public litigation. I do not for a moment believe either that the existing situation can be greatly improved by minor amendments to the existing system, nor do I believe that a drastic reform can be accomplished in one or two years. It is time, however, that a deeper study of the whole subject should be made by a body of citizens representing the bench, the bar and laymen. After conferring with you, I hope that I can recommend the definite initiation of this at a later time in the session.

PH (Insert 16 R)

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16B.

(19)

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~~(to be inserted in connection with that part
of the message dealing with reform in judicial
procedure)~~

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16c

~~MODERNIZATION OF THE INHERITANCE LAWS OF THE STATE.~~ (2)

*Modernization
of
Inheritance
Laws*

A State Commission composed of experienced Surrogates, legislators and lawyers has for the past two years been considering the important subject of the reform and modernization of our laws for the inheritance of real and personal property. Many of these laws have remained unchanged for over one hundred years and are out of harmony with modern economic and social conditions.

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I approve of the Commission's general recommendations for improvements, particularly those for the greater protection of women in estates and for more simplicity, economy and expedition in estate administration. I know that this important subject will receive careful consideration by you and hope its recommendations will meet with your approval.

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The recent election showed the need of various improvements in the election machinery, in order to take away all possibility of errors and to remove existing delays. I hope that when you pass legislation to ~~achieve~~ this end, you will also agree to the creation of bi-partisan boards of election in all Counties of the State, to the limiting of campaign expenditures for all elections and to the publication of all campaign receipts and disbursements before, as well as after election. Also I ^{recommend} that you make a part of our fundamental law a requirement referring further amendments to the Federal Constitution to the people of the State themselves before the Legislature passes on them.

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I strongly favor the right of the people to initiate amendments to their own fundamental law known as the State Constitution, and I ask you to submit this proposal to the voters.

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176

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SOLDIERS IN VETERANS HOSPITALS

There are a ~~few~~ many disabled veterans of the recent war who by reason of confinement in veterans hospitals for treatment and cure, are unable to register or vote in elections. I recommend ~~make~~ the necessary constitutional amendments and legislative changes ~~to~~ enable these men to exercise their rights of suffrage as citizens.

18 *R. W. H.*

(23)

State
Census

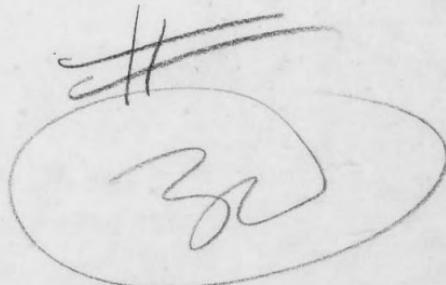
In the interest of common sense
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244

In my inaugural address to my fellow citizens I have already pledged myself to seek no mere personal or partisan advantage in the performance of my duties as Governor. I feel sure that the legislators of both parties will join me in this pledge. He best serves his party who best serves his state.

Let us all at this session rid ourselves forever of that blighting dread of following in the rear guard of another's triumphal procession along the road to better government which has too often in the past prevented any progress whatsoever. It is of small moment who first points out that road. The important thing is, having once seen the proper course, that we should turn towards it, fight for its adoption and march shoulder with the others to the goal.

In conclusion may I urge you all, individually, to come to me with problems, with suggestions, with honest differences of opinion as often and as freely as I hope you will let me come to you. The verdict on our relations that I most desire from you is that I have at least been fair - and reasonable - and friendly. Let a common desire to serve our state unite us in a common friendship.



A handwritten signature in cursive script, enclosed within a large oval. The signature reads "James W. Noyes". Above the oval, there is a stylized, horizontal mark consisting of two parallel diagonal strokes forming an 'H' shape.

62712
1-5
8/7/29

62737

EDITORS:

The following ~~Inaugural Address~~ of Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt is hereby released at noon, Tuesday, ~~Wednesday~~, January 2d, 1929, unless otherwise ordered by wire. It must not be quoted from, referred to, or commented upon in any manner prior to that time.

MESSAGE TO THE LEGISLATURE

62737

1929

Members of the Legislature of the State of New York: (2)

I come before the Legislature, not only in accordance with the Constitution to communicate the condition of the State, but also to express the hope and belief that neither you nor I are entering upon our offices with partisan purpose. From the day of our election we become individually and jointly the representatives of all the people of the State.

We are charged with the duty of carrying ~~on~~^{on} carrying forward the existing functions of the government and also with initiating changes in present laws, made necessary by changing times, and of undertaking also new projects which an advancing civilization make desirable.

The past six years have been an unparalleled era in our State. We have pointed the way of progress to our sister States and this is an added reason why during the coming year we must not allow this progress to flag.

Most of our problems are not political: they can be solved by the same kind of cooperation on your part which I as the Executive of the State hereby offer to you. A few are matters of an honest difference of opinion: many of these also can, I hope, find practical solution by frank discussion and honest effort to obtain results; and where this becomes impossible, I hope that you will agree with me in avoiding further delays by employing the sound American method of submission to an expression of popular opinion by referendum.

FINANCES

(3)

~~Finance~~ I inherit from my distinguished predecessor a financial balance sheet showing an excellent condition in the Treasury, and the prospect of a substantial balance at the end of the current fiscal year. Careful figures will be submitted to you with the budget for the following fiscal year, ^{in a few weeks} ~~preliminary~~, ~~in a few weeks~~. From a ~~careful~~ examination of anticipated receipts, and of expenditures, which are either mandatory or essential for the carrying on of existing business and of authorized projects, I am confident that we can arrive at a balanced budget, or, in other words, keep our expenditures within the figure of our anticipated income.

This does not, however make allowance either for new State undertakings, of which some are vital, ^{nor} does it make allowance for ~~adjustment on~~ reduction of certain taxes which now bear too heavily upon ^{particular} ~~some~~ of our ^{rural population} ~~citizens~~. In spite of previous studies, little progress has been made ⁱⁿ the formulation of a plan for a more scientific and equitable distribution of taxation. I urge the appointment of a non-political commission to this end.

Message to Legislature
Jan 2, 1929

3.

(4)

I want the agricultural problems studied without regard to partisan politics and it is my hope ~~now~~ through appointing an agricultural commission composed of members of the legislature, master farmers, representatives of the College of Agriculture, the Grange, the Home Bureau, the Farm Bureau, the Dairymen's League and other farm cooperatives, that through their recommendations the ~~Legislature~~ ^{the State of New York} Government will be able to act favorably and constructively on this most important ~~political~~ subject.

It may be that adequate investigation will show that many of the farms abandoned within ^{the agricultural} period of depression since 1920 should not be restored to agriculture but should be ~~especially used for~~ ^{devoted to} the growing of a future timber supply for the people of the state. At the same time we do not want the present alarming rate of farm abandonment to continue; so we must therefore make special efforts to make it possible for those who are now engaged in agriculture on suitable agricultural land, to continue to do so under more favorable and more profitable conditions.

I hope that ~~the~~ ^{this} agricultural commission will make a special study ~~in~~ and investigation of the whole farm assessment and tax situation in order to obtain a fairer adjustment of the farmers' taxes. ~~This means~~ ^{that} ~~the farmer and his~~ family receive ~~as the cost of~~ ^{for a year's work} as much for their labor as if they had been working not on a farm but as skilled workers under the best conditions in ~~any of our great industries~~, so that a New York State farmer will be put on the same level of earning capacity as his fellow American who lives in the city.

The agricultural commission should ~~also~~ ^{study} the problem of distribution of farm products to the end that the unnecessarily high differential between what the farmer receives and what the consumer pays may be materially lowered, giving a better price to the farmer for his products and a lower cost to the consumer for what he buys.

Original of this page is on display in the South Section of the Main Gallery, 3rd

removed from display and
retired for preservation

226-05
BC

(5)

Water
Power

On the subject of the development of Water Power sites, owned in part or in whole by the people of the State, I am convinced of two facts: First, that there is a definite demand for the undertaking of their development - not several years hence but this year; second, that the title and constant control of the power generated at the sources shall remain definitely in the people and shall not be alienated by long term leases. This is one of those questions on which I hope we can reach an agreement, ~~but failing that the people of the State are to be given~~ ^{as far as} opportunity to express their final judgment so that definite action can be made possible by the next legislature.

(6)

Parks

The development of our State-wide Park and Parkway system has,
I think, ceased ~~being a political controversy~~^{To be a} and will, I am confident, go
forward with your assistance. ~~With this goes hand in hand~~^{of equal importance is} the elimination
Grade
Crossings of railroad crossings. I am not satisfied either with the governmental
machinery or ~~with~~ with the cooperation of ^{some of the} railroads, and I hope
that we can find means to expedite the work.

HIGHWAYS AND CANALS

(7)

Public Works

Highways

The policy of placing all State construction in one consolidated department of Public Works has been ~~justified~~. It seems almost unnecessary for me to stress the continuation of the present large program of highway construction and reconstruction, the building as rapidly as practical of new roads ~~in farm sections~~ and the rebuilding of old roads,

now worn out or inadequate to meet modern traffic requirements. The State has recently lifted from the Counties any expense of building bridges on State highways, and I suggest that as there is little difference between a stream and a railroad as ~~an~~ obstruction, the present share of grade crossing elimination on State roads, now borne by the Counties, ~~as far as constitutionally possible~~, should be assumed by the State.

The past few years have shown greater justification for the maintenance and operation of the Barge Canal, and in view of this it is incumbent ~~upon~~ us to continue its maintenance at the highest possible efficiency. With the Canal the State owns a number of useless or unimportant terminal properties, not located on the Canal ~~property~~. Where these properties are ~~wanted~~ by local communities for useful public purposes, this use should be made possible by proper legislation.

This whole cost of maintaining State and County highways should be borne by the State.

It There is no doubt that under the present system of distribution of cost between State and Counties the burden of completing the state and county highway system ^{and bridges} fall in unfair measure on the less prosperous communities. The fairest measure should be the actual relative wealth of each community. The whole problem however is so involved in the broader subject of Taxes and of Budget that I will present it to you at a later time. P 168

6 B.

(8)

As both major parties have in their platforms recommended that the whole cost of maintaining State and County highways should be borne by the state, the provision of law requiring towns to contribute \$5 a mile for this upkeep should be re-enacted. This will add about \$600,000. next year to the state's expense.

(9)

GENERAL PUBLIC WORKS

Other
Public
Works

Definite progress has been made in designing and placing construction liberal under contract the enormous program of hospitals, prisons, armories, office buildings, and other public buildings, and you will, I know, recognize that the Division of Architecture and the Division of Engineering in the Department of Public Works ^{should} be given sufficient funds to keep the program up to schedule.

AVIATION

(10)

Aviation

In order to keep abreast of the times and to avoid far heavier expenditures in later years, I am convinced that the State must take steps to encourage the establishment and development of airports under a definite plan and policy, and to give official recognition to air navigation as an established means of communication and transportation.

PAYMENT FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

(1)

We need have no idle dreams that when the present program of public improvements is complete, the State of New York can remain idle for a dozen years to come. Idleness and lack of vision in past years made the present heavy expenditure necessary. A constantly growing population, together with new demands of civilization, will soon require still more buildings to house the wards and the business of the State, and additional expenditures to add to parks, parkways and roads, ~~to improve connections~~, and to put unused lands to some useful purpose.

With the example before us of highly developed and successful private businesses we can properly differentiate between those improvements which should be paid for out of current State revenues and the more permanent structures built for the use of ~~several~~ ^{and areas affected} generations to come, which should be financed by the issuing of bonds backed by the credit of the State. It is worth while to call your attention to the fact that in spite of the bonding of many public improvements during the past few years, the ~~bond~~ debt of the State of New York is far lower than that of many other states on both a per capita and an assessed valuation basis.

FOUR YEAR TERM FOR GOVERNOR

(12)

In the plan for the reorganization of the State government one recommendation remains unrealized, ~~a~~ constitutional amendment providing for the election in presidential years of a Governor to serve four years ~~at~~ defeat at the polls by ~~an overwhelming~~ ^{mat} ~~one~~ vote. It has been claimed by one political party that this defeat ~~voiced~~ ^{expressed} opposition to the principle of the four year term. It was claimed by the other political party that the defeat voiced no such opinion but only a rejection of the proposal to hold the election in presidential years. We are all familiar with the arguments on both sides. It is unnecessary to repeat them here. I want to make it perfectly clear, however, that as long as ~~this~~ ^{as} ~~in my judgment~~ ^{which is my recommendation} ~~will~~ ^{simplly} ~~exist~~, no one will ever know whether the people of this State approve of the four year term for Governor with elections coming in the year midway between presidential elections. The only way to solve this question is to submit it frankly and fairly to the people of the State, ~~again~~. If you are unwilling to pass a new constitutional amendment providing for the election in off-years, I ask you in fairness to submit this ~~question~~ ^{by referendum} ~~to the voters for an~~ expression of their opinion at the next November election. That would seem to be a practical ^{way} ~~will no the sensible~~ ^a course of good faith.

COUNTY AND TOWN GOVERNMENTS

13

I can see no object in being anything but frank with you in regard to the business efficiency of our system of Town and County governments. In recent years our system of State government has been brought to a high level of efficiency. Why should any of us pretend any longer that our County and Town governments do not require the same kind of overhauling which we have given to the affairs of the State? Even the school children know that we maintain many useless offices in our towns, that many functions now exercised by town officials should be taken over under County management, that there is an almost complete lack of budgeting, that there is an equal lack of proper auditing, and, in the final analysis, that the average tax payer does not know why or where his tax money is being spent. It would be a fine thing if you and I, laying politics and partisanship aside, could take definite steps at this session of the Legislature towards this referendum, which everybody knows is so vitally necessary. ~~and~~ I am confident that the public will support an honest effort on our part, for I am not enough of a cynic to believe that the public is indifferent to wasteful or outworn governing methods.

LA B O R

(14)

When I consider the extraordinary progress which has been made in labor and social legislation, I am reminded of the fact that eighteen years ago, when I was a member of the Legislature, any person advocating a large part of the laws which have been enacted in the succeeding years would have been called a dangerous radical. That is the universal history of social progress. While much has been accomplished so far, we cannot stand still, and I recommend to you the following program, which I believe to be in accordance with the needs of the day.

- Sharing
members
etc*
1. A real eight hour day and forty-eight hour week for women and children in industry.
 2. The establishment for them of an Advisory Minimum or Fair Wage Board.
 3. The extension of Workmen's Compensation to give its benefits to all occupational diseases.
 4. The prohibiting of the granting of temporary injunctions in individual disputes without notice of hearing; and ~~provision for~~
 5. Trial before a jury of any alleged violations of injunctions.
 6. The immediate consideration by a commission of experts of the subject of "old age security against want."
 7. The continuation of such provisions of the emergency rent laws as are necessary.
 8. Declaration by law that the labor of a human being is not a commodity or an article of commerce.

R. M. H. #1

HEALTH

(15)

Health
While we have made and are making splendid progress in caring for the general health of our citizens, there are two specific matters in which we can lay the foundations for great public benefit.

Cripples
The first of these is the care of adults and children who through accident or disease are so crippled in body that they are unable to lead useful and happy lives. It is estimated that at least ~~five~~ ^{thousand} 50,000 men, women and children in the State of New York are thus seriously handicapped, and many of them require constant attendance on the part of some able bodied person. As a matter of good business, it would pay the State to help in restoring these cripples to useful citizenship, and the great majority of them can, with the aid of modern medical science, be so restored. The great majority of them are, however, not today receiving adequate care or treatment for the very good reason that such treatment costs more time and money than the average family can afford.

But there is an added reason. I conceive it to be the duty of the State to give the same care to the ~~developing and perfecting~~ ^{restoring} ~~needs~~ needs of the physical development of these citizens as it now gives to their mental development. ^{Universal} Compulsory education ~~of~~ ^{now} the mind is, after all, a modern conception. We have reached the time when we must recognize the same obligation of the State to the ~~restoration~~ ^{recreation} to useful activity ~~those~~ those children and adults who have the misfortune ~~being~~ crippled. I shall submit to you a carefully worked out program to initiate this much needed care.

Saratoga
Springs
Second, the State has during recent years acquired one of the greatest gifts of nature in the whole world - the mineral springs at Saratoga. I am not satisfied that the program for their development

in the past has taken sufficient account of the great benefits ^{and Therapeutic} that can be derived from them as medicinal agents. We in this country are far behind Europe in the internal and external use of natural mineral springs for health purposes. The springs at Saratoga should be developed primarily for health purposes, under far more careful medical supervision than we have hitherto attempted. The physical development of the State properties at Saratoga must proceed, and I ask you to authorize the appointment of a temporary commission of scientific and medical experts, in order that a careful plan may be worked out under their advice.

EDUCATION

(17)

The principle mandatory increase in the coming budget will be
the additional sum, running ^{probably to nine} ~~to seven~~ eight million dollars, required
for the extension of the better education of our citizens. The people
of the State are unanimous in support of our present liberal policy.

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CH
32