

**State of the State**  
**Governor William Holloway**  
**May 16, 1929**

*(Remarks enclosed in quotation marks are impromptu references made by Governor Holloway while reading his message.)*

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the Extraordinary Session of the Twelfth Legislature of the State of Oklahoma:

By virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Oklahoma, in Section Seven of Article Six of the Constitution, this Legislature has been convened in extraordinary session upon the present occasion. It seems fitting, first, to express to each member of the Senate and of the House of Representatives my appreciation for your sincere interest manifested in the affairs of state.

In order to avoid undue sacrifice on your part and expense to the state, it is necessary to invite your attention to the consideration of the fewest possible subjects consistent with the public welfare. Therefore, the topics briefly discussed in this message are those which, in my judgment, are of paramount importance, and for which there is wide-spread and urgent demand for consideration.

In view of public needs at this time, I submit for your deliberation the following subjects which subsequently will be discussed in order:

“And you might write these down because I didn’t have any money to have any of these messages printed, and, Mr. Speaker and Mr. President, I would like to make a request of both Houses, in view of that statement, if you don’t mind, I would like to have each House have printed for me personally about 300 extra copies and furnished to me – that is, copies of your Journal, if you don’t mind doing that.”

- (1) Appropriations.
- (2) State highways.
- (3) Public education.
- (4) Election laws.
- (5) Salaries of elected officials.
- (6) Executive clemency.
- (7) Fish and game.
- (8) State Tax Commission.
- (9) Agriculture.
- (10) Court’s judicial reform, and judicial procedure.
- (11) Local legislation.

**APPROPRIATIONS**

As you know, the regular session of the Twelfth Legislature was adjourned without having passed appropriations with which to defray the expenses of government during the biennium beginning July 1, 1929, and ending June 30, 1931. It is of course necessary that fiscal provision be made for the carrying on of the duties of all departments of state and for the adequate functioning of the various state institutions, penal, eleemosynary, and educational. The recommendations contained in the departmental appropriation bill which will be submitted for your consideration were arrived at by conference of the various departmental heads with the Appropriations Committees during the regular session, and in further conferences since that time. The institutional budgets were drawn up in conference with the heads of the institutions concerned, with the Governor, the State Budget Officer, the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

## **Appropriations Must Not Exceed \$29,000,000.00**

Changes and readjustments are important and imperative, I realize, but there is not time at present to provide new sources of income to the State. Furthermore, such changes must be based upon information that can be secured only through careful and thorough investigation. The available revenues from all sources for the carrying on of state governmental and institutional activities will, without doubt, not exceed thirty-one millions of dollars. Of this amount, two millions of dollars have already been spent, by reason of the deficit which will be brought forward with the closing of the present biennium

“In other words, that is an approximate figure; it might go a little over two millions.”

After thorough investigation, I am convinced that the State government can be operated for the next two years efficiently and well on the amount remaining. Under no circumstances will I approve appropriation bills totaling more than the twenty-nine millions of dollars, believed to be available from present sources of revenue after provision for the current deficit has been made.

## **STATE HIGHWAYS**

Our state highways are the arteries of communication through which pulses the life blood of our commerce and industry, quickening our social life, terminating the isolation of the farm, stimulating and nourishing the prosperity of our commonwealth. Since the adequate development of our state highway system directly affects the welfare of every citizen of the State, I feel it mandatory to invite your attention to the following highway problems which, in my judgment, are urgent and presing for solution.

### **Toll Bridges**

It should be a fundamental policy of state highway construction and maintenance to provide free and uninterrupted traffic between all points within the state, and connection with all important centers outside of the state that have adequate highway terminals at our borders. The existence of numerous toll bridges both within the State and at its borders is an obstacle to the realization of this basic policy. The purchase by Oklahoma of intra-state toll bridges which are intimately connected with the maintenance and extension of our system of highways, as well as the joint purchase of essential inter-state toll bridges by this State and any bordering state, is necessary to the continued desirable expansion of our state highway system.

Legislation should therefore be enacted, authorizing the State Highway Commission to enter into contract for the purchase of any and all of the toll bridges within this State that may, in the judgment of the Commission, be deemed essential to the betterment of state highways. Furthermore, in the event that the Commission is not able to obtain these by contract, the State Highway Commission should be authorized to obtain such bridges by condemnation. The State's program with reference to toll bridges should not, however, be permitted to drain funds ordinarily available for the maintenance and extension of hard-surfaced and graveled highways, thus hampering the good-roads program throughout the State as a whole. It is therefore recommended that the Highway Commission be authorized to issue bonds against such bridges, as in their judgment, it seems advisable to purchase, for sums not greater than the purchase price, such sums to be amortized through the continued operation of the bridges on a toll basis, sufficient to produce only the revenue needed for that purpose. When the total bond issue against any bridge has been amortized, it shall then and forever be a free bridge. In order that the people of the State shall have an added burden of interest to pay by reason of such a bond issue, it is further recommended that any funds of the several departments of state, or any funds subject to investment by any part of the state, be made legally available, with the approval of the boards governing such departments, for use in the purchase of such bonds. Thus, it appears to me, those

using these bridges will eventually pay for them. No added burden will be imposed upon any one, and the continued expansion of the road system throughout the State will be safeguarded.

Similarly, plenary power should be vested in the State Highway Commission to join with the lawfully authorized representatives of other states, bordering upon ours, to obtain for the public such inter-state toll bridges as may by the Commission be deemed necessary. The Highway Commission should also be authorized to join with responsible representatives of other states in constructing bridges across state lines under such terms and conditions as may to our Highway Commission seem necessary, if so doing would in their judgment better conserve the interests of Oklahoma; provided that such bridges, when obtained by joint action of our own and an adjoining state, shall be thrown open to the public either as free bridges, or operated as toll bridges under joint control, with such tolls charged as may be necessary for the repayment of the purchase or building price only. It should be distinctly understood that when the total bond issue against any bridge has been paid, it shall then and forever be a free bridge.

### **Employees**

Legislation should be enacted giving the State Highway Commission greater discretion in the employment and compensation of the Chief Engineer and the Secretary of the Commission. These positions have duties which require a highway degree of technical training and proficiency, and all restrictions which may in any way hamper the Highway Commission in securing the services of the best possible men for these important appointments should, in my judgment, be removed.

### **Estimate and Purchase of Materials**

Legislation should be enacted authorizing the State Highway Commission to purchase materials for road building or bridge construction in such quantities and at such times as may be deemed advisable to meet the demands for the fiscal year in which the purchase is made. Materials other than those needed to fill existing contracts should be purchased upon an estimate by the Chief Engineer of the Highway Commission of the quantities of each of the several materials that will be needed during the fiscal year. In making this estimate, the Chief Engineer should be limited by the estimated income available during the fiscal year and the amount of construction and repair that can be accomplished in that time.

### **Motor Vehicle Registration Department**

Having in mind the efficiency of the State Highway Department, I recommend that this Commission be relieved of the duty now imposed upon it by the Automobile Registration Law. In my judgment, this law is primarily intended as a source of revenue and a means of identification of owners, which falls to this extent within the police power of the State and should not be imposed upon the Highway Commission.

Legislation should be enacted, establishing a department, to be known as the Motor Vehicle Registration Department, whose function should be to register motor vehicles and collect motor registration fees as required under present laws. Such a department need not increase the number of employees, and would be more efficient. Rigid rules should be provided by law, regulating the distribution of automobile tags and the reports and money deposits of the collectors.

### **Inter-State License Co-Operation**

The far-reaching net-work of Federal highways, of which our state system is rapidly and increasingly becoming a part, makes it imperative that legislation be enacted immediately, permitting reciprocal recognition of automobile licenses issued by other states.

“Now, you have read much in the papers recently about the war going on between Kansas and Oklahoma. The Governor of that state and I have been trying to call a truce until something may be done in the way of legislation to relieve that situation.”

## **Motor Bus Taxation**

It is a matter of common knowledge that the business of transporting passengers and freight by motor carriers has increased by leaps and bounds, and more and more is taking over the traffic of interurban and urban street railways and the short haul passengers of railroads. This growth of business has been affected at the expense of other carriers that are heavy tax-payers, through the utilization of highways built by public taxation. At the present time, a bus transporting forty passengers pays the identical amount per mile that is levied against one transporting five. A mere statement of these facts, known to everybody, demonstrates the inadequacy of the system. The Motor Carrier Act found in Chapter 113, Session Laws of 1923, should be amended in such manner as to require these carriers to pay a tax more nearly in keeping with the burdens of constructing and maintaining the highways from which they derive their prosperity.

## **State Road Bond Issue**

There seems to be a growing and urgent demand for a road bond issue that will quickly meet the needs of the State for a complete hard-surfaced highway system. You would be unwilling, if my judgment is correct, to act upon this matter until there has first been made a comprehensive and all-inclusive survey of the entire state that will graphically reveal just what is needed. The expenditure of one hundred million dollars is too colossal a task to be entered into hurriedly and without adequate data upon which to base a definite program. Such an amount is about four times that usually contained in the total biennial appropriations. It is well worthy of the most careful and undivided attention of a legislature.

It is possible that the necessary data may be available before the adjournment of the extraordinary session. In that event, you would be in position to carry through that thorough and comprehensive consideration of the facts involved which you yourselves would require, and which our citizens would expect before the project of a bond issue could be entertained.

If, on the other hand, such data as is necessary can not be compiled before your adjournment, when such an investigation as that suggested above has been made and the actual needs and costs have been determined, and if it seems to be the consensus of opinion of the citizenry of the State that such an undertaking be entered into, I will then convoke another extra session for that sole purpose. No citizen should be willing to launch upon so far-reaching a road-building program as is contemplated in the bond issue discussed until he is thoroughly informed and has all the facts at his disposal.

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Government has no function transcending in importance the education of its citizens, and no phase of our society changes more rapidly than education. Because there have been no major changes in the laws affecting public school support and administration since the inception of statehood, certain readjustments are now pressing. Your attention is respectfully invited to the following suggestions and recommendations which I consider to be at the present time most urgent.

### **Public School Support**

Financial inequalities of the school districts make it impossible for them to support uniform school programs. An almost inconceivable difference exists among districts as to their ability to support an adequate program. Inasmuch as the people in these school districts are doing all that is possible according to law, they must depend upon the Legislature of Oklahoma to provide the solution to this problem. Past legislatures have appropriated state funds to supplement their inadequate local revenue. Due to such factors as the constantly enlarged enrollment in the public schools, the increase in the number of high schools, the longer term, and the concentration of wealth in certain centers, the number of weak school districts in Oklahoma

is increasing. In spite of the fact that conditions today are markedly different from those prevailing at statehood, this great commonwealth still attempts to maintain its schools under the provisions of the same statutes and by the same method of taxation which were at that time set up.

The State Legislature, during the regular session, passed Senate Bill No. 52, supplementing the regular appropriation for the aid of weak schools. This bill carried an appropriation of \$500,000. Because of a deficit in the revenues of the State for the current fiscal year, it was necessary to veto this bill. Such action was taken with reluctance and profound regret. Nevertheless, I stand committed to the policy of keeping the channels of opportunity open to every boy and girl within our borders. It is imperative that a state as rich and as prosperous as the great State of Oklahoma should guarantee equity of chance to all of its children. The State should provide for such an education as will best fit the young for the increasingly complex duties and responsibilities of citizenship and the ever more difficult task of earning a living. The time must never come in Oklahoma when education will be an accident of birth or of residence, or the privilege of the economically more fortunate. The time has come, however, when we must face this problem squarely and settle it once and for all. I realize that you may be too pressed to make a through and comprehensive survey of all available revenues as a basis for the enactment of remedial legislation. Yet, it seems to me that the Twelfth Legislature should give this vital school problem the most serious and careful consideration, to the end that a definite State policy shall be adopted and all possible steps taken, considering the limited time available, toward eliminating the inequalities of educational opportunity now existing within our State.

### **A State System of Higher Education**

Higher education – “This is a subject which is becoming serious as well as the aid necessary for the weak school districts of Oklahoma” – is in Oklahoma largely a state enterprise. We maintain eighteen tax-supported institutions for higher learning, which enroll approximately 80 per cent of all college students in the State. These schools have been created and have developed with no definite plan and with no correlating or coordinating agency to promote cooperation and unity of function and to prevent needless duplication and competition. As a natural consequence of this unregulated growth, constantly multiplying problems involving duplication of curriculum and of effort have arisen. It is evident that there can be no permanent solution of the State’s higher educational difficulties until the issues are squarely faced and the State assumes responsibility for determining an intelligent plan for the future development of its colleges. The acceptance of the following principles seems to be essential before a state system of higher education can in reality be established:

1. All state institutions for higher education are parts of a single state system.
2. The sole object of the system is to serve the state economically and effectively.
3. Where several state institutions have been established and their functions defined, no one institution should attempt to cover the entire field of higher education.
4. No institution should attempt to offer a particular course of study when it can be shown that greater benefit to the state would result if that particular curriculum were offered in another school.
5. State service can better be accomplished by friendly cooperation than by competition and rivalry.

“There is no excuse for a spirit of competition developing among the higher institutions of learning in the State of Oklahoma. The only thing we want to consider is the welfare of all of the people in this state; that is all! We are not trying to build up anything for any individual nor any town in this state, but we have the problem of unifying the policy for higher education in this state.”

6. Since an institution’s only excuse for existence is the service it can render, the final test of its function is to determine the way in which it best can serve the state.

“Now, I am not just going to offer you a lot of general suggestions and then leave you in the woods. I am going to offer you some practical suggestions as the basis for intelligent consideration, because you haven’t the time, in four or five weeks, to make an exhaustive and intelligent study of these great problems. And, don’t think this is entirely from my study either. I have had some of the ablest men in this state work on this for some seven or eight weeks, and here is what I am going to recommend:”

To vitalize these principles and thereby bring about a unified state system of higher education, legislation should be enacted incorporating the following proposals:

1. The number of governing boards for state institutions for higher learning should be reduced from nine to three:

- (a) The Board of Regents of Oklahoma University should control the State University. This Board was established by the Eleventh Legislature, and should be made permanent by constitutional amendment. “So that when a Board is appointed, members thereof cannot be removed except for cause, and serious cause at that.”
- (b) The Board of Regents for the Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges of the State should control all State agricultural and vocational schools. In order to establish a separate Board of Regents for the Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges, it will be necessary to amend the second paragraph of Article six, Section 31, of the State Constitution. I consider that such an amendment is imperative, and its adoption would mean much to the future growth and welfare of our great Agricultural and Mechanical College.

“Now I hope it will not develop a feeling that in trying to establish a Board of Regents for that institution, and thereby taking away its immediate control from the State Board of Agriculture, that it is any effort on the part of anybody to make it any the less an agricultural college. I know that some persons in the state have been spreading propaganda that that is the purpose for which this amendment is being pushed forward and urged in this state. But I want to say to you that the Board of Agriculture is appointed by the Governor and can be removed in a moment’s time by him, and it is not right that a great educational institution of this state should have a Board of Regents so fixed by the Constitution that any Governor it matters not what his purpose might be, can throw an institution like that into chaos overnight. I hope that this Legislature will submit that question to the people of his state, because I believe when it is fairly presented that the people of this state will overwhelmingly adopt such a constitutional amendment.”

- (c) The State Board of Education, “ – Now I am going to step on somebody’s toes, but I can’t help it, because I think I am right –” the only strictly educational board provided by the Constitution for the control of education, should govern all institutions of higher education maintained by the State which are not specifically mentioned above.

“In other words, a Board of Regents for the A. & M. College, a Board of Regents for the University of Oklahoma and one more, a State Board of Education to control every other institution of higher learning in this state.

“Now, if you can image any reason for a separate Board of Regents for example for the School for Women at Chickasha, for the school at Wilburton, for the school at Miami, for the school at Tonkawa, for the school at Claremore, and for all of these other institutions, any sound educational policy for them, I can’t imagine what it is. You are never going to have a fixed policy in this state, unless you have fewer boards and you have to unify those boards.

“Why, the institutions of higher education in Oklahoma have grown up like mushrooms overnight, every institution with its own separate board; every one in its own sphere; no co-relation with the institution over yonder or yonder or yonder, and I think it would be the greatest step forward in an educational way, if you reduce all of these boards to the three boards I have outlined here.”

2. A central coordinating agency should be established for the purpose of definitely unifying the tax-supported institutions into a state system of higher education. This agency might be expected to accomplish the following results:

- (a) The assembling of exact information that will show the actual costs of education at the several institutions, together with the immediate and future needs of each school, thereby giving a more accurate basis to the Governor for recommending and the Legislature for making appropriations:
- (b) The Checking of the up-grading and expanding tendency by a clear interpretation and definition of the function of each of the several institutions and the elimination of unnecessary and undesirable duplications;
- (c) The bringing about of harmonious working relationships among the institutions by the establishment of needed councils;
- (d) The unifying of the tax-supported institutions into a state system of higher education through the determination of an intelligent plan for their future development.

3. The central co-ordinating agency thus provided might well be composed of the Chairman of the State Board of Education, the Chairman of the University Board of Regents, the Chairman of the Board of Regents of the Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges, the President of the University of Oklahoma, the President of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, a President of one of the State Teachers’ College who shall have been designated by the Council of State Teachers’ College Presidents, and a President of one of the other institutions

who shall have been designated by the State Board of Education. These men are already in the service of the State and would receive no additional compensation.

It is not the purpose of the above proposals to place all of the state institutions of higher learning in the same class or on the same level, but rather the purpose is to avoid unnecessary and expensive duplication of curricula and effort and definitely to unify the tax-supported institutions of Oklahoma into a state system of higher education. Oklahoma is able and willing to maintain adequate facilities for higher education, but it is unable to continue indefinitely the present unregulated system.

### **Textbook Commission**

The interests of our common schools throughout the State will best be conserved, it seems to me, by certain changes in present laws governing the selection of textbooks. The abrupt and almost complete change in textbooks every five years, as is now required, works an undue hardship upon the parents who buy the books, upon the children who use them, and upon the teachers who administer the school work in the class room. To remedy this situation, it is recommended that the following provisions be made: First, that a permanent textbook commission be authorized composed of persons technically qualified to pass upon the merits of the textbooks submitted; second, that not more than 20% of the books be changed in any one year. The serial plan of textbook adoption is in operation in many of the most progressive states and conforms to the best current practice in education throughout the nation.

“Now, a great many of us used to be school teachers, but it has been so long that we don’t know very much about it any more.

“I invite you and request you to get in touch with your County Superintendent, with your State Superintendent, with your City Superintendent and with the teachers of your school systems at home, and I will venture that in nine cases out of ten they will tell you it is an abominable method now used in changing abruptly in one year practically all of the books that the children have to buy and use.

“In three-fourths of the state of this Union the serial plan of textbook adoption is now in vogue, and evidently it is in line with the best educational thought in America. Therefore, I recommend it to you for your earnest consideration, in order that present conditions may be bettered, in the interest of the tax payers and in the interest of the people that have to buy these books.

“There is another thing upon which many do not agree with me, but with reference to which I believe I know I am right.”

In my judgment, the Governor should not be a member of this commission. In the first place, his duties are too heavy to permit him to give the necessary time; and, in the second place, the adoption of textbooks is a technical matter requiring the services of specialists. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction, on the other hand, should in my judgment remain a member.

“Now, I used to teach school, from 1910 to 1914, and from 1914 up to this good hour I haven’t seen inside of a textbook. Now, what in the world would I know about adopting textbooks, and what I say about myself applies to every Governor that ever sat in the Governor’s office in Oklahoma.

“Now, what good excuse is there to leave the Governor upon this commission? Why should it not be best for the children of this state and for the people to permit an intelligent, efficient expert to be appointed on that board?

“Therefore, I sincerely want you, in tackling this problem, to reconstitute that commission and leave the Governor off of it.

“Now, I know as well as it is humanly possible to know that there is three times as much work already on the Governor as he can do. You fellows know that as well as I do. Don’t add any more burdens. If anything ought to be done, some of the burdens ought to be taken away from the Governor.

“Therefore, I earnestly recommend to you that you tackle this problem immediately, because the textbooks must be adopted and secured sixty days prior to the opening of school next September, if the children are to get their books on time.”

In view of the fact that there is some uncertainty as to the legal status of the present adoptions, it is imperative that the Legislature give immediate attention to these proposals.

“Now, when we repealed the text book law for free textbooks in 1925, some way or other a provision or form of amendment got into that Act, which provided in effect that the present adoptions should be good for five years from that date.

“You and I know that it was not the intention of that Legislature to pass any Act that would have for its purpose the extension of contracts. That is not sound business policy, and this Legislature should repeal that provision so that there will be no legal uncertainty about the status of the present adoption.”

### **Certification of Teachers**

In the interest of increased efficiency and economy of the administration of the common schools of the State, and consonant with best practice in the most progressive States of the Union, legislation should be enacted vesting in the State Board of Education the sole power to certificate teachers for the public schools of Oklahoma.

“That is in line with educational progress and development. I say to you that I happen to know that the County Superintendents think it is best that that authority be vested wholly in the State Board of Education.

“Now, here is a subject which I am going to recommend at which I do not wish you to become frightened before you have given it thought:”

### **County Board of Education**

Many fine qualities of democracy which should not be lost are inherent in our local district system, with responsibility reposed in local citizens elected as school district officers. Consequently, the local district organization should not be changed. The very important office of County Superintendent of Public Instruction, however, should be removed from the field of partisan politics. This can be done by creating a County Board of Education, vested with the power to select the County Superintendent on a purely non-sectarian and non-partisan basis, in keeping with minimum requirements and standards to be set up by the State Board of Education. The County Board of Education should be charged also with certain powers and duties not conflicting with those now abiding in the local districts and officers.

“In other words, I think you can take, as an already established, fixed elected bunch of officials, your local Trustees, in an annual meeting and let them select in some manner a County Board of Education, and then that County Board of Education select the County Superintendent. Your County Superintendent has no excuse on earth for being elected, any more than you elect a City Superintendent by popular vote – not a bit on earth. The principles and rules are the same, and the logic is the same. It should be taken out of partisan politics, with the hope that you can get the best qualified man or woman for that important post and not just the best hand-shaker to get elected County Superintendent to have charge of our local schools.”

### **Safeguarding School Funds**

When the law providing for independent school districts was enacted, the Legislature inadvertently failed to provide for safeguarding the public funds of these districts, in that it is not mandatory for the treasurers to be under bond. This costly oversight has resulted in the loss of

more than a million dollars to independent school districts during the past few years. Good business judgment demands that proper safeguards be thrown about all public school funds, as is now done with public money handled by treasurers of the various counties.

### **Vocational Education Board**

The State Department of Vocational Education should be made an integral part of the State Department of Education and should be governed directly by the State Board of Education. This plan has been adopted in more than three-fourths of the states. The consolidation of this Department with the State Department of Education will eliminate one board; will provide for greater economy of operation; will make this department responsible to an elected state official rather than to an ex-officio board; and, by a co-ordination of efforts, will no doubt provide greater efficiency in this department.

“There is another off-shoot in our scheme of education, which is just out there doing the best it can. It is under an efficient ex-officio board, it is true, but if there is no reason why it should not fall under the classification of one of the three boards, then it ought to be put here.”

### **ELECTION LAWS**

Popular government, in order to prevail, must provide adequate methods for the clear expression of the will of the majority. It is therefore our duty to seek out obvious defects in our present laws, and to apply such amendments and remedies as would seem to promote and effect this end.

Among the more obvious of these defects, in my judgment, are those growing out of our present laws governing the machinery of primary elections, and the present manner and method of securing a recount, as well as the contesting of elections.

### **Run-Off Primary**

The purpose of our laws governing primary elections is to enable the voters of each party to choose their candidates for public office. It was undoubtedly the hope and intention of the framers of our primary election law to secure for each of the political parties the strongest candidate from the material available. But the law as it now stands has failed to do this. At present, when three or more candidates are on the same party ticket, it is possible for one of them to be nominated by a decided minority of the party because of the majority being divided between two strong men, either of who could have commanded a majority had the other not been in the field. We are therefore confronted today with a primary election system which may place upon our tickets as nominees persons who do not represent the popular choice of the voting strength of their several political parties. This regrettable situation should be corrected to insure that each candidate who goes before the voters in the general election shall have been selected by a popular majority within his own party.

Legislation should therefore be enacted providing that, in case there is in any primary an office for which no candidate has received nomination by a clear majority of his party voting, a second, or run-off primary shall be held as soon after the first primary election as you may deem practicable. In this run-off primary, the two candidates who received the highest number of votes cast in the first primary election should have their names placed upon the ballots of their respective parties. It is of course obvious that the above provisions for a run-off primary should apply only to those instances where a clear majority has not secured by any candidate.

### **Contests and Recounts**

The preservation of the integrity of the ballot is one of our highest duties. This integrity is threatened by reason of the fact that at present our statutes do not provide a simple, speedy, and certain method for the recount of votes in cases where unsuccessful contestants for public office honestly feel and earnestly assert the prevalence of fraud, improper methods, or incorrect

results in the total vote cast at either a primary or a general election. A plain, easily understood, and adequate procedure should be provided to right this situation.

### **SALARIES OF ELECTED OFFICIALS**

The salaries of the elected officials of the State were fixed, in most cases, nearly a quarter of a century ago under conditions vastly different from those obtaining at present. While in many instances these salaries were fair and adequate at that time, they have become, due to the increased cost of living, wholly insufficient to maintain the various state officials and their families in a city which has more than tripled its size. It is my earnest recommendation that the salaries of these officials be carefully scrutinized by you and readjusted more nearly in line with present day living costs. This seems to me a vital matter. The State cannot long continue to secure the services of able, competent, and well-trained men and women, regardless of the honor which attaches to the office, if the honorarium is not consonant with the responsibilities entailed and intelligence required for the satisfactory performance of the duties involved. By providing adequate salaries for public officials, the State gets better public servants and more efficiency in governmental operations.

“Now, let me tell you this: If you don’t think it is a big task to select competent men and women on the present salaries that are provided for these posts, you simply haven’t become aware of it, because you haven’t had to try to do it yourself. I have offered one position to five different men in this state, all of whom have turned it down because of the salary paid. I want to tell you that when you pay your public officials an honest, reasonable figure, you are going to go a far step forward in keeping public officials away from temptation.

“It is an actual fact that I shall have to live far more economically as Governor of the State than I did as Lieutenant Governor. That is a fact. And yet, I am forced to try to live on that salary.

“Now, it is true that I will not get any benefit from this. In fact, there ought to be a specific provision put into it that it shall not be effective until two years, and commence when the new officials take office, so that there will be no misunderstanding and no feeling that this is being urged so that any public official may try to get the advantage of it at this time.

“In a few days I am going to recommend to you a reorganization of several state departments, with an increase in salary, because I am telling you now I can’t even keep some of those who have promised to start to work unless those salaries can be increased.

“I have offered the position of Secretary of the School Land Commission, by permission of the Board, to five different men in this state in the last two or three days. We are not going to offer it to just any Tom, Dick and Harry, I am telling you. We will let it go vacant if we can’t get someone that we feel competent to do the work.

“Now, this is serious business, my friends. We must tackle these problems in that way. There are several departments of this state where the officials are appointed. The salaries ought to be increased so that we can keep some of these we have and secure others who are competent and efficient.

“Now, you will make a mistake if, under my recommendations, you try at this session of the Legislature to pass a comprehensive salary bill, raising the salaries of all appointive officials. You will wind up by getting nothing through, so I hope and pray that when I do submit that to you, if you think it is right and ought to be done, that you will just confine yourselves to the things I point out to you. I am pointing them out to you because of my two months’ experience here, and I know we must have some help if the people’s business is to be run as it should be. My friends, you and I are charged with that important responsibility, and I think we ought to meet it without regard to partisan politics, without regard to what may be popular or unpopular,

and look to the welfare of the people of the State and try to put the state's business upon a high-class, honorable plane, so that all good citizens will say Amen and Well Done."

### **EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY**

"This is a nightmare to most anybody, but it is not bothering me much, because I refuse to permit it to bother me."

The judicious and proper granting of executive clemency is one of the most serious problems with which the Governor has to deal. The wise and just exercise of this power is vital to the welfare of every citizen of the State. Limitation of the power of the Governor in respect to this should be effected by a constitutional amendment creating a board which would advise with and assist him in determining any major act of clemency. It should be possible for the Governor to grant any pardon or parole without the concurrence of the majority of the Pardon and Parole Board as expressed in a formal vote, although the power should still rest in the Governor to veto any recommendation of clemency.

"In other words, he couldn't grant an act of clemency unless the majority agreed with him, and after all of them voted for it, he would still have the right to say 'no'."

I shall not ask the Legislature to pass any law concerning this matter at present, since a statutory board so created could only be advisory under the present constitutional provisions. I contemplate making such rules and regulations as will best cope with the situation until the Constitution can be amended. A thorough examination into the merits of each case and the combined judgment of such a Board will no doubt be of tremendous assistance to the Governor, will give the convict fair consideration, and will be a protection to society.

"Therefore, I want you to submit a Constitutional amendment which, in your wisdom and judgment, will limit the power of the governor in granting executive clemency."

### **FISH AND GAME**

You will find that there are a few minor amendments which should be made in the laws relating to fish and game, which will add to the efficient functioning of that department.

### **A STATE TAX COMMISSION**

It is apparent to all that a complete and thorough analysis of the tax laws of the State of Oklahoma should be made in order to equalize assessments and to include certain types of property now escaping taxation. The method and manner of assessing taxes needs to be revised. A Commission, consisting of able experts only, should be created and provided with ample powers, whose sole purpose should be to make an exhaustive investigation of this matter and to prepare a report including definite recommendations, which shall be submitted to the next session of the Legislature. Adequate appropriation should be made for the maintenance of this Commission, so that its work may be comprehensive and effective. It is not the purpose of this recommendation to add to the burden of any class, but to enable the next Legislature to set up general standards so that all may bear a just share in the costs of government.

"Now, you may say this: 'We have had tax commissions before and they didn't do any good.'"

"It all depends on whether you are trying to appoint a commission just to give some man a job, or whether you are really going to exercise your good judgment and pick men who will know how to do the work.

"If you provide such a commission I will guarantee you to pick the ablest men, either in Oklahoma or the United States, that we can find, if you provide money enough to do it.

"Now, there is a lot of property in Oklahoma escaping taxation – millions of dollars worth of property. Now, will it be the purpose of the Legislature just to provide more funds and bring in more money to provide more jobs for more folks? That is not the thing. We ought not to enlarge the offices of government any more than is absolutely necessary and consistent with

honest business and good, sound efficiency; but we can find these fellows who are escaping taxation, bring them into court, put them on the tax rolls and that will help decrease the farmers' taxes and the taxes of the average citizen of the state whose taxes are now a burden."

### **AGRICULTURE**

Agriculture is a major industry in Oklahoma, creating between three and four hundred millions of dollars of new wealth annually in this State, and supporting directly a major of our population. No other single industry affects so many lives nor produces so much wealth for us. Fostering and encouraging the diverse activities of agriculture is therefore of supreme importance to the State. It must never be forgotten that Oklahoma is in competition with other states of the Union in economical agricultural production. If we do not work out our problems, we are going to increase our handicap and eventually place ourselves at serious disadvantages in the production and marketing of agricultural products. Our research in agriculture is at present far behind. I therefore wish to invite your consideration to it specifically, and believe at least three topics to be of such grave importance as to require definite discussion herein.

#### **Soil Erosion**

According to reliable Oklahoma agricultural experts, more than a million acres of arable land in this State have within the past few years been lost to production through soil erosion. This waste has been so serious that the Federal Government has allotted this State twenty thousand dollars annually to be spent for the purpose of finding the best means of conserving the fertility of the soil. These Federal funds are available when they have been matched by an equal amount from State funds. If the situation is serious enough for the Federal government to take action, I deem it my duty to recommend that these funds be made available in order that this worthy project can be effectively consummated.

#### **Boll Weevil Investigation**

The boll weevil continues to be a destructive pest in our cotton fields, causing annual losses of almost incredible magnitude. To study this pest and further its eradication in Oklahoma, the Federal government has allotted the sum of ten thousand dollars annually. This amount likewise should be matched by the State in the furtherance of this badly needed investigation and demonstration of the best methods of boll weevil control. No project could be more vital to the welfare of the farmers of southern and eastern Oklahoma than this one. "Colonel Leecraft, you ought to get that thing through this House, because you and I are going to starve to death down there if we don't exterminate the boll weevil. Clark Wason, Colonel Leecraft and John MacDonald there are especially familiar with those conditions and you should convince these fellows that that should be done."

#### **The Dairy Industry**

The dairy industry is growing rapidly in every section of this State, and is becoming one of our most profitable farm enterprises. This rapid expansion has brought to our farmers many new problems which cannot be met by the agencies at present existing. Funds should be provided for the employment of a sufficient number of dairy specialists to foster intelligently and to encourage the dairy industry in every section of the State. For, after all, in diversification by the farmer lies his most reasonable hope for a stable and profitable income, and the success of every citizen is in large measure dependent upon the success of this primary industry.

### **COURTS, JUDICIAL REFORM, AND JUDICIAL PROCEDURE**

In response to strong public demand for changes in our laws pertaining to courts, judicial reform, and judicial procedure, I deem it my duty to open this subject for your consideration. Since I have not had time to give this matter intensive study, no specific recommendations have been formulated affecting this topic. Many of the ablest lawlers of the State are themselves at a

loss to know what should be done to strengthen the service of our courts and to facilitate the trial of cases to their ultimate consummation. Many of our citizens feel that a different method should be found of selecting our judiciary. The subject of our judiciary system is therefore presented to you with the earnest hope that the remedies may be found and incorporated in our laws.

### **LOCAL LEGISLATION**

All local bills which have been properly advertised as required by law may be given consideration by this extraordinary session.

In conclusion, may I emphasize that the best interests of the State will be conserved by a prompt and expeditious handling of the matters to come before the legislature. Imbued as I know you are with a desire to see the best interests of the State conserved and furthered, I feel sure that you will expedite the business before you to the greatest extent consistent with its efficient and thorough prosecution. With these high purposes in view, I am happy to extend to you my sincerest good wishes for a pleasant and useful session here assembled, and to assure you of the fullest co-operation of the office of Governor.

W. J. HOLLOWAY,  
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.