

State of the State
Governor Charles Haskell
January 20, 1910

To the Legislature:

Pursuant to Section Seven, Article Six of the Constitution, I have deemed it to the best interests of the people in our State to convene the Legislative branch of our government in Extraordinary Session, believing that there is necessity for legislation, the benefits of which will far outweigh the cost of this meeting, limited, as I believe it may be, to a brief period.

The people of Oklahoma have entrusted the Legislature and the Governor with certain duties of government, which it is our duty to perform from time to time as our best judgment may convince us is right, and when we are confronted with official duty, it devolves upon us to execute the same without fear of criticism, and with a firm hand, and with a determination to do the right, to make government as beneficial for the mass of our people, and at the same time as economic as the close application of genius may devise, and honesty of purpose promote.

STATE BUILDING.

The building of a great state carries with it burdens upon its public officials and its people that every citizen is bound to appreciate, and it is only senseless or vicious critics that would demand in the beginning those conditions of perfection and organization which can come only with years of effort. You may rely upon it that our duty fearlessly and honestly performed, will meet the approval of all these whose good opinion is worthy of consideration.

The organization of a new state under ordinary conditions is a vast undertaking. But the consolidation of two Territories into one state, as we have undertaken, stands without a precedent in our American Union. Until the admission of Oklahoma there had been no other newly created state within the last forty years, except such as had been preceded by thorough Territorial organization, with counties, districts, and towns thoroughly organized and under local government, with school houses, bridges, roads, and other improvements already in existence, and the people experienced in the conduct of local government.

Again, no such state had as much as three hundred and fifty thousand population, nor greater than forty million dollars of wealth, whereas in Oklahoma the area of our state, from which forty of our new counties were made, was wholly unorganized, no county organizations, no school districts, no townships, no rural school houses, no bridges, no roads, and the local officers necessarily elected largely of men who had had little or no opportunity to gain experience in the science of local government, and however capable, it was necessary for them to have time and experience to qualify themselves for satisfactory public service, and in our new state, with almost one and a half million population and one billion dollars of wealth, we have fully realized that the magnitude of contention with which your officers have to deal is largely measured by its population and its wealth.

To be selfish is but human, and we have had to contend with the demands of selfish interests, and to put on a bold and determined front to those who would attain selfish ends at the expense of the great mass whose defense is our sworn duty. And

hence, I say to you, that it is not to be taken as in any way indicating that your Honorable Body, in your former sessions, failed in any degree in the performance of any work, that I found it desirable to have you meet again.

Indeed, in state building, under a constitution written at the command of the honest people of our state, you are to be commended for the good work of the First and Second Sessions, and it is not surprising that there is more good work to perform.

We are not here to criticize the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature, which in seventeen years preceding statehood accumulated a code of laws which the state inherited, and which might have been sufficient for state government. In the spirit of fairness and liberality, we prefer to say that changed conditions, a greater population and greater development, might have necessitated, in some degree, a different code of laws. Let that subject be buried with the past, and let us live in the present, and continue amending the Oklahoma Territory laws wherein their amendment may benefit our people, and make them to fit modern conditions, and the protective features which our constitution guarantees to our people.

Before asking your Honorable Body to enter upon the consideration of the matters to which I shall call your attention, I want to thank you for the good work of the past, and in extending my thanks to the Legislative Body, I trust that no one will fail to realize that my thanks are to your entire membership. I have often, and do again, congratulate myself that in the consideration of laws in the past, your members, regardless of political affiliation, have given me many reasons for feeling grateful for your candid and courteous consideration, and I therefore commend to you all, as men whom I know will consider in all seriousness and fairness, the subjects that will be before you.

ONWARD AND UPWARD.

The great Creator gave Oklahoma a soil and a climate fit to be one of the grandest states of the Union. He stored its hills and plains with immense wealth, mineral, oil and numerous other deposits of great value. It rests alone for the people of this state to avail themselves of Nature's bounties and opportunities to make Oklahoma an abiding place where homes of happiness and plenty may abound. The last year has been one of continued progress and development. Complete statistics of the state's progress are not yet available, but enough is known to justify congratulation.

Our leading commercial center (Oklahoma City) shows that during the last twelve months, in commerce, in finance, in manufacturing, and in population, there has been an average increase of slightly more than thirty-five per cent, and this flourishing city is but an index to the volume of statistics of the entire state from which enough is already known to show that remarkable growth has taken place in all localities of the state.

It is true that the constitution of the State of Oklahoma has continued to be the subject of discussion throughout the Union, --praised by those who would have honest government, and viciously condemned by those who would have special privileges. The direst [*sic*] calamities [*sic*] have been prophesied, and the with-holding of foreign capital for investment has been the constant threat of those who would assail a government, not in theory but in actual practice, "of the people and for the people." It has become so apparent that not is found to deny that organized special interests, through subsidized press, we regret to say, both at home and abroad, have relentlessly and viciously, first, sought to intimidate and then to destroy all public officials of this state who have insisted

that the constitution made by the people of Oklahoma shall be administered in their interest.

Has foreign capital been with-held? Let us see:

BANKS.

On November 27th, 1908, the state banks of Oklahoma contained twenty-nine million, four hundred forty-eight thousand, nine hundred seventy-three dollars and ninety-six cents of individual deposits.

On November 16th, 1909, the state banks contained forty-nine million seven hundred seventy-five thousand four hundred thirty-three dollars and forty-one cents of individual deposits, and as evidence conclusive that this vast increase of nearly seventy per cent in our state bank deposits in a single year was either increased wealth within the state, or foreign money entrusted to our care, we have but to note the fact that the national banks within our state also made a moderate increase within the same period.

RAILROADS.

I am pleased to call your attention to the fact that within the last twelve months there has been built almost two hundred and fifty miles of railway track within our state, an amount of railroad construction not equaled by any one of the other twelve states touched by the largest single system that passes through our borders.

OIL.

In oil production, Oklahoma is still in the front rank of oil producing states, and thanks to the acts of your Honorable Body, in its last session, the greatest among the oil handling companies has decided to domesticate its pipe line company in Oklahoma, serve our people, and trust to their honesty to give capital a fair opportunity to earn a reasonable profit.

NATURAL GAS.

The further development of our State shows the great value, at least for the time being, of the deposit of natural gas within our state. We still firmly believe that the state of Oklahoma is entitled to the benefit that may accrue from this valuable product, and we regret that we may be deprived of the home benefits to which the people of our state are justly entitled. We don't believe that a foreign company can properly be vested with power to invade our state and take away this product against the will of the state, and the wishes of our people, and we hope that opportunity may be found to protect our state against this unwarranted invasion.

AGRICULTURE.

The sum total of agriculture throughout the state in the volume of wealth produced, is a subject of congratulation, but I regret that the unfavorable season caused distress in some localities, and yet with the great variety of products of which Oklahoma soil is capable of production, the general average has been good, and results have advanced our state as a whole to a higher place among the other states of the Union

TWO CENT FARE AND FREIGHT RATES.

I regret to advise you that the concerted and determined assault upon the constitutional provisions which you and I are here to protect, have reached in every direction where the few might profit by a heavier burden of the many. The actual experience of th [*sic*] last two years shows conclusively that a two cent railroad fare, with free transportation to none, and a uniform rate to all, has given the railroad companies a larger earning than the former rate of three cents to the masses and free transportation to

the classes, and yet Oklahoma's two cent fare and freight rate laws are assailed in the Federal Courts, and no one can tell with certainty what the end may be, but in view of the great care and wisdom of those in the Constitutional Convention, who drafted these provisions, I cannot conceive how it is possible for a Federal Court to interfere with our two cent railroad fare law, nor the provision for regulating freight rates. Those provisions that afford an adequate remedy at law in all cases where a two cent fare or a freight rate ruling of our Corporation Commission are alleged to do an injustice to the transportation company, certainly should protect these provisions against interference by a Federal Court of equity, and where similar laws in other states have fallen before the approach of these courts, I rely upon the wisdom of those who drafted these provisions in our constitution to have saved Oklahoma from any such disaster.

TAXATION.

The policy of Oklahoma government is that taxation should bear with equal force upon all items of property, and all sources of profit, strictly according to the value thereof, and that one hundred thousand dollars worth of property should pay one hundred times as much as one thousand dollars worth of property, no more in proportion, and no less. It was not to be expected that this rule of common honesty could be proclaimed in the Oklahoma Constitution and carried out in our administration of government until the great powers had exhausted every effort to avoid their just proportion of the burdens of government. We know full well that great combinations of capital throughout the world have at all times opposed every effort in government that stood in the way of their obtaining special privileges, and an advantage over the weaker classes, and this effort in Oklahoma has made it necessary for your officers to contend daily for the people's rights, and this contention we again find, that called us into the Federal Courts to meet the opposition to equal and just taxation.

Substantially half the miles of railroad in our state has not yet paid the last half of the taxes for the year 1908, and this controversy is still in court, untried for more than a year. Likewise the revenue due to the state for the year 1908, fixed by the Legislature upon the profits and earnings of public service corporations, coal mines, and the like, is still with-held from the state, and protected by injunction against the state officials, issued by the courts where those cases are pending.

BANKING LAW.

Theorizing may do when we consider untried things, but two years of actual experience has qualified our people to judge of the efficiency of the Oklahoma banking law, and I am proud to remind your Honorable Body that with a rare exception, and usually inspired by a selfish interest, all others commend your Honorable Body for the passage of this law. It has been subjected to the severest test possible to have occurred within our state. It has arisen from this test, supreme in its power, and blessed by the people for its beneficial effects.

Some suggests this law needs amendment. You will find, as I have found, no doubt, that this call for amendment is inspired, either by those friendly disposed who have not carefully studied its provisions, but largely by those who would kill the law by amendment, and who pose as its friends when they want but the opportunity to destroy it.

Judge this law by its record. We do not mean to say that we are not at all times ready to listen to those who would promote improvement in this law, and yield to their judgment if necessity be shown therefore, and to all such we will lend patient ear, and

welcome their advice, and yet this law, like the two cent fare, the railroad rate, equal taxation, and the extending of foreign gas pipe lines within our state, has been assailed in the Federal Courts of the Union, but I have the confidence to believe that the right of a state to reasonably control its own corporate creatures, the right to protect the people of the state, the right to afford stability to finance, and safety to the business interests of our state will not be invaded by the great Court which will pass final judgment upon this question [*sic*].

I mention the above as a few of the raids made upon the constitutional provisions of our state so that our people may realize that while their officers have been burdened with the ordinary cares of organizing a new state and administering its government, they have the added tremendous burden of defending the people and their constitution against these determined assaults.

OTHER DEPARTMENTS.

Due to the fact that this extraordinary session was only determined upon a few days ago, the various other departments of government have not had sufficient time to furnish me with their reports and statistics so that I will at this time be prepared to make very little specific mention of the other departments other than to say that the good work of our state corporation commission is going forward, as in the year before, embarrassed here and there by court injunctions, but yet making a record that speaks well for their efficiency and determination to properly administer the law.

Our educational department while it is the chief item of expense throughout the state, is also one of its greatest benefits and is attaining a high standard of efficiency.

Of the new institutions the State Normal School at Tahlequah, accommodated by the buildings purchased [*sic*] from the Cherokee Nation, is making an excellent record.

The State Normal School at Durant, and the State Normal at Ada, and the Girl's Industrial School at Chickasha, and the University Preparatory School at Claremore are all being accommodated in local buildings furnished by the people of the respective communities, are making a showing complimentary to the community and the state. The permanent buildings for these several institutions are in course of construction, as is also the new building at the Weatherford Normal, and all are progressing in a satisfactory manner. The new main building at the Colored Agricultural School at Langston and at Taft, and the School of Mines at Wilburton are either completed or under such progress as to promise early completion.

WHITTAKER ORPHAN HOME AND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF.

These institutions will both receive mention hereafter, but the fact and figures that I desire with relation to these have not yet reached me.

Other state officers, boards and departments not hereinbefore or hereinafter specifically mentioned for the want of detailed reports, I can safely say have made very substantial progress in the conduct of their work, and such as I am sure will meet the approval of your Honorable Body.

I am also pleased to advise you that except as hereinafter specifically stated *no deficiencies* exist in any appropriation, and on request is made of you for any further or additional appropriations to any of the offices or departments of state government.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

To the following subjects only I now submit recommendations for your consideration:

SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND.

Due to an error, no doubt in enrolling, the appropriation bill at the last session of the legislature for appropriation then made to maintain the school for the blind for this year and next year, was, in the opinion of the Attorney General, rendered invalid, and I therefore ask you to re-enact such appropriation bill validating the appropriations then intended to be made. This will not increase the cost of state government this year as the amount of this appropriation was included in the total cost of state government heretofore made and was for the sum of \$20,000 for each year.

NEW APPROPRIATIONS.

I ask for new appropriations from the general revenues of this state as follows: In order to aid our Attorney General in employing an assistant counsel whom he deemed necessary, and in which I concurred, for the defense of the state in the two cent fare and freight rate cases, I set aside two thousand dollars from this year and three thousand dollars from next year's appropriation made for me to be used in special investigations, employment of counsel, etc. I did this because I believed the interest of the state could best be served by my turning this fund in to aid the Attorney General, and I am sure he expended it wisely, and I now ask that you appropriate similar amounts to reimburse the fund from which the same was taken.

MILITARY EXPENSES.

The state militia incurred an unusual expense, but in my judgment a necessary expense, in suppression rioting and other vicious conduct in Okmulgee and McIntosh counties, known as "The Snake Indian Uprising," and for which bills were incurred amounting to six thousand three hundred and eighty dollars and ninety-seven cents, and I ask that you appropriate an amount of money necessary to liquidate said bills.

It will be observed that the two new appropriations herein asked to be paid out of the tax funds of the state amount to less than \$12,000, and I am satisfied that surplus balances in other appropriations made by you at your last session for the current year will be so much greater than these two items as to keep the total expense of state government well within the total appropriation for the year's business.

INSANE INSTITUTIONS.

The State of Oklahoma now has substantially 1200 insane patients under its care. About 575 are kept at Fort Supply Asylum, and about 625 are still kept under the provisions of the Oklahoma Territory contract at the private institution at Norman. As to the condition and conduct of both of these institutions, I hand you herewith the complete detailed reports of our State Charities Commissioner, Miss Kate Barnard. You will find she has carefully and fully analyzed the subject, and I commend these reports to your careful consideration.

It is true that Oklahoma is a new state and its institutions must necessarily be of a character less comfortable, less complete, and less attractive to the patients and the public, and yet I believe there are many of her recommendations that we can encourage and adopt to the great benefit of the service. I especially call your attention to the fact that the most serious complaints set forth are such that the legislature alone can remedy, as they require greater expenditures of money than you have given the board appropriations to meet.

I have further to recommend for your present consideration the following:

That you amend the law so that each county that commits a patient to the care of the state asylum shall be charged with such quarterly payment in advance as will defray at least 70 per cent of the total expense, the state furnishing the institution and paying for its administration is substantially 30 per cent of the entire cost.

Further, that your law contain such provisions that the person legally responsible for the support of the patient, if possessed of an estate greater than the exemptions provided by law, shall, by the county court so committing the patient, charge such person with the payment to the county of a sum equal to the amount that the county is required to pay the state. And further, that if there be no person legally responsible for the support of the patient, either as parent or next of kin, that such patient is possessed of an ample estate of his own, that the amount which the county is required to pay the state shall be reimbursed from the estate of such patient, if such estate is in amount greater than the exemptions allowed by law.

I respectfully call your attention to the fact that there are few states of the Union which, as Oklahoma is now doing, provides for the care of all of its insane free of charge to the county, the patient or his family.

I also call your attention to the fact that the county court in each county has a much better opportunity to cause the county to be reimbursed by the family, or the estate, than it would be possible for the state board to administer such law throughout the entire state.

CHILOCCO MISSION.

I am advised by the Honorable Bird McGuire, our member of Congress from the First District, wherein the Chilocco Mission School is located, and who, fortunately is Chairman in the House of Representatives at Washington of the committee having such matters in charge, that the United States Government may deem it wise to give the State of Oklahoma all of said Chilocco Mission property, which consists of buildings costing practically a half million dollars and embracing over 8000 acres of valuable land, and I therefore ask that you, at the earliest moment possible, pass a joint resolution properly authorizing our said member of congress to express the desire of the State of Oklahoma to have said property, the same to be used as an asylum for the care of insane patients. And further, that all of our delegation in congress be earnestly urged to aid and support the effort to secure said property for the state. I find, on investigation, that this property is of such character as to be immediately available for the comfortable care and keeping of probably as many as 600 patients, and I believe that we should, at the earliest possible moment, provide a place where the patients now kept under contract at Norman can be transferred.

VINITA ASYLUM.

At your last session you made an appropriation of two hundred thousand dollars to build an Eastern State Insane Asylum near the town of Vinita, on 160 acres of land to be furnished by the citizens of that community. Before beginning the expenditure of the two hundred thousand dollars in buildings on this land, I advised the other members of the state asylum board to visit the several insane asylums in the states of Illinois and Indiana in order to better qualify ourselves to properly handle such an important question. This Committee visited these institutions, made a careful investigation and reported to me in writing (a copy of which I hand you herewith).

From this report you will observe it was universally urged upon us by men of great experience that in order to be efficient and economical an insane asylum was essentially a farm proposition, and that the best results were obtained where the land was equal to substantially two acres per inmate, and that from 600 to 800 inmates was the number most economical to maintain at each separate institution. I therefore felt that to spend two hundred thousand dollars building on 160 acres of land at Vinita would not be a sensible thing for the state to do. I did not desire, on account of the great necessity of same, to delay this building until a future session of the legislature, neither did I deem it good judgment to depend on the state having an opportunity to buy additional land at a fair price after the state might have expended the two hundred thousand dollars in buildings, and therefore be irrevocably bound to that location and be at the mercy of land owners who might fix extraordinary prices for their land, and hence before taking any steps to invest any of the state's money in building, I sent an agent to Vinita, who was able, and greatly assisted by the Vinita Commercial Club, in securing legal options, executed and recorded, upon about 1100 acres of land adjoining this institution, and which options and a plat of the ground I hand you herewith showing that the state may purchase any or all of the several farms at acreage prices, averaging about thirty odd dollars per acre. I am informed by those who know, that these prices are not above the present fair market value of these several farms. And, therefore, the legislature now has an opportunity, should it deem wise, to buy such amount of this additional land as in its judgment may be proper; and I do recommend that out of the proceeds of the sale of public building land, first, that this additional land be purchased for the state for the use of said asylum and the site whereon to build and maintain the same; and I do further recommend that in order to give said asylum institution a capacity sufficient for from 500 to 600 patients, that an additional appropriation be made for building purposes out of the proceeds of the sale of public building land. While you have heretofore appropriated two hundred thousand dollars to begin this institution, I call your attention to the fact that similar institutions in our neighboring states cost several times the amount you have already appropriated, and if we are to care for our unfortunate insane it is but necessary to read the report of our State Charities Commissioner in order to convince us that substantial appropriations must be made for building purposes. Judging by the present insane patients as compared with total population in other states, Oklahoma, with its present population must soon contemplate the necessity for accommodating from 1800 to 2000 patients.

PENAL INSTITUTIONS.

By various acts of our legislature in former sessions we have under construction at McAlester, a state penitentiary. One hundred acres of ground was acquired as heretofore reported by a donation of the people of that community and a very substantial and suitable wall and buildings have been under construction for sometime and are now nearing completion. About one thousand prisoners are now being detained at McAlester, a part in the federal jail leased to the state temporarily and a part in temporary enclosures on the new prison grounds. The State Warden has made a remarkable record up to date, not only in the economic maintenance of this institution, but in the safe keeping of the prisoners. He has had less than one per cent of escaped prisoners during the [sic] year 1909, notwithstanding a high barbed wire fence charged with electricity has been his only prison wall. You had also directed us at a former session to purchase, not exceeding two

thousand acres of adjoining land as a part of the state prison grounds, and upon which a goodly part of the provision for prison support might be produced. It was thought at the time that these grounds could be paid for out of the four hundred thousand dollars appropriated for buildings and appurtenances, but as the Attorney General ruled otherwise, the grounds have not been purchased, but I have to hand you herewith a contract made by the Secretary of the Prison Board, J. P. Connors, showing the opportunity for the state to acquire the surface right to about fourteen hundred acres, at substantially ten dollars per acre and also to advise you that this is but a small part of what this property would cost if purchased from individual owners, but the state has been favored by a low price fixed by the Governors of the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations and approved by the Interior Department as a friendly concession to the state

I also call your attention to the fact that this land is known to be underlaid by a very valuable coal deposit and that if the state deems the ownership of this coal deposit valuable, that it would be well at this time, and it is recommended by Mr. Connors that your Honorable Body look carefully into this question and by your act direct the State Board of Prison Control, both as to the purchase of the surface right at the price indicated above and as to the purchase of the coal deposit, and also that you make such appropriation out of the sale of public building lands as may be necessary to acquire the surface of said lands and if you deem wise, the coal deposit thereon.

I have to advise that the erection of the State Reformatory at Granite is progressing satisfactorily and with the approval of the State Board.

PUBLIC BUILDING WARRANTS.

Anticipating the sale of public building lands and the use of the proceeds of such sale to pay for the erection of various public buildings authorized at former sessions of the legislature, you also authorized the issuance of public building warrants, indefinite as to date of payment. I now call your attention to the fact that the value of these warrants is greatly depreciated in the financial markets by the fact that there is no definite time fixed for their payment. I also remind you that the state will not get a dollar's worth of property for a warrant that must be discounted by the contractor, and therefore it is advisable for the state to have this warrant so amended that it will bring par in the hands of the contractor who accepts it on a building contract, and to do this, I am advised by bankers that a definite time should be fixed for the payment of any such warrant. I therefore recommend that you amend this law so that a definite time for payment may be fixed, not only for the warrants heretofore authorized, but for such as you may authorize at this session for additional buildings and grounds.

TAXATION.

The constitution of Oklahoma fixed a maximum limit of tax levy, for each of the state, county, township, school district and incorporated towns. While this was unusual as a constitutional provision, the experience of the other new states to the north and the northwest of Oklahoma had shown us the necessity for restraining the tax levying boards, particularly in the early years of statehood. It was a well known fact that local government of other new states had been controlled in nearly every locality by the boomer element, anxious for sudden and abnormal development and far too seldom interested in the permanent welfare of the community; in fact, disposed to acquire sudden riches out of boom conditions and then remove to other parts before the penalty of extravagance in the form of tax burdens should overtake them and thus leave to the

stable, permanent citizen, the blight upon his community, the inevitable result of hasty development in public improvements and the extravagance of such methods, and thus we today, can appreciate the great benefit that we have had from this constitutional provision. When these maximum levies were placed in our constitution, it was not believed that it would, except on rare occasions, be found necessary to make tax levies anywhere near as high as these maximum limits, but Oklahoma, like other new states, has been subjected to the influence which would proceed at a reckless rate, bent on extensive, extravagant expenditures, sewing the wind today, regardless of reaping the whirlwind tomorrow. The disposition to glory in the number of miles of paved streets and concrete sidewalks and other public expenditure, rather than to be content with pride in a just claim to having comfortable homes and pockets containing surplus, instead of suffering from deficiency. I do not believe that the true greatness of our state, or of its cities or communities rests with public expenditure at an extravagant rate half as much as it does in the individual improvements about the homes of its individual families. I therefore urge that your Honorable Body fix maximum take rate limits, at not exceeding one-half of the present authorized rates and that such limits shall be a bar, above which the local taxing boards cannot go, excepting only by a vote of the people of the county, city or district to be affected by the tax and that the people shall have the right to express their wishes by an election actually held, notice having been given, so that if they take upon themselves any tax burden in excess of half the constitutional limitations, it shall be by their own voluntary ballot cast at a public election. I fully realize that ninety per cent of the total burden of taxes today upon our people are local taxes, levied by themselves in thier [*sic*] own communities, through their local officers and that debts honestly contracted and for which the community has received a valuable consideration, must be honored and provided for, but let us see to it that for the next few years of the future at least, that we proceed with less haste in public affairs and thereby preserve greater opportunities for creating home comforts and necessities. I also call your attention to the extravagant issue of bonds in many districts and localities, and remind you that the practice of other new states found that a mountain of indebtedness thus created in early days has been repented of by subsequent years of struggling under the burden of public debt. I appeal to you to enact such laws as will restrict these local bond issues and require the approval thereof by a larger proportion of the citizens of the community upon whose shoulders this burden of debt is bound to fall. In the name of common business sense, in the name of the homes of our people, it is incumbent upon the legislature to save them from the burdens of which ambition, honest though it may be, is bound to create extravagant taxation, is wholly unnecessary in the state of Oklahoma. Reckless public improvements may be a source of pride to the few, it may attract the stranger for the moment, but the burden of taxation which it creates is a destroyer of credit, a destroyer of the peace and prosperity of our people, and you, our state legislature, and you alone, can curb this practice, which can have but ultimate end. Convenience also suggests that hereafter the taxes be divided into semi-annual payments.

TEMPORARY RELIEF.

The present tax payment will become delinquent and penalty attached on February 1st. In response to the petition of many people, I recommend extension of this time till [*sic*] April 15th.

STATE TAXES.

Your state officers have, from the beginning, strenuously worked for economy, and we challenge the world to show any items of extravagance in your state administration. The first year of statehood, although our state constitution authorized a maximum levy of three and one-half mills, we made the levy one and one-fourth mills and this, supplemented by incomes from other sources, would have fully provided the cost of state government, had not our other legitimate revenues been withheld by the public service corporations, protected by the injunctions issued by Federal Courts. The second year of statehood, being the year 1909, our tax levy was two and one-half mills. Being double the levy of the first year. I deem it proper to call your attention to the public records of the State Auditor's office, which would show the reason why a higher state levy was required the second year than the first year. It is as follows:

By order of the legislature at its last session, the state made a levy of one-fourth of one mill, not for state purposes, but for distribution to aid the common schools of the state (being intended to help the weak county districts), [*sic*]

Also, in the building of the public buildings of the state, the Attorney General decided that certain of the public building bills were not definite enough in their expression to require the payment for the buildings to be made of the proceeds of the sale of public building land and therefore that they must be paid for out of the state tax revenues. This equaled practically another one-fourth of one mill and then the deficiencies in the first year's governmental expenses occasioned as above stated by the tying up of franchise, gross production and special privilege taxes by decree of the Federal Court, it became necessary by this year's tax levy to make an additional levy of substantially one mill to take the place of those unpaid corporation taxes, so that from these records in the state auditor's office it will be observed that for the expenses of this year's government, the state tax levy is in fact *one mill only*; and I have here the pleasure of advising your Honorable Body and the people of Oklahoma that it is possible by the enactment of a little additional legislation, which I shall either herein or in subsequent messages, submit for your consideration, for us to defray the entire expense of state government *with no direct tax levy* whatever for state purpose.

The office of the Secretary of State, under our new corporation laws of your first legislature, the office of State Insurance Commissioner, under the beneficial provisions of the Constitution, are both turning into the state, greatly increased revenues and with some added provisions made to the collections made through the auditor of the state, we shall hope, in case you concur with me in passing the legislation, which I do here now and hereafter recommend, to derive the entire expense of state government from the special privileges, franchises, corporations and other incomes *so as to relieve the people of the state wholly from the levy of any tax for state purposes.*

REAL ESTATE APPRAISEMENT.

The appraisement of real estate for tax valuation every twelve months is a tremendous and unnecessary expense. I recommend that real estate valuations be made once every four years and that new improvements only be appraised as personal property during intermediate years.

The School Land Department of the state includes, at the present time, four departments. First—The Land Leasing Department. Second—The Farm Mortgage Department. Third—The Land Selling Department, and Fourth—The Quintennial

Appraisal Department. The present method of conducting these departments and paying the expense and salaries, clerk hire and incidental expenses is by direction of the Board of Land Commissioners as provided in the constitution and is the same method as practiced during the entire history of this department under the Government of Oklahoma Territory. There are some who believe that the legislature should pass a law, recognizing the several official and clerical positions required for the conduct of this department and make appropriations for the payment of their salaries and incidental expenses. It will be remembered that at every former session of the legislature, I have submitted, this same question and asked the legislature on each such occasion to use its own judgment, free from any advice from me, as to whether the old Oklahoma Territorial method should be continued, or whether a new method should be adopted. I say here again, as I have said before, that as a matter of dollars and cents to the tax payers of Oklahoma, it will make no difference whatever. If the expense of conducting this department is paid out of the state treasury, it would add that much additional burden to the cost of state government, but would leave a similar larger amount of money to be distributed for common school purposes. On the other hand if the old territorial method is continued, it will reduce the amount of money to be distributed for common school purposes and will to the same extent reduce the amount of the cost of state government. It is simply a matter of swapping dollars and I have no opinion to express. I shall be content with what the legislature decides is proper in this regard, and I therefore again submit it to you for consideration at this session and in doing so I beg to advise you that within a few days there will be ready for your consideration a separate report as to the doings and expenses of each one of the four subdivisions of the School Land Department above mentioned, but I am now prepared to give you some general results of three said subdivisions.

LAND LEASING DEPARTMENT.

For your information we give you the last two full years of territorial government, with its expenses and results, and the first two full calendar years of state government and its expenses and results:

Received from the leasing of public lands year 1905	\$545,438.36
Expenses for the year	22, 835.13
The expenses being 4.19 per cent of the gross receipts.	
For the year 1906, receipts	\$537,826.66
For the year 1906, expenses	24,788.03
The expenses being 4.61 per cent of the gross receipts.	

UNDER STATEHOOD.

Receipts for the year 1908	\$724, 341.60
Expenses	27,329.54
The expenses being 3.77 per cent of the gross receipts, the gross receipts having increased thirty-three per cent in the year 1908 as compared with the year 1905.	
For the year 1909, gross receipts	\$677,082.83
Expenses	30,782.06
The expenses being 4.54 per cent of gross receipts. The increase in the receipts for the year 1909, as compared with the year 1906 being twenty-six per cent. We would	

add that delinquent payments for the year 1909, which has just ended, will later show total for the year 1909 considerable in excess of the amount already collected.

FARM LOAN DEPARTMENT.

Total amount of the principal of the permanent school fund is \$5,038,643.63, which is invested as follows:

In first mortgage on improved farms	\$2,992,770.88
Invested in current expense bonds of forty-five different counts in the state	1,094,500.00
Balance of cash on hand, subject to investment in farm mortgages	951,372.75

This cash on hand is deposited in a total of one hundred and sixty one banks, scattered over the entire state.

From the beginning up to the 31st day of December, this fund has earned a total of \$550,624.22 interest already collected by the state. We also give you the amount of money distributed by the School Land Department to the common schools of Oklahoma Territory for the year 1907, and the amount distributed to the common schools for the state for the year 1909.

1907, January distribution	\$309,996.06
July distribution	33,935.70

Total for the last year of territorial government	343,931.76
Distribution for the year 1909 under Statehood:	

January distribution	\$500,281.00
July distribution for the year 1909	250,246.00

Total for the year 1909	\$750,527.00
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It is proper, however, to call your attention to the fact that approximately two hundred thousand dollars of the funds distributed for the year 1909 was interest money on the permanent school fund of which there was none the last year of territorial government, but still the increase from land rentals is certainly complimentary to the present administration of this department. I would also add that the January distribution for the year 1910, about to be made will exceed one-half million dollars, the exact figures not yet being in my hands.

QUINTENNIAL APPRAISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

By act of the first legislature, this department was directed to carefully re-appraise all the public lands of the state and have prepared as a part of the land office records, not only a careful appraisement of the value of the lands and of the improvements, and a record that would thoroughly advise the department and all those who might call for information as to the character of each tract of land, its condition and value. This work has been carefully conducted and is now near completion. The total cost has been substantially an average of three cents per acres, or a total of about one hundred thousand dollars. I will not burden you with further details at this time. The complete reports will be in your hands within a few days. I recommend that you give consideration to the proposition as to whether or not the legislature may, under the provisions of the constitution, change the method by which this department has been operated, both under

territorial and state government, and if so, as to whether the appropriations that you may make for the conducting of this department in the future shall be drawn from the tax funds of the state or from the earnings of the department.

Also there are perhaps a dozen of the growing cities and towns in the western part of the state, which embrace within their limits, or immediately adjoining the same, certain public lands of the state for which there is no present law authorizing sale. The value of these tracts of land for additions to these cities is so much greater than their value for agricultural purposes, that I recommend that you give consideration and take such action as you deem proper, looking to either the sale of said lands now or the amendment of the leasing law, so that they can be leased at their farm rental value instead of at four per cent of their actual appraised value.

As one illustration, one tract of land is appraised at sixty-five thousand dollars, but it cannot possibly be leased for farm purposes at over two hundred dollars. There are several other tracts of land in substantially the same condition. I recommend that you look into these matters.

FEES AND SALARIES.

With but one or two slight exceptions, the present fees and salaries of county officers are still regulated by the laws which the state inherited from Oklahoma territory, and are in such chaotic and uncertain condition that I find from careful inquiry throughout the state, there are perhaps not over a half a dozen counties that pursue the same policy of construing the fee and salary law alike, and I find that there is substantial reason for county attorneys differing as to what this territorial legislation means, but in nearly every instance it is construed liberally in favor of the officer. For the purpose of establishing certainty as to the meaning of the law and for the purpose of economy of government I recommend that you adopt a new code of law, covering the subject of such fees and salaries. I wish to be distinctly understood as favoring full compensation to every public officer, according to the service he performs. The public must expect to pay their officers just compensation and I therefore do not ask that you make the salaries of public officers lower than justice and fair dealing demands, but on the other hand, the public is entitled to have a definite, fair salary law and I believe that if the fees required to be paid to such officers as receive fees from the public are industriously collected and turned into the county treasuries, that it will not be unreasonable to expect these fees to furnish a fund sufficient to pay the salary accounts to all the county officers and in this regard, I do not ask that injustice be done the officers, but I do ask that justice be done the tax payers as well.

USURY LAW.

The Constitution of Oklahoma undertook to provide an interest and usury law. As compared with the Oklahoma Territory law it reduced the legal rate of interest from eight per cent down to six per cent and the contract rate from twelve per cent down to ten per cent and provided a penalty for usury. There is doubt in the minds of many people as to whether this provision of the Constitution is self operating and I find that doubt so general that I have had careful investigation made and am satisfied that the Constitution is self operating and its said interest and usury provisions are in full legal force and therefore needs no further vitalizing legislation.

GAME LAW.

The game law has demonstrated a revenue producing capacity much greater than originally contemplated by most of us. I understand that there is now a surplus of about fifty thousand dollars in the license fund.

I recommend that the law be so amended that this fund accumulated and future collections, be turned into the general revenue fund of the state, and that appropriations for the salaries and expenses of this department be made out of the receipts, and that the general revenue fund of the state have the benefits of all surplus.

I also ask you to investigate as to the satisfaction with which this game law may be working, particularly in the hill and mountain counties of the eastern part of the state. At one time it was thought this law would be unjust to the people residing in those mountain counties. A little inquiry will show you whether or not injustice results from this law. If so, the people should have relief, which might be granted if certain localities by some form of petition, which you might authorize by law, but if the further experience under the law has shown that its operation has ceased to work injustice, then this may not be necessary, but we do feel that the people who live in these mountain districts, are entitled to have their wishes considered, and a game law, like unto a herd law, may in a great state like Oklahoma, where different localities have vastly different conditions, need to have exceptions authorized and availed of by the people in any given district.

SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT TAX.

I call your attention to the complaint by many people that street paving and the building of sidewalks, and the taxing of the expense thereof to the abutting property owners is being complained of for the reason that almost unlimited authority is vested in the public boards of control, and practically without considering the wishes of the property owners in the district or along the street upon which such improvements are to be made, and I recommend that you provide that before any street shall be so improved, and the cost thereof taxed to the abutting owners, that such property owners must, by petition in writing, to the extent representing a majority of the front feet petition the proper public board for such improvement.

CODE COMMISSION.

Since the adjournment of the last Legislature, the Code Commission provided for has been at work revising and codifying the laws of the State.

I recommend that a committee be appointed from the House and Senate to meet with the Code Commission, and carefully inquire into the progress made, the methods adopted, and all things pertaining to said work, and from such report your Honorable Body, having decided what course should be pursued, should the same require further action of your Body, I shall be glad to concur in your consideration of the subject.

We fully understand that this is a very necessary work for all the people of the state,--that poorly done, it is worthless,--well done, it is vastly beneficial. It is not a class of work that is worth doing hastily or poorly. Its importance to the people of the state cannot be over-estimated.

By special message within a day or two, I shall transmit to you for your consideration and such action as you deem proper, a proposed amendment to the Constitution of the United States, authorizing the levy of a Federal [*sic*] income tax. I am delayed in transmitting this matter to you, as I desire to have the benefit of the consideration of your Honorable Body and myself of opinions given upon this subject by

eminent men in other states, and whose opinions may be a light to us well worthy of our consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
C. N. HASKELL, GOVERNOR.

About Digitizing the Governors' State of the State Addresses

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

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

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

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