President Elthon then presented Governor Hoegh who delivered the following address:

MR. PRESIDENT, MR. SPEAKER, SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND FRIENDS:

I am proud today to present an account of our stewardship during the past two years. We have lived in peace and we have enjoyed a stable and prosperous state and national economy. Twelve years ago and more recently in Korea many of us lived in fear as we faced a stubborn enemy on the battlefields. Today we are truly blessed. We have every reason to be happy—and fully prepared to face the future with hope and courage. We might take a page from the University of Iowa’s win over Oregon State and the Iowa State win over Kansas University.

While I shall not continue to serve as your Governor, you can be assured that as a citizen, I will be interested in your deliberations and decisions. The people of Iowa have placed their trust in you. I congratulate you, and wish you success in the performance of your duties.

Through the foresight of the Fifty-sixth General Assembly and the able administration of the program by the other state officials and employees Iowa has made great progress these past two years. In every field of state function and responsibility Iowa occupies a commendable position among the states. Iowa has moved forward, because we have assumed that the zenith of our day in the sun lies ahead, not behind.

We have practiced economy and efficiency in government. We are especially proud of the honesty and integrity with which state affairs have been conducted, and with the enforcement of all laws enacted by the people through you, their elected senators and representatives.

FINANCE

Our fiscal policy for this biennium was sound, Iowa’s state administrative costs were among the lowest in the nation. We have operated on a balanced budget.

On June 30, 1955, your state balance was $29,000,000. On June 30, 1957, this balance will be $36,000,000—5 1/2  million more than the Comptroller had estimated two years ago. In other words, the greater investment made by the Fifty-sixth General Assembly for education, mental health, full homestead and veterans tax exemptions, and the other worthwhile services has been paid in full, and 7 million dollars additional revenue will accumulate by June 30, 1957.

The one-half cent increase in sales tax is, therefore, no longer needed. It has financed our program, and by eliminating it now, you will still accumulate 4 1/2 million dollars by June 30, making the state balance 33 1/2 million dollars. I, therefore, urge that you take immediate action to repeal the one-half cent increase in the sales tax.

To insure a fair and just state tax structure the Fifty-sixth General Assembly created a bi-partisan Tax Study Committee. After eighteen months of diligent study and deliberation this committee, headed by Senator Prentis, has filed its report. It is a comprehensive and carefully prepared document. I urge that you study it thoroughly and give it your individual and collective consideration.

Iowa must continue its sound fiscal policies of:

No state property tax

No state debt

No deficit spending

A balanced budget

An adequate reserve.

It’s not only good business, but good government.

AGRICULTURE

Basically the state’s economy is sound. However, in 1955 and 1956 our basic industry, farming, was hurt. by disastrous drouths in parts of Iowa. This damage to our farm crops and the low prices of hogs a year ago created some serious problems. Your state government took immediate action to save the livestock herds in the drouth areas by conducting the hay lift, by securing grazing rights of reserve acres and by securing additional credit for the farmer. Fortunately the last General Assembly had strengthened soil and water conservation. However, it will be necessary for you to do more in this field. Your action to make conservation expenditures deductible for income tax purposes was helpful. Nearly 6,000 ponds have been built on Iowa farms these past two years. I suggest that you study and fully consider the thorough report of the Iowa Study Committee of Water Rights and Drainage Laws, and that you create an emergency fund to be available for use should such disaster strike us again.

In October, 1955, seven midwest governors met in Des Moines to take action on bolstering farm prices. Three recommendations were made—establish the soil fertility and conservation plan, purchase of meat by the Federal Government for use, and create a committee to advertise and promote the consumption of farm products. Through the Iowa Farm Products Committee, a national committee has now been organized to promote the sale of meat. The other two recommendations have been put into effect by the Federal Government and have materially benefited agriculture. As the Number One farm state, Iowa must always be the leading spokesman for a healthy and prosperous farm economy.

Iowa’s agricultural might was recognized this past year when the Federal Government located at Ames a new Federal Animal Research Center, costing 18 million dollars. It will greatly benefit not only this state’s livestock farmers, but also those of the nation.

INDUSTRY

Iowa is proving to be one of the nation’s most attractive states for industrial growth. With increased appropriations from the Fifty-sixth General Assembly, the Iowa Development Commission’s activities were greatly expanded. The message of Iowa has been transmitted by the Commission and by your governor throughout the nation, and the results have been rewarding.

During the years of 1955 and 1956 there have been 183 industrial developments in Iowa, which is far in excess of the national average. This is the greatest industrial growth in Iowa’s history. Already these industries have created over 10,000 new job opportunities and will expand beyond 15,000 in the next two years. Not only will this program keep our sons and daughters in Iowa, but it greatly extends our tax base to the benefit of all citizens. Over $150,000,000 in new capital has been invested by these companies in new plants and equipment. We can now truthfully say Iowa is the Twin Empire State.

General Electric, Procter and Gamble, American Chain and Cable are a few of the great industries which have come to Iowa for the first time. Many more will make their home with us, because of our abundance of natural resources, our self-reliant, well-educated and industrious people, our communities with their fine churches and schools, our state government with its principles of honesty, efficiency, and economical administration within a balanced budget.

Iowa has actively participated in the deliberations of the Missouri River committees. This great river is being rapidly developed for flood control, navigation, industry and power, which will materially aid the industrial growth of western Iowa. It is hoped that the Des Moines River will be similarly harnessed in the near future.

In order that we may do an even more effective job of attracting industries to Iowa, the Commission has completed a comprehensive study of Iowa’s industrial and agricultural resources. This information will enable the Commission to pinpoint its efforts, and will accelerate the industrial expansion program.

EDUCATION

We know that the children of Iowa are the state’s greatest assets and that they receive a good education is a fundamental necessity. There is no substitute for the trained and educated mind if we are to have the proper future leadership in our communities, state, and nation.

Of 100 boys and girls in the world 15 live in Europe, 9 in Africa, 8 in South America, 1 in the South Pacific, 62 in Russia and Asia, and only 5 in the United States. Our responsibility is to provide these 5 boys and girls the very best in education.

It is the duty of every citizen and of this state to develop human talent and to provide our youth with the ideals, ideas and knowledge that are so essential in making a true leader.

Because of the good judgment of the members of the Fifty-sixth General Assembly, Iowa today is making a greater investment in education than at any time in the history of this state. Eighty per cent of the increased appropriations for this past biennium is invested in education.

To improve the quality and efficiency of our educational program more school districts have joined together these past two years than at any time in our history. In July, 1954, we had 4,417 districts—while today we have approximately 3,600.

These reorganizations have been effected by a vigorous Department of Public Instruction despite the fact that our school laws are not adequate. We vitally need new statutes which will change the voting procedure in school reorganizations and will create an incentive for districts to join together. The recommendations by the Board of Public Instruction and your Taxation Study Committee have been carefully prepared and submitted to you. They deserve your thoughtful study and consideration.

Your State Board of Regents continued to seek increased efficiency and higher standards in the operation of our state colleges and university. The ever increasing enrollment in our state institutions means that more teachers and facilities must be provided. Already we have exceeded our estimated enrollments for 1958. We must face these facts courageously and with dedication that every individual shall have the opportunity to develop his or her best self, to continue appropriate education to the personal point of optimum development.

In all phases of education there is no substitute for a good teacher. Quality of instruction and the personal characteristics of teachers are important influences on our youth and their development. Higher standards and better pay for our teachers must therefore never take a secondary role.

It is not enough to say that Iowa ranks the highest in literacy and fourth best on the basis of results and then blind ourselves to the problems which need our attention. Education is good in Iowa but it can and must be constantly improved and strengthened.

BOARD OF CONTROL

Iowa has made substantial progress in the treatment of its mentally ill and in the operation of its correctional and penal institutions. The Fifty-sixth General Assembly wisely appropriated more money for this purpose. Additional trained personnel with better pay was given priority. Emphasis was placed upon early detection, scientific treatment and rehabilitation. Results were good: in 1945, 334 of our patients were discharged as fully recovered, in 1955, 704 were so discharged and in 1956, 746.

Because trained personnel is scarce throughout the country, Iowa was not able to secure full staffs for our institutions. We learned early that Iowa needed a training and research center. With the Board of Control and the University of Iowa co-operating, plans have now been prepared to establish such a center, and closer liaison and co-operation between our mental institutions and the University has been perfected. This is a sound program and I trust sufficient funds will be provided by you to finance it this year.

A Governor’s committee of psychiatrists and leading citizens has been surveying and studying Iowa’s mental health needs for the past eighteen months. In conjunction with the American Psychiatric Association it has submitted to you its recommendations. They merit your careful study, consideration, and adoption. It is our responsibility to provide the mentally ill with the best treatment so that they may be returned to their homes as useful citizens.

ROADS

We are all agreed that adequate transportation is needed in Iowa’s expanding economy. New industries are coming to Iowa because we have recognized that highways are a vital part of the transportation system, and because we have greatly accelerated the construction and modernization of our primary system.

The General Assembly has shown a commendable understanding of the need to bring our highway system up to modern standards. In 1953 you passed a temporary 1 cent gas tax, earmarked to hardsurface the graveled primary roads. In 1955 you extended this tax and passed an additional 1 cent gas tax for primary road modernization. With this increased revenue your State Highway Commission has given Iowa its greatest road improvement and building program on a pay as you go basis.

In the past two years 1,026 miles of our narrow 18 foot roads have been widened to 24 feet. This is a three step program—1st, eliminate the curb and widen to 24 feet, 2nd, resurface, and 3rd, widen the shoulders. Over 300 miles have already been resurfaced. Widening of the highways has been based upon the traffic and feasibility.

One hundred twenty-three narrow bridges have been widened or contracted for widening from 20 to 30 feet. Over two million dollars were saved for the Iowa road user by using a new engineering technique of widening bridges under traffic. In addition, 134 new bridges have been built.

Six hundred twenty-two miles of new pavement have been constructed reducing the number of unpaved primary roads to 961 miles.

Five hundred eight miles of primary highways have been graded these past two years, preparatory for paving.

Iowa’s farm to market and secondary road system is the finest in the United States. In the past two years great progress was made with the result that now approximately 80 percent of these roads are surfaced.

In July, 1956, the new Federal interstate program of super highways went into effect. Approximately 700 miles of Iowa’s highways, including numbers 6, 69, 75, and 275 are a part of this system. It will be financed 90 percent by the federal government and 10 percent by the state.

Fortunately, you have provided sufficient funds to finance the state’s share of this program. Many other states are confronted with the task of raising their gas tax to meet their needs. Your Highway Commission has therefore been able to launch the new program. Contracts have been awarded and construction will be started this year of 1957. The Commission is prepared to use all of Iowa’s share of interstate money for the next thirteen years. This is possible because of the funds available and because the Commission had the foresight to employ private engineering firms to implement their engineering staff in preparation of plans and designs.

With the coming of the interstate four lane roads, your Toll Road Authority is no longer needed. However, you are to be commended for creating it and thereby enabling Iowa to be prepared to build a super turnpike across Iowa if the federal program had failed.

The past two years have been fruitful ones on highway construction and modernization. For the safety and convenience of the people of Iowa a continuance of this program is essential. The pace can be maintained and the new interstate road system requirements can be met only if the same funds now provided are kept intact.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

In 1954, Iowa’s fatal accident rate was 5.9 deaths per 100 million vehicle units. To combat the slaughter on our highways we put into effect the three E’s: Engineering, Education and Enforcement.

In engineering, we greatly accelerated road and bridge widening and the elimination of dangerous curves.

In safety education, we stressed drivers’ training for the beginner and for the adult with a bad driving record. Twenty-six additional schools now provide driver training, and the number will continue to rise. Driver improvement centers, which have been established in various sections of our state, are retraining the accident prone or repeat violators in increasing numbers. Also, every means of publicity has been used to emphasize the need for individual driver responsibility.

In enforcement, we have accelerated strict enforcement of our safety regulations. Selective enforcement in high accident areas, use of electric timers, employment of the National Guard to assist the patrol on heavy traffic days and establishment of aerial supervision of traffic, all have contributed to better enforcement.

This program has been effective. In 1955 our fatal accident rate was reduced to 5.5 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles, and in 1956 to 5.6. Fewer deaths occurred on Iowa’s highways per million vehicle miles than at any time since official records were first kept in 1935. Iowa’s safety record ranked 10th best in the nation in 1955 and 19th best in 1956.

The national increase in traffic fatalities has been spectacular. During the post Christmas holidays, alone, more people lost their lives on the nation’s highways than in Iowa for a full year.

While we are making progress, we cannot be satisfied until the absolute maximum of safety has been made available to our citizens on every Iowa highway. This leads me to resubmit two proposals I made two years ago, fixed speed limits and an increase in the number of patrolmen. No material reduction in highway deaths and accidents can be achieved unless these urgently needed measures are adopted.

The laboring man and woman prospered in Iowa these past two years. New job opportunities and steady employment kept Iowa unemployment far below the national average. Employment has been at an all time high and the average weekly wage the highest in Iowa’s history. Because of your foresight in providing additional revenue, old age and blind pensions have been substantially increased to help meet the current living costs, and a record number of handicapped persons have been rehabilitated into useful citizens. You are urged to continue to strengthen these programs.

Plans have been perfected to establish a diagnostic and treatment center at the University of Iowa for emotionally disturbed and mentally retarded children. The expansion of this program along with the treatment and training of our physically handicapped children merits your full support.

As directed by the Fifty-sixth General Assembly, I appointed a Commission to study the extent of discrimination in Iowa. Its report is now on your desks. I urge that you give it your thorough study and consideration.

Two other committees were appointed, one headed by Governor Blue, to study the problems of our elder citizens, the other, headed by Commissioner John Ropes, to study the problems of intra-city transit companies. I trust you will carefully study and consider their reports.

There are other matters which I must call to your attention. At the present time the 45 feet limitation on truck lengths is an obstacle to East-West trans-continental commerce. Iowa should join other states in lifting this restriction by increasing truck lengths to 50 feet.

Two years ago I urged that the legislature be reapportioned. Today I renew this recommendation, because I firmly believe that for true representative government one house should be on an area basis and the other on a population basis.

We all love Iowa, and we’re proud of her wonderful people, her fertile fields, her industries and the many hundreds of fine communities, schools and churches.

I have confidence in your judgment and wisdom and that you will face the future with the courage and zeal of our forebears. Only in that way will Iowa become an even better place in which to live.

God bless you—Thank you.