

State of the State
Governor James Robertson
January 14, 1919

Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives:

In conformity with the requirements of the Constitution and of long established custom, I have the honor of herewith submitting to you a message touching upon the legislative needs of the state.

At the outset, we, as a state, and of right should be, deeply grateful to the Father of Nations for the safe deliverance from the threatened and menacing danger of that idea of government typified by the Hun. The glorious achievement of our army and navy awakens within the heart of every true American the strongest feelings of pride while the leadership of our forces has inspired us with a greater degree of confidence in American citizenship than we, as a nation, have ever before experienced.

The war required of us untold wealth in a material way and we will, for generations yet to come, be burdened with its cost; yet, not one of us regret the expenditure of a single dollar; and the loss of many thousand precious lives – while hard to bear, has not been in vain, because of the glorious and everlasting benefits which their sacrifices guaranteed.

Oklahoma has borne her share in this great contest gladly and without regret. We have met every requirement of the Federal Government and of our Allies, and the splendid achievements of our noble boys will be the subject of song and story, and of grateful tribute and loving homage, as long as we exist as a nation. The great victory has cost us much in money and in tears, but with it comes greater duties and responsibilities, as well as greater opportunities. Since that fateful day in 1914 when the armies of Europe began to march we have lived a thousand years, and with the coming of peace we face a new world, with new problems and new difficulties. No living man is wise enough to correctly appraise the results of the war, or predict with any degree of certainty the new obligations that will be imposed upon the signatories of the world's greatest and most important peace treaty; but there are some things requiring our attention which do not call for prophecy or conjecture, and in these hard, yet important duties that face us on every hand we can find employment of all our best endeavors. To a few of these matters I desire to briefly direct your most considerate attention.

STABILIZING CONDITIONS.

Merely by way of a general observation, I desire to impress upon your minds and to call your immediate attention to the very important position you now hold as law-makers of a great and growing commonwealth.

Irresponsible and thoughtless persons, in the past, have sought to minimize the dignity and importance of law-makers and all other public officials, and in this they have been encouraged and assisted, to a degree, by the conduct of the officials themselves. I say to you that such criticisms are intolerable and unfair, and must be stopped. The duties of law-makers and officials, generally, are of so much general importance that every patriotic citizen owes it as a duty to his state to combat such manifestations wherever found, and to aid and assist us in the proper performance of onerous and exacting duties. But above all other methods of attracting esteem and support, the proper conduct of public officials themselves is the best guarantee of that homage and respect to which the honorable position is entitled.

Oklahoma is no longer the “baby” state; we have passed the day of swaddling clothes, and have donned the habiliments of full grown manhood, and we, as public servants, are charged with duties and responsibilities, the proper discharge of which affects directly the happiness and prosperity of more than 2,000,000 living persons, and of millions yet unborn. We can ill afford,

as representatives of such a constituency, to act like boys or other irresponsible agents, but must realize immediately and fully the requirements of our positions. To that end let us unceasingly, and in good faith, labor. Our standing as a sovereign state, both at home and abroad, is fixed and determined very largely by our own efforts and public officials represent, a large measure, the character and reputation by which we are known and appreciated by the world at large. It is a matter of genuine regret that we have been handicapped and retarded in our growth by “freak legislation,” by the exploitation of spectacular and unnecessary “fads” and “isms,” and by the unseemly and undignified wrangles of public officials, played up to our disgrace and disadvantage by sensational newspapers and other agencies.

Is it not a prime duty, and is it not an opportune time for us, and each of us, and all others in the state government, to undertake to bring about a happier and more wholesome condition of affairs? To that end I urge upon all citizens, regardless of their rank and station, the absolute necessity of standing by Oklahoma first, last and all the time. Let us begin to boost and praise our great state, crystallizing a sentiment that will have for its object and purpose the creation and growth of a love and reverence for Oklahoma and her institutions, so that her boys will gladly fight and die for her if necessary.

To my mind it is high time for us, as individuals and collectively, to lend our best endeavors towards a stabilizing movement in every field of activity, to the end that we may more nearly achieve and hold a proud position in the sisterhood of states for thoroughness and high character, and show by our own efforts that Oklahoma is the safest and best state in the Union in education and commerce, industrially, economically, and otherwise.

GOOD ROADS.

No question of greater importance will come before you for consideration than that of good roads. No one is opposed to good roads – all favor them and this, in a measure, has always been true. Yet the fact remains that we have no good roads in Oklahoma, notwithstanding the enormous sums of money expended for that purpose.

The war is now practically over and we must be prepared and hold ourselves in readiness to enter vigorously upon the work of readjustment and construction which the sudden dawn of peace marks out before us. The tests and strain of war conditions have clearly exposed the economic waste of our present highway system, or rather, lack of system. Under modern conditions the prosperity, or lack of prosperity of the citizens of such a state as Oklahoma can be largely written in terms of market facilities and transportation advantages, and costs.

In the platform on which I went before the people of this state, asking for the nomination and election to the position of Chief Executive, I stated my position on this subject in part as follows:

“I declare for an aggressive policy of road improvement, such as will place Oklahoma in the forefront among the states that boast of the most forward achievement in the great enterprise, and giving regard to the fact that highways should be improved, ultimately, in approximate proportion to the traffic they will be required to carry.”

I also said:

“Old systems fail and fall overwhelmed by the rising flood of traffic. In the world war we have seen a vivid illustration of this, and we know now, more than ever before, that the public highway must be made to carry the load. The building of permanent, hard-surfaced roads, under the co-ordinated plan provided by our laws, should receive active and material support from the state. With principal state highways built of permanent construction, more attention and funds can be given to building local dirt roads, much maintenance waste eliminated, and the whole people benefited immeasurably.”

There is another phase of this question which must not be lost sight of. Something like 80,000 soldier boys from Oklahoma will soon return to civil life, together with half that number more able-bodied men who have left the state to engage in war work in ship yards, munition plants, and other activities. The most of these men will return to find their jobs taken by women and older men who, for various reasons, may not surrender up their places, and it is our duty to provide work for them all. Again the re-adjustment that is bound to come to our commercial life brings to mind many difficulties, all of which will be attended with uncertainties and the enormous demands of the Government for money, coupled with the enormous economic losses occasioned by the absence from the state of more than 100,000 able-bodied wage earners for the past year or eighteen months; these and many other reasons require a brisk stimulation of industry in this state, to the end that business of all kinds be stabilized until we can readjust ourselves to the changed conditions.

In order to furnish employment to the returned soldiers and war workers, or those who must give way for them, we must unitedly engage our efforts either by furnishing private employment, or by public internal improvements. It is of the highest importance that all hands be employed to the end that wily agitators be not given a chance to sow the seed of discord in the minds of those who made such mighty sacrifices for human liberty. To these ends, and because of the otherwise imperative need of good roads, to what greater work can we dedicate our efforts?

I am therefor enthusiastically in favor of submitting to the people of the state at the very earliest opportunity the question of using not less than fifty million dollars worth of Good Roads Bonds for this purpose.

This may seem like an enormous sum, and it is, yet nothing short of that amount will answer the purpose. In order to guarantee this project we must first and above all, convince the people that every dollar of the sum so raised will honestly and in good faith, go into good roads, and that the state will obtain value received for all sums expended. We must guarantee to every county in the state its prorata share of the proposed improvement, based upon population, area, taxable wealth and traffic requirements; we must also fix the routes of the proposed highways in the bill to the end that all the people will know just where the improvements will be made, and thus guarantee good faith to the weaker counties, and also thereby save the administrators of this law the embarrassment of rival routes, thereby eliminating the charge of favoritism, politics, and undue influence after the bond issue shall have carried. We must designate in the measure the width of the road to be constructed, and the character of road to be built and provide that every foot of it shall be built of Oklahoma material and by Oklahoma workmen. The bond issue thus provided must be so arranged that not less than \$2,000,000 of the principal shall be retired each year, and the receipts from motor vehicles and 5-6ths of the present income from the gross production tax on oil, gas and minerals should be appropriated for the purpose of paying interest and principal; and if this be done every dollar of the issue would be taken care of without increasing our present tax one penny.

The Federal Government stands willing and anxious to join hands with us on this great enterprise, both with money and skilled and experienced engineers, and we should avail ourselves of this aid, especially as to the engineers, to the end that we may have an adequate supervision and inspection of the work and thus satisfy the people that the improvement is being honestly made. To my mind, no greater opportunity for real service will ever present itself to us, and I most earnestly request the immediate and continuous consideration of this subject. If the matter can be speedily submitted I will call a special election at an early date, so that if the proposition is approved by the people the legislature will yet be in session to enact such further laws as may be necessary to vitalize and make the plan workable.

EDUCATION.

The subject of education continues to be one of the most important with which state governments are called upon to deal; and it is one to which I feel that we must devote the most thoughtful attention during the present eventful period.

It may be said that Oklahoma has provided prodigally for the small percentage of the rising generation whose circumstances will enable them to attend the higher institutions of learning, but so long as illiteracy exists within our boundaries, or while it can be said that the children of any class, or of any condition in life, are denied that equal opportunity to which they are entitled to obtain at least a good common school education, we have not done our duty as the guardians of the public welfare, or as citizens of a great, free, democratic state.

Intelligence is the spiritual essence of good citizenship in a republic. More than a century ago Thomas Jefferson in advocacy of the common schools wrote: "I look to the diffusion of light and education as the source most to be relied upon for ameliorating the condition, promoting the virtue, and advancing the happiness of mankind." And since we have traveled far on the road of progress since his day, I do not believe that the progressive people of Oklahoma are satisfied, or that they should be, with the conditions that obtain in a great many of the rural school districts of this state. Personally, I shall not rest content until a full nine months' term is secured for all of our primary schools, and until every child in the state is in the way of achieving the equivalent of at least a common school education.

The chief business of a democracy is education; education means opportunity, and a democracy that fails in this respect is untrue to the first principle. I want you to co-operate with and aid me to so prune the tree of knowledge in this state that some of its perfect fruit will ripen on the branches within the reach of the children of the common people, who constitute an overwhelming majority of the citizenship of this state.

I may lay myself open to criticism when I assert, as I now do, that our common schools do not measure up to our requirements, and expectations. I venture the assertion that seven out of every ten of the children who start in at the bottom in our common schools, obtain all the education they will ever get in the district school at home. This is unfortunate and should be remedied, but it is nevertheless true, and being true, I contend that conditions should be so changed that when a boy or girl finishes the eight grade in our common schools he or she should have the foundation of a "practical" and useable, every day education. He should be able to solve ordinary problems in arithmetic, write an intelligible sentence in the English language, know the common ordinary history and geography of his state and nation, write a legible hand, and spell the words of his every-day vocabulary. Drawing, mechanical draughting, domestic art and science, music, athletics, etc., etc., while desirable and useful must give way in the common schools, and the number of subjects studied must be reduced and more time given to the fundamentals to the end that a greater degree of thoroughness be reached.

I am proud of our University, A. & M. College, the various state normals, and other higher institutions of learning, and wish to see them prosper to a much greater degree than that which they now enjoy. I want the legislature to be liberal with them – in fact they have just begun to grow and we should, and will, treat them with a jealous care. But I know that but comparatively few of our girls and boys will ever have the privilege of a higher education, so, I plead for the common schools; that institution that has been, and is now, the foundation of all our greatness as a nation.

To that end let us immediately simplify the program of our country schools, and eliminate many subjects from their programs to the end that more time may be given to the fundamentals. Let us continue to encourage our consolidated rural schools, and to this end I urge an increase in appropriations for building purposes maintenance.

AGRICULTURE.

Agriculture is our most important industry, and is entitled to our most serious consideration. Conditions are continually changing, and this fact alone requires that we keep in mind, at all times, the necessity of modernizing our laws to meet the varying needs of those who feed the world.

A few years ago Oklahoma was considered by some as of the south, and by others as of the north, and each class sought in good faith to impose upon the farmer, by law, the customs and methods of the particular section from whence they came, without regard to nature's laws, which, after all, silently, but inexorably, mould and shape our destiny. As a result we have lost much time and many opportunities by what, at times, seems useless experimentation.

This, I presume, could not have been avoided, and yet unless we are willing to profit by experiences, and are willing to recognize the large and unchangeable part which nature plays in these things, we are doomed to further uncertainty and doubt as to the settled policies to be followed. The thought I will to leave is this: We should begin to feel and act as though we were a "settled" community, and should leave experimentation in laws as well as crops to those who are specially charged by law and who have the opportunity, and who can engage in this most useful and necessary work, without the danger which comes with failure. In other words, our farmers and our law-makers should use a wise caution in adopting innovations; and I am loath to make recommendations except in a few instances where time, experience and observation warrant us in the belief that relief by law is needed.

I must not, however, be misunderstood as being opposed to progress, nor as underestimating the importance of up-to-date scientific methods of agriculture; what I want in agriculture here in Oklahoma, as well as every other line of activity, is, as nearly as may be, a settled policy so that we may concentrate all our energies and obtain the best net results. However, much we desire this "settled" condition, we also know that in order to secure it we must all work together, and the law-makers will play a very important part in eliminating the errors of the past and in placing the farmer in a position to profit by the experience of those who elsewhere have succeeded under conditions comparatively such as we have here.

The first great need of the farmer in Oklahoma is "Good Roads," and this is subject to such vital importance that I have treated it specially, and under a separate head.

There are other things, however, that have a direct bearing on the prosperity of this great industry, and which are indissolubly connected with it, the mere mention of which, however, will, without argument, convince us that they should be cared for by law; and without attempting to discuss them herein at length, I shall briefly enumerate a few subjects, confident that the mere mention of their names and purposes will recommend them to your favorable consideration.

1st. Marketing Laws. The importance of an efficient marketing law cannot be overestimated. Our present law is a short step in the right direction, but unless it be enlarged and strengthened it would better be repealed, because as it now stands it pretends to offer relief without being able to give it. The administration of this law should be charged directly to the State Board of Agriculture. The subject is of so much importance and yet so little understood and appreciated that public hearings before the Committees of the two Houses might be of great value; for I am sure the Federal Government would gladly send experts to aid us in evolving a workable plan.

2d. Pure Seed Law. Every year the farmers of the state lose thousands of dollars in the purchase of poor seed. This fact in itself is sufficient to warrant the passage of a Pure Seed law; but important at this phase of the subject is, it is as nothing compared to the loss of crops which always results from poor and imperfect seed, to say nothing of the loss that results from noxious and bothersome weeds and other plants that every year are brought because of being mixed in the

purchased seed. The loss from this source to the farmer is large, but the loss is not the farmer's alone – we all lose because of the shortage of food products. I most earnestly urge the passage of a comprehensive pure seed law.

3d. Dog Law. Sheep raising in Oklahoma is rapidly becoming one of our chief live stock industries, but it will not reach the maximum importance without the protection of a modern and comprehensive “Dog Law.” The levying of a license tax is but a step in this direction, and yet an important one; and if placed high enough would serve to increase the state's revenue. I urge the enactment of a law patterned after that of Pennsylvania or West Virginia.

4th. County Farm Agents. No expenditure of public money brings greater returns than that spent by the various counties for farm agents and for work done under their direction. As the law now stands the counties desiring to take advantage of this modern aid are handicapped because of a prohibition limiting the expenditure to \$1200.00, while no county is compelled to expend anything. I have no special objection to the last provision, but surely if a progressive county desires to appropriate more than \$1200.00 for this work, and there are many in the state that do, I can see no good reason why they should not be permitted to do so.

5th. Tuberculosis in Live Stock. The ravages of tuberculosis in live stock, especially in milk cows, has reached an alarming stage in this state, and further steps should be taken to strengthen existing laws in order to enable the Department of Agriculture to eradicate this disease. This should be done, not alone for the protection of the breeders, but also to prevent the spread of this menacing disease to the human race. The Federal Government stands ready to pay one-third of the loss occasioned by the slaughter of infected animals and the state should make suitable provisions to bear an equal amount of loss, leaving the owner of the animal to bear an equal loss with the state and Federal Government.

The present law is lame in this particular, and it is difficult of enforcement because of the lack of a provision therein for compensation in case of slaughter of infected animals. I feel sure that a proper consideration of this suggestion, aided by data which the State Board of Agriculture is prepared to furnish, will result in the amendment of our law, thereby enabling the Department of Agriculture to successfully combat this great and growing evil.

6th. Additional Aid for Experiment Stations. I am advised that the Federal Government is expending each year in this state \$15,000.00 from the Hatch fund and \$15,000.00 from the Adams fund for work in experiment stations in this state, while Oklahoma is contributing but \$5,000.00 for such purpose. The total of the above amounts is expended under the joint direction of the Federal and State governments, and I feel that the state should appropriate a large amount in order to provide for localized experimentation, thereby permitting this work to be prosecuted with greater efficiency in experiments that would be of peculiar benefit to Oklahoma alone, instead of the whole amount being used for experiments of general interest, not only to Oklahoma, but to neighboring states. Until we meet the Federal appropriation with a larger sum than that given in the past, the Federal idea, instead of the state, will dominate the expenditure of the fund. As evidence of gratitude and good faith I feel that we can afford to increase the appropriation for this highly commendable purpose.

7th. Oklahoma has a constitutional as well as a statutory requirement that “Agriculture,” as a science, shall be taught in our public schools. This wise provision of law cannot be properly complied with so long as the pupils of our schools are dependent upon text books written for states with latitude and longitude different from ours. In other words, we have no text books on this subject adapted to the peculiar needs and conditions of our state. Surely we have adequate talent in our A. & M. College to prepare and furnish our students with an up-to-date text book on Agriculture, suitable to our needs and conditions.

I recommend that the State Superintendent and the State Board of Education be authorized to cause such a text book to be prepared and placed on sale.

8th. Secondary Agricultural Schools. Our secondary agricultural schools, as now organized, are failing in their purpose. I am of the opinion that they should be attached to the A. & M. College at Stillwater, and be operated under the direction and supervision of that institution. It is unfair to all concerned that they be continued in their present status. I recommend that the legislature by proper committee investigation give this matter careful consideration.

9th. Grain Warehouses and Inspection. I urge a complete revision of Chapter 80, Revised Statutes 1910, covering the subject of Grain Warehouses and Inspection. The present law was enacted by the Territorial legislature in 1899 and needs modernizing. The subject of proper grain inspection is of vital importance to our farmers, and nothing but a complete revision of the law will suffice. The Department of Agriculture will gladly furnish data and valuable advice on the subject.

BUDGET LAW.

It needs no argument to convince any person that our present method of appropriating money for the maintenance of the various departments of government and the state institutions is not only cumbersome and unscientific, but in many instances extremely wasteful.

Frequently a very large portion of the time of the legislature is taken up in the considerations of appropriations and matters of legislation are slighted because of want of time. A workable and comprehensive "Budget Law" for the purpose of presenting to the legislature a reliable estimate on which to base appropriations should be enacted. The income of the state, less the fixed charges, should be the basis of the state's expenditures for the operating expenses, and the needs of the various departments and institutions can be more fairly and equitably measured by an impartial Board than by the present method. A law based on the Virginia and Wisconsin plan would prove of untold value not only in the saving of money and the time of the legislature, but would be of value in the introduction of scientific business methods in the handling of the financial affairs of the state, and would not infringe upon the proper and legitimate jurisdiction of the law-making branch of our government.

DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RESOURCES

The development of the natural resources of Oklahoma offers a most inviting field for the enterprise and industry of our citizens, and for the safe and profitable investment of capital; and, notwithstanding the wonderful strides already made in that direction, the work has just begun. To put this development on the plane of activity which the energy and enterprise of our people demand, and the richness of our mineral deposits and the importance of the industries made possible by an abundance of raw material warrants, we need very large amounts of outside capital. To induce additional capital to enter the state and find employment as a factor in the development of oil and gas fields and refineries; the promotion of mining and smelting of zinc and lead; the mining of coal and manufacture of coke; the exploitation of our granite, marble and other building stone, salt asphalt, gypsum, deposits of less well known value, whose abundance and untold richness have been the theme of our most eloquent newspaper men and able geologists, we must offer the encouragement of fair and equitable treatment towards invested capital.

"I said in my platform that "unless additional "unless additional capital can be made to feel secure and is guaranteed fair and just treatment, we need not expect that development which would otherwise be ours for the asking.

"The opening and developing of our great resources will bring to our state large numbers of intelligent men of high-wage earning capacity who will build homes and make markets for the farmers' products, and otherwise assist in the upbuilding of this commonwealth; and to me it seems a short-sighted and foolish policy to place obstacles in the way of these industries,

especially in view of the untold benefits that would accrue to our citizenship, and the increased revenue to the state and the various municipalities.”

What I said then, I want to accentuate now. The day has gone by in Oklahoma when capital can be baited and penalized, or organized labor or industry exploited. Rightly administered and backed by an intelligent public opinion, our laws should provide room and opportunity in Oklahoma for the investment of unlimited capital and the establishment of countless new industries that will add to the material wealth, the prosperity and happiness of our people. To vitalize and bring to full fruition the most effective policy and the needed legislation to secure results commensurate with the opportunities offered and the advantages possessed, must be one of the most urgent of the many duties that will devolve upon the executive and legislative branches of the state.

HOME OWNERSHIP.

The ownership of a home is the surest antidote for anarchy and its legitimate spawn, more familiarly known as I. W. W., bolshevik, and red card Socialism. The portals of the American home – no matter how humble it may be – are the sentinels guarding the entrance into the holy of holies of patriotism and good citizenship, and the perfection of our Home Ownership Law by amendments that will extend its helpful provisions to the man of integrity and industry without money capital, should be made one of the foremost features of our program for re-adjustment and constructive legislation. It is not a wise policy to remove the restrictions in the present law which govern the loaning and investment of the trust funds of the schools, but a fund should be provided out of which home ownership loans, of not to exceed \$2500.00, can be made on the moral risk of a good, industrious character and the security of the land. If we are to accomplish all we should accomplish along this line the state must take some risk.

The present law requires that the prospective owner must have one-half of the purchase price of the land, or that he can borrow only one-half the value of the land, irrespective of improvements, and this conservative and iron-clad provision of the law has denied its advantages to the very class most in need of the state’s fostering care. The 1917 amendments to this law reduced the rate of interest on the land to be sold to maintain the loan fund, to a point below the interest rate on government bonds, and at four per cent. Under present and prospective conditions there is neither a home nor a foreign demand for such securities. The successful operation of this law means much for the state, but it is more than a mere administrative or economic policy. Its practical and successful operation is of vital importance, not only those who take advantage of its provisions, but it should awaken and enlist the hearty support of every banker, land-owner, school teacher, and business man, for it is both a community and state builder.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

The matter of public health and the provisions for safeguarding the people of Oklahoma against disease and death should receive the most special and thorough consideration of the members of the legislature. The ravages of the recent terrible epidemic, which has taken toll of the lives of many of our citizens, has emphasized in an appalling way the inadequacy of the resources available to our State Health Department, both as regards the size of the organization and the equipment at its disposal.

I recommend that you materially increase the appropriation for the use of the State Health Commissioner and the proper reorganization and enlargement of his staff to the end that he may be equipped at all times to protect the lives and health of our people.

In this connection, I would call you especial attention to the fact that Oklahoma is far behind many other states in dealing with the ravages of tuberculosis. This dread disease is claiming thousands of victims in our state, and many thousands of others are impoverished and

almost helpless because of this disease. Many of the patients who are suffering from tuberculosis have reached that stage in their conditions where they are a constant menace and source of infection to members of their families, or other healthy persons with whom they are obliged to come in contact, and this causes the spread of the disease among those who would otherwise be sound and healthy citizens.

Many other states have been able to greatly reduce the death rate of their citizens from tuberculosis by the construction of sanatoria and hospitals in which the afflicted ones may be assisted to a permanent cure, or, in any event, may be cared for in comfort and without endangering the health of other persons. I therefore urge you to enact such legislation as will provide for the construction and maintenance of sufficient and proper sanatoria to enable the health authorities to successfully combat the growing ravages of this disease.

I would also recommend that you provide a special Bureau of Tuberculosis, in charge of an expert on – that subject, who shall be under the authority and direction of the State Health Commissioner.

In this connection, I desire to call your attention to the splendid work, during the past year, by the health authorities of the state in connection with the Federal Government in the matter of combatting the ill effects of the so-called social evil, or in other words, venereal diseases. The prevalence of this trouble, as disclosed by the records of the army, came as a distinct shock to the average American citizen, and the danger to civilization cannot be over-estimated.

The publicity program as adopted by the Federal and State Authorities has proved of untold benefit, and should be continued, especially as an educational factor in the solution of this vexatious problem. Our present laws are inadequate, and I trust they will be strengthened, and I urge the adoption of the model laws prepared by the Federal Government, because they seem not only comprehensive, but also they tend to uniformity in legislative enactments, which, in this case, is of very great importance.

While under the heading of public health, I desire to call your attention to the very wide-spread growth of sentiment relating to physical inspection in our public schools; also to the desirability of requiring all teachers in our schools, and all persons handling food and drink for the public to have health certificates before entering upon the discharge of their duties.

CONFEDERATE PENSIONS.

I urge such appropriation as may be necessary to meet the requirements of the Confederate Pension Law, and trust you will treat these old heroes with the generosity for which Oklahoma is celebrated.

I also recommend, for the more efficient administration of the Pension Law, that it be taken from the office of Commissioner of Charities and Corrections and placed in a Bureau by itself, under the direction of a Commissioner of Pensions who can devote his entire time to the work. The present Board should be retained to aid the Commissioner. The present Commissioner of Charities and Corrections (who is a Confederate soldier) recommends this change, and it seems to be the wish of all concerned, and I feel that such change would be for the benefit of all.

In the nature of things, these old heroes will not be with us long, and I am sure that all Oklahomans are glad of the opportunity to honor and care for them in their declining years.

BLUE SKY LAW

The rapid development of our natural resources has given opportunity for the organization of many purely “wild cat” stock selling corporations which are detrimental to honest business endeavors. Their purported object and purpose is all to frequently impossible of attainment, and, as a result, many millions of dollars are being taken from our people without

hope or possibility of return. This subject is one of general concern, and you have all, doubtless, had experience along this line, at least by observation if not otherwise, and must realize the necessity of some legislative relief that will curb this growing evil, without interfering with legitimate promotion and development.

STATE AND COUNTY COUNCILS OR DEFENSE.

The great war brought into existence many new agencies to aid and assist the government. One of these was the Council of Defense, which we all recognize as having been indispensable.

The war is practically over, and as a natural result the Federal agencies will return to normal, and many of the duties that have been performed by and under the direction of the Federal Government will either lapse and die, or be taken up by the state alone. While the war has ended, we must not forget that there are in this great country of ours many dangerous agencies that have been compelled to be and remain dormant, but which, at the first opportunity, will become active and dangerous again. It is up to the state to be prepared to meet any emergency that may arise, and I can think of no movement or effort that will serve the state in this connection so well as the state and county Councils of Defense. If the legislature is of this opinion, it will be necessary to give consideration to some law on the subject looking to the recreation and jurisdiction of such agency. I would not advise any law authorizing the creation of debts or the expenditure of money, but authority should be given to enable patriotic volunteers to act with authority in case of emergencies that may arise.

SOLDIERS' MONUMENT.

There is a universal demand, throughout the state and nation, that we take some steps showing our appreciation of the sacrifices made by our brave soldier and sailor boys in the recent great world war. With that sentiment I am in hearty accord, and I beg to suggest that any monument or memorial for which we shall provide should be such only as is prompted by a proper reverence and for sacred and hallowed memories of those patriotic efforts which were so freely made, without the thought of monetary recompense. To my mind any monument or memorial based entirely, or even largely, on its utilitarian purpose would be unsatisfactory to us, or to those for whom it was designed.

Let it be a real memorial, and not tinctured with commercialism. Let us be in a position to say "We erected this because we wanted to do so, not because we needed it as a utility."

I therefore recommend a generous appropriation for the purpose of building a memorial for our soldiers and sailors on state or public ground, at or near the capitol.

WOMEN VOTERS.

The people at the recent general election, conferred, by constitutional amendment, full rights of suffrage on women on equal terms with men. It is our duty to fully and properly vitalize this constitutional provision by proper and necessary statutory enactments, to the end that this new privilege may be completely exercised.

The foregoing are but a few of the most important subjects to which I desire to call your attention at this time. I shall, in the near future, take the liberty of submitting for your further consideration additional matters that press for attention. But I most earnestly urge upon you, gentlemen, the supreme importance of early action and disposition of the good roads measure, for if the purposed improvement is ratified by the people our general road law, which in no event should be repealed, would require amendments along certain lines; on the contrary, if it should be rejected, then a wholly different line of amendments would be needed. It needs hardly to be suggested that the Governor, and all other heads of departments, stand ready and anxious to render you every possible aid in the performance of what we all know to be arduous and onerous

duties. Feel free to call upon any officer of the executive branch of the government for assistance.

With all good wishes for a successful and harmonious session, I have, sirs, the honor to subscribe myself, your obedient and humble servant.

J.B.A. ROBERTSON,
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.