

**State of the State**  
**Governor Martin Trapp**  
**January 15, 1924**

To the Ninth Legislature of the State of Oklahoma, in Special Session Assembled,  
Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, and Ladies and Gentlemen of the Joint Assembly:

In submitting to the Ninth Legislature certain subjects for consideration, permit me first to express to each member my utmost appreciation of the tireless effort and painstaking thought which you have devoted during recent weeks to the questions of governmental reform.

Called into session, as you were, to perform certain duties, which however personally unpleasant they may have been to you, were yet in your best judgment incumbent upon you, you have labored here at a personal sacrifice for many weeks and now following a brief recess you have returned to the unfinished task before you, prepared to "carry on" to the end that our governmental machinery may be readjusted and placed upon a sound and economic basis. To accomplish this, we have many conflicting problems to consider, for you are here to enter upon a work that has never confronted a previous Oklahoma Legislature, a work which I might say has not even been contemplated before by legislative body in this State.

Since the establishment of our State Government in 1907, each succeeding Legislature since the first has seen fit to expand and widen the scope of our several State agencies. This has been done with a view to meeting the new and complicated conditions arising at each of these successive periods, and yet this expansion has been made too frequently, it would seem, without due consideration having been given to the question of efficient administration, and often, I do not doubt, without sufficient attention having been paid to the necessity for maintaining our administrative agencies at a minimum of cost compatible with efficient public service.

Today, as a result of this rapid growth of our governmental functions, we find our several institutions and departments overloaded in many instances with needless employees, hampered and embarrassed through the existence of unnecessary and conflicting boards and bureaus, and with the resultant overlapping of authority and uncertain jurisdiction that hampers the efficient administration of government and prevents the business-like conduct of our public affairs upon a sound and economic basis.

This condition has been previously brought to the attention of the members of your respective bodies, and pursuant thereto, the House and Senate recessed some weeks ago, leaving here a Joint Survey Committee, to work out adequate adjustment of these problems. The members of this committee have labored here at the Capitol night and day, devoting their best thought and effort to the problems of retrenchment and reform. I am somewhat familiar with the work of this committee, and the results of their labors have been of material assistance to me in assembling information on the subjects herein submitted for your consideration.

**RETRENCHMENT AND REFORM.**

Too frequently in the past we have been led to make excessive and unwarranted appropriations due to the insufficient time permitted us for adequate investigation into the demands and needs of our several institutions and departments. This was true during the regular session of the Ninth Legislature; and it is now apparent that we may well correct and modify certain of the measures approved at that time, thus reducing several of the appropriations then made. This can be done, in my opinion, without impairing our governmental efficiency and yet effect a great saving to the taxpayers of our State. To this end, I am opening for your

consideration, the subject of the appropriations made for the educational, penal and eleemosynary institutions of the State.

On the other hand, with the view of combining the duties and functions of certain bureaus and the duties and functions of certain offices, the elimination of unnecessary positions, the readjustment of salaries within certain departments, and the general reorganization of other departments in the interest of efficiency and economy, I am also submitting to you the question of remedial legislation for all of the departments and the appropriations therefor.

### ***State Market Commission.***

As an example, I might call to your attention the State Market Commission as it is now constituted. Its present organization as an independent department of State is, in my judgment, incompatible with economic and efficient administration; and I would, therefore earnestly suggest to you the repeal of the statutes covering this commission, and the establishment in its stead of a Bureau of Marketing in the Department of Agriculture, under the control and supervision of the State Board of Agriculture.

### ***Revolving Funds.***

Under authority of laws previously enacted by the Legislature there have been created in the several educational, penal and eleemosynary institutions of the State, revolving funds from revenues derived from the sale of commodities produced therein and from other sources, from which expenditures are made in a manner other than the usual methods of paying out public funds. Investigation reveals that this practice leads to waste and extravagance, and, in my judgment, the monies derived from these sources now accruing to the so-called revolving funds should, in the future, be deposited in the State Treasury to the credit of the respective institutions, and thereafter to be paid out for the maintenance and support of such institutions as may be provided by law. Therefore, I submit this subject to you for your consideration in order that remedial legislation may be enacted to safeguard the expenditure of these funds.

### ***Our System of Common Schools.***

Under the present system of financing the common schools of the State, there exist remarkable inequalities of expenditure per pupil and per teacher. Owing to the wide variance of property valuations in the respective districts, and the resulting inability of some districts to maintain a standard term under qualified teachers, there exists an inequality of educational opportunity for the children of the State.

The problem is of a dual nature. There is, on the one hand, an administrative problem, and on the other a fiscal one. To effect economy and efficiency in the administration of our common school districts, I submit this question to you for your consideration.

The fiscal or financial remedies are a fundamental problem for the State, and constitutional provisions may be involved, but the inequality of school expenditures and of the educational opportunities throughout the State should be remedied.

### ***Free Text Books.***

Under House Bill No. 197, Session Laws of 1923, provision was made for the free distribution of text books to the school children of the State. We have found upon cursory investigation that the appropriations then made will be insufficient to carry into effect the provisions of this Act. I, therefore, respectfully suggest the propriety of an additional appropriation therefor, or the modification or repeal of this law.

### ***County Excise Boards***

The County Excise Board of each county is constituted of elective officials. The argument favoring the creation of such a board originally was that the elective officials would be

better acquainted with the needs of the county and the various county offices than a board composed of persons other than county officials. However, in many instances, this board has been more interested in making large appropriations than in holding taxes down to the lowest level consistent with efficiency and economy in municipal and county government. In order to correct this tendency on the part of the excise board, it is suggested that a board of free-holders elected by the voters of the county would perform the duties in a manner that would make for economy in local government. This would be particularly true if membership on this board was made a non-salaried position. Members thus chosen would be selected because of their qualifications and fitness for the position and not because of political considerations or the attraction of a salary. A board thus constituted would be particularly interested in eliminating useless expenditures of money in the support and maintenance of municipal and county government. I, therefore, urge that you give this matter your thoughtful attention.

### ***The Darlington Home.***

Under Senate Bill No. 385, Session Laws of 1923, entitled, "An Act establishing an institution for drug and liquor addicts in this State," provision was made for the purchase of a certain tract of land and buildings thereon known as the "Darlington Home" in Canadian County, Oklahoma, for the establishment of an institution for the cure of drug and liquor addicts. In view of the fact that no similar institution is maintained in any of the other States of the South and West, the passage of this Act is apt to result in an influx of drug habituants into Oklahoma from other States, as is evidenced through letters and communications reaching the Executive Department. I might also point out that our existing appropriate institutions should be adequate for the care of our resident addicts, since therein they may receive scientific treatment for their ills at no additional cost to the taxpayers. With this in mind, I am recommending the repeal of this Act, with the suggestion that adequate adjustment be made for any obligations that may have accrued by reason of the operation of the law.

## **REORGANIZATION AND REMEDIAL LEGISLATION.**

### ***Office of Bank Commissioner.***

In the matter of needed reforms, I most earnestly call your attention to the present law governing the qualifications for the appointment of the State Bank Commissioner, Section No. 4225, Article 5, of the Compiled Statutes of 1921, reads as follows:

"The Governor shall appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, a Bank Commissioner, who shall hold office for the term of four years, and until his successor is appointed and qualified. No officer or employee of any bank or any person interested as owner or stockholder of any bank shall be eligible to the office of Bank Commissioner; provided, that no person shall be appointed as Bank Commissioner who shall not have had, prior to such appointment, at least three years' practical experience as a banker."

Under this law, it is mandatory upon the Governor to appoint a practical banker, inasmuch as three years' practical experience in banking is required of such appointee. On the other hand, the inhibition against the appointment of any person interested as an owner or stockholder in a bank precludes the selection by the Governor of a successful banker. I, therefore, most respectfully urge that you give this matter your earnest consideration, to the end that one or the other of those inhibitions be removed.

### ***Co-operative Marketing.***

In my judgment, it should be the purpose of the State to encourage the organization of co-operative marketing associations among our farmers, and that we should lend our official aid and

sanction to such associations through the enactment of adequate legislation of a protective nature. Therefore, in order to more fully protect the integrity of contracts entered into by such associations, the making of which have been encouraged by the State and National Governments and financial agencies of the country, I suggest that a law be passed providing for the filing of verified copies of co-operative marketing contracts, signed by co-operative marketing organizations in accordance with the laws governing the filing of chattel mortgages, which law has been recommended by some of the farmers' co-operative associations.

#### ***State Bureau of Criminal Identification.***

In order to secure a more proper and efficient enforcement of the criminal laws of the State, it has been suggested that an adequate and efficient system of identification of criminals and suspects should be put into effect. I, therefore, submit to you for investigation and consideration the question of the establishment of a State bureau for the purpose of centralizing the efforts of our various agencies for the prevention and detection of crime.

#### ***Oklahoma Soldiers' Memorial Hospital.***

I am likewise submitting to you, at the request of the Soldiers' Relief Commission, the question of the propriety of an appropriation for the purpose of building at the Soldiers' Memorial Hospital at Muskogee a recreational hall, and also installing there an outdoor illuminating system and providing a fund for contingent repairs. The need of these things is touched upon in the commission's recent report to me, which communication I shall be pleased to submit to the appropriate committees of the House and Senate at a later date.

During the regular session of this Legislature, your honorable bodies passed Bill No. 20, Chapter 12, Session Laws of 1923, granting authority for the sale and transfer of title to the United State Government of said Oklahoma Soldiers' Memorial Hospital, now under a year-to-year lease to the Federal Government, and authorizing the Soldiers' Relief Commission to open and carry on such negotiations. I am informed by the Soldiers' Relief Commission that they have taken this matter up with the Oklahoma delegation in Congress, and with General Hines, Director of the United States Veterans' Bureau, and have found that it would facilitate these negotiations if the Legislature could be prevailed upon to grant the Commission broader powers to deal with the Federal Government, with respect to this matter, than it now possesses. In this suggestion, the Oklahoma members of Congress have fully concurred in a letter written to me by Congressman W. W. Hastings, dated December 20, 1923, and I might suggest that you give this matter your attention at the present session.

#### ***Aid for Disabled Soldiers and Sailors.***

Under Senate Bill No. 15, Session Laws of 1923, entitled, "An Act providing for the emergency appropriation of \$100,000.00 for the aid of sick, wounded or disabled soldiers, sailors and marines of the late World War, and their destitute wives, widows and minor children," it was provided that this fund should be administered by the executive committee of the American Legion, the American Red Cross and the Governor. In my judgment, this fund should more properly be administered by the Soldiers' Relief Commission, which Commission was created by law for purposes of this nature.

#### ***Provision for a State Highway System.***

The time has arrived in the development of our State when we should have a State Highway System in fact. The development of motor-driven traffic has been so rapid that our dual system of road construction and maintenance has proven entirely unsatisfactory, and, in my judgment, our counties should be relieved of the enormous burden of building and maintaining inter-county highways. A complete division of authority should be effected between the State

and its sub-divisions. Our system of State roads should be built and maintained through State agencies to link up the county seats and the industrial centers of the State, and thereby provide means by which farmers and other producers can convey their products to market, and at the same time afford to our citizenship an easy method of communication between the different sections of the State. When this is done, and when our inter-county roads are taken over by the State, the sub-divisions of our government will be enabled better to build and maintain those roads remaining under their jurisdiction and to construct such laterals as may be required to render their rural communities accessible to markets and centers of population.

I, therefore, submit to you, for your consideration, the question of public highways, and respectfully urge the passage of appropriate legislation providing for a system of State highways, to be built and maintained by the State and the agency through which such a system can be established, constructed and maintained, and at the same time safeguard the expenditure of the funds that may be made available in the interest of the taxpayers at large.

### **GENERAL SUBJECTS.**

Your time is too limited to permit of an extended discussion in this message of all of the various problems which demand our attention. However, I feel it incumbent upon me to open for your consideration, the following legislative subjects, to-wit:

1. Method of collection of the gross production tax.
2. Confederate pensions.
3. Taxing of shares of foreign corporations owned by residents of this State.
4. Licensing of attorneys.
5. Gross production tax on lead and zinc and property used in the production of same.
6. Nepotism law.
7. The making and furnishing of copies of public records and matters to be placed of public record.
8. Real estate mortgages, chattel mortgages and tax liens.
9. Narcotic drugs act and drug and liquor addicts.
10. Indebtedness to the State, or any institution thereof.
11. Reports of attendance at the various State schools.
12. The manufacture, possession or transportation of any beer, wine, distilled spirits or liquor in violation of the prohibitory law.
13. Sale of securities.
14. Filing of notice of Federal tax liens.
15. Boll weevil experiment station.
16. Traveling expenses and hotel bills of State officers and employees.
17. Names of corporations.
18. Railroad transportation.

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION.**

I have received numerous and sundry requests that I submit to you at the legislative session certain proposed constitutional amendments. However, inasmuch as this is a prerogative vested in the Legislature by the Constitution of the State of Oklahoma, I am not embodying in this communication any specific suggestions in regard to such amendments, although there would seem to be at this time a public demand for the creation of a Pardon and Parole Board.

In closing, again permit me to thank you in the name of the loyal citizenship of the State of Oklahoma for your patriotic and unselfish efforts in working toward the restoration of public confidence in our State Government, and to predict that each and every one of you will be long remembered by your constituencies for the accomplishments of this special session. The people of our State, that vast and unorganized element that make up the majority mind of our citizenship, will be justly grateful to you for this work and in that knowledge and in the satisfaction that comes from the knowledge of a compelling duty well performed, you will have been amply repaid for your labors, even though your work here today is performed at an unjust and stinted stipend.

Yours very respectfully,  
M. E. TRAPP,  
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.