

State of the State
Governor James B. A. Robertson
April 25, 1921

To the Members of the Eighth Legislature:

By virtue of the power vested in me by the Constitution, I have convened you in extraordinary session for the purpose of considering matters which are of vital importance to the people of the State and which were not cared for during the late regular session.

It is now a matter of no concern to the people of the State why the necessary business of the State was not disposed of at the regular session. The fact is that it was not, and that alone is the reason for your return, and, it seems to me, that it is time for us all to quit giving excuses or offering explanations as to the failure to properly care for the business of the State at the regular session. We should realize that a patriotic duty confronts us and that it must be promptly performed. Let bygone be bygones and let us go to work and attend strictly to the business which we were chosen by the people to look after.

That there will be honest difference of opinion on the various phases of State business, no one will deny, but we should approach this duty in a spirit of fairness and give due consideration to the views of each other, and recognize that all legislation is largely the result of compromise. Unless we enter upon our work with that spirit, we cannot hope for a successful conclusion.

I have every reason to believe that the members of this body have returned to their labors imbued with this idea and I trust that no time will be lost in reorganizing and getting down to work and that the session may be brief and inexpensive.

Under the provisions of the Constitution, no subject can be considered in an extraordinary or special session except such as the Governor may recommend for consideration, and, under that provision of the Constitution, I beg leave to call your attention to the following subjects, to wit:

APPROPRIATIONS.

No provision has been made by the Legislature for the expense of the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Departments of the government for the next biennium; this includes not only the expenses of the various State Departments, but every other agency of the State as well. Provision must be made by you for the maintenance and support of all State schools, all penal, eleemosynary, charitable, custodial and other institutions of the State which have been authorized by law. In this connection, I call your attention also to the fact that many of the departments and State institutions require emergency deficiency appropriations in order to efficiently operate until June 30th, next, the end of the fiscal year.

Since the adjournment of the regular session, two incidents have occurred which will call for additional appropriations for the Attorney General's Department. The first is the favorable decision by the Supreme Court of the United States in the Red River case, whereby the State has established as its southern boundary the south bank of the Red river as fixed by treaty between Spain and the United States in 1819. The fact that Oklahoma was successful in the Red River case serves to emphasize the importance of sufficient appropriations to take care of the enormous amount of work that the State will

be compelled to perform in adjusting the conditions that will necessarily arise. The permanent line between the two States will now have to be delineated and established and the claims of the State in and to the land recovered by the decision will have to be litigated, and this will involve much expense.

The other incident is the unfavorable decision of the District Court of Stephens County in a certain case wherein a lessee of school land claimed the mineral right in the land to the exclusion of the State. This case, in itself, might occasion not great outlay of money were it not for the fact that a large number of school land lessees, for the past ten years or more, have been asserting the same right to tracts in other parts of the State, and, until this decision can be appealed and definitely settled, we have every reason to believe that a large number of similar cases will be instituted. This calls for prompt and vigorous action on the part of the State through the office of the Attorney General.

I believe the Attorney General should be given a contingent fund of not less than \$75,000 each year for the next biennium for the purpose of protecting the interests of the State in these and other important cases that may arise.

I therefore submit, for your consideration, the entire subject of appropriations, and trust you will give the same your earnest and patriotic consideration.

SOLDIERS' RELIEF.

In my message to the Eighth Legislature, delivered January 4th, last, I called special attention to the needed legislation for hospitals and other facilities for disabled ex-service men. Nothing has been accomplished in that direction, and I renew my recommendation for proper facilities to meet the ever-increasing demands that are being made upon the State by our soldiers, and I hereby submit the entire subject of soldiers' relief to you in the hope that you will speedily enact the necessary legislation that will enable the State to repay, to the best of its ability, the debt of gratitude it owes to our soldier boys.

In conclusion, permit me to say that I can see no good reason why this session should not be completed in a week or ten days. The people are expecting the session to be brief, and I shall use my best endeavors to assist you in expediting business to the end that an early adjournment may be had.

On motion of Senator Coyne, the joint session was dissolved.

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.