

State of the State
Governor E. W. Marland
January 15, 1935

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the State of Oklahoma:

My first message to you will be brief and deal chiefly with emergency measures which I shall propose.

From time to time as your session of the Legislature progresses I shall consult you concerning other measures of importance to our State – and avail myself of frequent opportunity to make suggestions of needed legislation.

Last month I organized a number of Citizens Committees to make studies of the functioning and problems of administration of the various activities of government in Oklahoma.

- A Committee on
- (1) Education
 - (2) Financial Administration
 - (3) Public Welfare
 - (4) Revenue and Taxation
 - (5) Highways
 - (6) Natural Resources
 - (7) Conservation
 - (8) Law Enforcement.

I have contracted with the Brookings Institution – an Institution for Governmental Research – to furnish technical advisers to each of these Committees and to furnish a complete report of the findings of these Committees.

This report will contain recommendations regarding each field of administration, designed to point out commendable features, to remove existing defects, to increase efficiency, and to reduce expenditure.

The full report is to be completed in written form by July 1, 1935.

One copy is to be delivered to the President of the Senate – one copy is to be delivered to the Speaker of the House – another copy is to be delivered to the Chairman of the Citizens Committee on Good Government.

This report will, I believe, recommend changes in our eleemosynary and penal institutions – our educational system – our administrative departments – our law enforcement agencies – and our financial administration. All looking toward economies in government.

No such survey has ever been made in Oklahoma and because of its complete character cannot be finished in time for use in our study of the needed appropriations for the next fiscal year (1935-1936), or the revenue measures needed to meet the appropriations.

For this reason, I propose to you that you consider revenue measures for one year only, or until the end of the next fiscal year, and appropriations for departments and institutions only to the end of the next fiscal year – and in addition to these such emergency appropriation measures as may be necessary.

* * *

In just two weeks from today we must meet the emergency arising from the decision of the President to drop from the Federal Relief rolls all but the able-bodied destitute unemployed.

Federal aid in Oklahoma will be continued by furnishing public works employment to approximately 115,000 able-bodied family heads.

Approximately 35,000 cases of the 150,000 cases now on the relief rolls, will need the immediate care of the State. FERA authorities estimate for me that these cases represent approximately 150,000 individuals.

This will throw upon us the burden of supporting at least that number of our fellow citizens who, on account of their age or infirmities, are unable to maintain themselves.

I propose to you that in order to meet this emergency we pass a new general sales and service tax law, broadening its base and increasing the amount to three per cent – one per cent for schools are now; two per cent for relief of destitute unemployable persons.

The greatest task before our Nation and our State today is the permanent solution of our unemployment problem.

This administration stands pledged to the people of Oklahoma to cooperate to the fullest possible extent with the National administration in this undertaking.

The President in his message to Congress on January 4th said:

“This new program of emergency public employment should be governed by a number of practical principles.

“(1) All work undertaken should be useful – not for just a day, or a year, but useful in the sense that it affords permanent improvement in living conditions or that it creates future new wealth for the nation.

“(2) Compensation on emergency public projects should be in the form of security payments which should be larger than the amount now received as a relief dole, but at the same time not so large as to encourage the rejection of opportunities for private employment or the leaving of private employment to engage in government work.

“(3) Projects should be undertaken on which a large percentage of direct labor can be used.

“(4) Preference should be given to those projects which will be self-liquidating in the sense that there is a reasonable expectation that the government will get its money back at some future time.

“(5) The projects undertaken should be selected and planned so as to compete as little as possible with private enterprises. This suggests that if it were not for the necessity of giving useful work to the unemployed now on relief, these projects in most instances would not now be undertaken.

“(6) The planning of projects would seek to assure work during the coming fiscal year to the individuals now on relief, or until such time as private employment is available. In order to make adjustment to increasing private employment, work should be planned with a view to tapering it off in proportion to the speed with which the emergency workers are offered positions with private employers.

“(7) Effort should be made to locate projects where they will serve the greatest unemployment needs as shown by present relief rolls, and the broad program of the national resources board should be freely used for guidance in selection. Our ultimate objective being the enrichment of human lives, the government has the primary duty to use its emergency expenditures as much as possible to serve those who cannot secure the advantages of private capital.”

In order that we may be prepared to cooperate with the National administration and receive the full benefits of its public works program, and furnish the greatest amount of useful employment to our people,

I propose that you enact laws creating, establishing and financing certain State Boards:
ONE: *Oklahoma Planning Board, of fifteen members,*

With power and authority to establish and maintain a survey of the natural, agricultural, industrial and human resources of the State – and develop plans and programs for the conservation and better utilization of these resources.

Long-term coordinated planning and programming of Public Works should be its objective – with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, efficient and economic development of the State, which will, in accordance with the present and future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, comfort, convenience, prosperity and welfare of the people of the State of Oklahoma.

I suggest that you appropriate for the uses and purposes of this Board for the period ending June 30, 1936, the sum of \$500,000.00.

TWO: *Oklahoma Flood Control Board, of three members,*

With power and authority in connection with flood control, soil erosion, irrigation and reforestation – with authority to acquire, lease, hold and sell land – with the power of eminent domain – and with other powers necessary and incident to conservation of our natural resources of land and water.

With authority to cooperate with the National Government in its flood control program.

I suggest that you appropriate for the uses and purpose of this Board period ending June 30, 1936, the sum of \$1,000,000.00.

THREE: *Oklahoma Housing Board, of three members,*

With power and authority to acquire, buy, lease, hold and sell land –
To acquire, buy, build, own, maintain and sell houses, barns and outbuildings –
To create homesteads, farm and-or city, and sell the same on the installment plan –
To do and perform any and all acts necessary to promote home ownership and rural rehabilitation.

With power to borrow money, mortgage its assets, issue bonds and finance its operations.

I suggest you appropriate for the uses and purposes of this Board for the period ending June 30, 1936, the sum of \$2,500,000.00.

FOUR: *Oklahoma New Industries Board, of three members,*

With the power and authority to acquire, buy, lease, own, hold and sell land –
To erect, maintain, operate, lease and sell buildings, factories, mills and manufactories.
With all necessary power incidental to the promotion of new industries in Oklahoma.
With power to mortgage its assets, issue bonds, borrow and loan money to aid in the building and operation of industries.

I suggest that you appropriate for the uses and purposes of this Board for the period June 30, 1936, the sum of \$1,000,000.00.

FIVE: *Oklahoma Highway Board, of three members,*

With all the power and authority vested by law in the present highway commission.
I suggest that you appropriate for the uses and purposes of this Board for the period ending June 30, 1936, the sum of \$2,500,000.00 out of general revenues of the State, for the purpose of matching the Federal appropriation available for our highway use.

I suggest that all members of the four last named boards shall be ex-officio members of the Planning Board.

* * *

In order that the operations of these new Boards shall be properly financed, I propose that you enact emergency revenue measures for the period ending June 30, 1936, imposing a severance tax of two cents per barrel on all crude petroleum produced in the State.

And two cents per thousand cubic feet on all natural gas produced in the State.

And an additional one cent per gallon on gasoline sold in the State.

The revenue derived from the new tax on crude oil and natural gas will, I believe, be more than sufficient to provide the amount needed for the Housing, Flood-Control, New Industries and Planning Boards.

The additional revenue from gasoline sales will, I believe, be sufficient to provide the amount needed for the use of the Highway Board.

Since oil and gas are irreplaceable natural resources of Oklahoma, it seems to be quite fitting that the revenues derived from such taxes can appropriately be used in the prevention of waste of another natural resource – our soil.

Flood-control and prevention of soil erosion are of paramount importance in all planning for the present and future generations of our State.

* * *

Another emergency existing which must be met by special revenue measures is the depleted condition of our Treasury and the outstanding deficiency warrants.

I ask your authority to issue short time notes (not over four years) to retire these warrants.

I propose passage of emergency tax laws to raise revenue for the general revenue fund of the State from the following sources:

Income, insurance premiums, inheritances, cigarettes, salaries, and income from rents.

The income that can be derived from these sources will, I believe, be sufficient, with the other general revenues, to meet the ordinary expense of our government and retire outstanding warrants.

I suggest for your *immediate* consideration legislation to appropriate funds to be made available for the care of our unemployables beginning February 1st, and funds to meet the requirements of the Federal government of our participation in the work relief program.

I suggest the appropriation of the sum of \$5,000,000.00 for relief purposes.

A new general sales and service tax law of three per cent (3%) – one-third for schools, two-thirds for relief – will, I believe, raise the revenue necessary for this purpose.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives, I urge, in the name of suffering humanity, prompt action of these emergency measures.

THE GOVERNOR OF OKLAHOMA,
E. W. MARLAND.

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.