Lieutenant Governor Hickenlooper, President of the Joint Convention, presiding, then presented Governor Wilson who delivered the following message:

GOVERNOR’S INAUGURAL ADDRESS

*To the Forty-ninth General Assembly and the people of Iowa:*

Thank you one and all for the abounding manifestations of good will and the hearty show of the spirit of unity on this occasion.

The year just closed will loom large in the story of the progress of civilization.

The year now opening will, we hope and believe, witness the beginning of a new era of tranquility for a more orderly world. All people everywhere who love liberty and have faith in humanity are committed to translating their hopes and beliefs into action. I am happy to come to you again to speak words of encouragement to the end that together we may help to make the year 1941 a turning place from the darkness to the light.

We do well to counsel together and to fortify ourselves against the impact of the forces of destruction.

We must work together—you, the elected representatives of the people charged with legislative duties, the members of the judiciary and state officials and heads of administrative departments. I know your ears are attuned to the tales of horror that follow the air lanes around the world, and that is why it is so important that as we come into this year, we enter upon our duties free from every hampering prejudice and boldly facing the realities of life.

The greatest service now is in the strengthening of the orderly processses of free government. The immediate opportunity is to demonstrate the workability of the American way.

We can and we should be able to present our fair state of Iowa, in its every activity and all its agencies of public service, as a worthy example of self government that is both just and liberal, at once strong and flexible, economical and efficient, administered openly and honestly.

That is our job—yours and mine, you who have the duty of determining public policy within this jurisdiction, you who have responsibility for interpretation of law and its application, all of us who have been commissioned to be servants of the public. If we do well the tasks of today those of our children will not be so arduous. We dare not now falter or retreat.

Is this ideal for Iowa and Iowa people just a vision destined to fade? Ours is almost a new age of miracles. The doing of that which seemed impossible has become commonplace. We live in the midst of change and are unafraid. We believe that beyond the dark clouds of today lies the bright sunshine of a new day. We meet with confidence the challenge of the forces that would destroy our way of life. We welcome freedom of thinking, and freedom in the expression of thought in any form, confident in the triumph of truth over error. We stand defiant against any philosophy that tolerates the lust of power or leads to appeasement with the baser emotions of men. We place home and family and human freedom above all else. It is a high ideal, but it is not too high. We shall climb the ladder step by step.

The people of our Nation have sent forth out of this wonderful age of progress in the arts and sciences much to make the world better. The people of Iowa in their brief experience have done their full share in helpfulness. Now we see portions of our handiwork turned to the sorry support of tinsel thrones of the sawdust Caesars. The airways we dedicated to peace are cluttered by the din of war. But we are sure that neither the sweet words of persuasion nor the harsh threats of blood vengeance can stay the onward march of civilization.

For our contribution to the common welfare we are rewarded by an onslaught upon the very foundations of our rich inheritance. We are regaled about the rights, not of men and women, but of classes and groups as distinguished from the plodding many. There are attacks upon the institutions that have been built up by the genius and the enterprise of free men. New names, queer phrases, strange arguments appear, largely as importations from places where the people have been bludgeoned into social and political systems different from our America.

The people of Iowa have created here a state of organized society with roots firmly set in the deep black soil of the pioneering period of which we are a part. These wide prairies decorated with green groves and red barns, these woodland fringes that frame our rural picture, these bustling cities and towns of thrift and industry, these roads of steel and concrete, these deep mines, these temples of worship and of learning and of justice—this is the work of our generation and our predecessors, and it is our pledge that we will preserve and improve it.

We face the realities of life, every year and every day. It is a severely practical world in which we live. The way of progress is by work. We get by giving. Life is not a lottery. Nothing ever just happens. The most precious thing we know is the freedom to live our lives in the service of ourselves and our fellow men. It is a changed and a changing world, and if we will it so, every turn will be for the better.

This does not mean that we shall accept every novelty or try every experiment conjured up by distorted minds. Within the memory of pioneers who survive, Iowa has come a long way from a wasted wilderness to a realm of abundance; and these pioneers and those who have gone ahead are fully responsible for our inheritance of a rich culture stemming from their resolute spirits.

We do not mean to exaggerate, we will not be led into overconfidence, we of Iowa can afford to present the naked truth; but we do firmly believe that here is one of the finest places in all the world to give an every day demonstration of the virtue of government by the people. Let us do it now.

In the final analysis, a state is made by its men and women. No civic structure is ever better than its makers. We see Iowa as a shapely figure on the map, surrounded by other splendid states, with rivers and forests and plains and interlaced with routes of commerce. We have exhausted the dictionary in telling of the soil and climate and all natural advantages. But the race that left the stone axes and chipped flints scattered over these hills failed to create a place for homes.

It was the home seekers and home makers who effected the marvelous transformation of a hundred years. They did not seek gold. They did not gather riches from the trees. They set to themselves the task of using the abundant raw materials for creating wealth. They took over the buffalo paths for trails of destiny. They set their herds upon the hills and chained the power of the streams. They made Iowa a homeland for two and a half million people.

Is the pioneering all done? Not at all. We still have unknown quantities of raw material out of which to produce more and more of the useful things for our homes.

Above all else the pioneers built a state. The natural resources, the favorable location, the genius to plan and the will to do, all added up to a community of free homes. The state makers wove into the fabric of their state the virtue and the wisdom they brought with their axes and looms and plows and their Bibles. They held no forum debate on their capacity for self government.

Nobody was engaged in devising ways for doing less work and getting more for it. They heard the Declaration of Independence read at least once a year and believed and lived it. They knew about the Constitution. They upheld the bill of rights. They met every attempt either to disrupt the union or to undermine its principles in whatever manner served best to preserve their homes and protect their families.

Look at the map of the world. Put your finger on the spot marked Iowa. On the agricultural chart it is the center of the very finest region of productivity known to man. It is the heart of that midland region of industry and commerce which is ever steady and reliable. Iowa and the adjoining states is an area unsurpassed in rich educational, spiritual and cultural values.

Turn again to the map and study the record of this group of states of which Iowa is the heart and center. No truer words were ever uttered than those spoken by Judge C. C. Nourse, a distinguished citizen and statesman of Iowa, when he said:

“The great ultimate fact that America would demonstrate is the existence of a people capable of attaining and preserving a superior civilization, with a government self-imposed, self-administered and self-perpetuated. In this age of wonderful progress, America can exhibit nothing to the world of mankind more wonderful or more glorious than her new states—young empires born of her own enterprise and tutored at her own political hearthstone. Well may she say to the monarchies of the old world, who look for evidence of her regal grandeur, ‘Behold, these are my jewels!’ And may she never blush to add, ‘This one in the center of the diadem is Iowa’!”

Let memory run down the long list of notable achievements, the sum total of which make the history of the midland states of the Upper Mississippi Valley. We have back of us more than a century oftremendous forward strides. Recall the hardships, the controversies, the triumphs, of men in fields of toil, in fields of statesmanship and on fields of battle.

You cannot fail to observe that it has been from among these stalwart Americans of the land of deep furrows and tall rows of corn that our Nation has drawn a steady stream of dependable patriots. They have helped greatly to make a reality of loyalty and independence.

The rugged forthrightness of these pioneers deeply marked every phase of human activity where they led the way. As they converted their log cabins into comfortable homes, they were also making over their rules for simple justice into a workable code for the public service.

The thought of those who organized the first claim clubs and vigilance committees was to make certain the protection of their homes and their property. That is the purpose of all good government.

If there is one thing more than another that is needed to stabilize the world, it is confidence in government by the people. That confidence should be securely anchored to a living exhibit of free people working out the ideals of democracy by republican rules on a fair testing field. Iowa can provide that anchorage.

The Iowa of today, our Iowa that we love, is a product of the growth and unfolding of that revolution which a hundred and fifty years ago startled the world by a new concept of human relations. It is a civic structure girdled by the unifying spirit of our fathers of long years ago who made, their resolve that government by the people should not perish from the earth. Iowa has not broken faith with the founders. Iowa people have from time to time renewed thier pledge to carry on in industrial, social and political ways as in the years of our marvelous advancement. The changes we approve must be for the better, constructive and not destroying.

Now what is the practical and prosaic job for which we have been selected? The resources of our state are known, the quality of our citizenship has been tested, our institutions give us elbow room and provide freedom of action. We must be ever busy patching up the holes where leaks may be found. The rest depends upon us. The people of Iowa want the best government that can be devised and be maintained.

They want efficient and economical government in the state and all the divisions of the state. They desire that every dollar of their money be used for good purpose. They are willing to pay the bills if the bills are just and proper. They oppose waste or extravagance; they are for fairness and liberality.

The people of Iowa have faith in themselves. They profoundly believe in the American way of life and industry, and desire the freedom to aid in carrying that way on to greater heights of world leadership.

Iowa people have no patience with those who would exchange our social advantages, and our cultural and spiritual associations for whatever it is that is offered as imported substitutes.

We of Iowa are unwilling to subscribe to the theory that when the time for reconstruction comes we must turn to some strange pattern for a reorganized society dragged from the debris of discarded thrones, or moulded from the charred embers of destroyed dictatorships. The principles of the Magna Charta, and our beloved Declaration of Independence, and our noble Constitution, and the Sermon on the Mount, will live as long as human hearts yearn for liberty.

This favored region between the two great rivers was specially carved out to be the abiding place for unshakable loyalty to the cause of human freedom. We have here a great agricultural state and yet it is an industrial state, with an admirable balance between all our interests.

It should be our considered effort to encourage and protect not only agriculture, but creative industry, and all that relates to both. We should put forth our best efforts to see that the rewards for those who toil upon the farms are on a parity with the compensations elsewhere. The wage earners are receiving direct protection by the power of government and the rewards of labor are better. But in Iowa all our industries and labor, whether on farms or in shops, are closely linked together. There is a large degree of dependency, one upon the other. We must keep all our people working together in harmony.

Home life upon the farm has been made more attractive in many ways. We are building our towns and cities for better health and better living. We have declared in the most emphatic manner our adherence to the sound principles of society and government that have enabled the people of the United States of America to bring this Nation to world leadership.

When the trail-blazers crossed the rivers into what is now Iowa they cut themselves off from the rest of the world. It is different now. We are citizens of Iowa, but we are also citizens of a great Nation, and we have been made to realize that we are neighbors to the people of every land and of every color or race. What we do will be a part of the world history of our times. We cannot better serve our neighbors, near and far, than to demonstrate here and now that democracy put to work under the pattern that we have followed for many years, administered intelligently and firmly, gives the utmost of freedom and security.

We find ourselves in a position wherein it is necessary to put forth our best efforts to build up a defense of such magnitude as will uphold our institutions of freedom.

In doing this, let no man be a slacker. Let each be willing to sacrifice as did our forefathers, but let those sacrifices be made within the limits of our system of government. Let nothing be done which will change that system.

The defense we desire, the protection we should have, can be accomplished within the framework of our constitutional government. Now as never before must we insist that the three branches of government, the Executive, Legislative and Judicial, be preserved, each enjoying and exercising the powers delegated to it, none engaging the unworthiness of encroachment upon the prerogatives of the other. A surrender now, by anyone, of its rights, means the imminent downfall of the republican system of free government in the United States.

No emergency has been so great, no emergency ever will be so great, that free men cannot meet and solve it. We seem to be living in an age of hysteria. Let not hysteria so blind us that we will permit our form of government to be changed from one requiring the consent of the governed to one calling for submission. The people of the State of Iowa—Iowa, the first free state admitted to the Union—are willing to meet the responsibility and sacrifice for defense of our nation and our people, but are resolute in their determination that government shall not be by edict, but shall be continued by law, under the provisions of the grandest, most humane, most inspired charter ever written, the Constitution of the United States.

Its preservation, unsullied, is the hope, the most potent armament of defense for free people.

On this, my second inaugural, my heart is filled with gratitude and humility, for the splendid cooperation of the people of the State, for the many honors they have continued to bestow, and for their charity in viewing mistakes which, I plead, have been of the head and not of the heart.

I renew my solemn pledge to the people of Iowa. With your help, and with the beneficence of Divine guidance, for which I am suppliant, all within my power will be done to see that the laws of the State are justly administered, and vigorously enforced, without fear or favor. We will proceed with all energy to the end that the doors of government will be open to honesty and candor, but securely barred to the intolerable approach of graft or corruption, that nonfeasance or neglect of duty will be constantly sought out and dealt with firmly. It is my firm conviction that unending determination to bring economy and efficiency to the affairs of government will carry its own reward in the dynamic workability of our republican institutions. Public office will be treated always as a public trust. The people are the masters and their officials the servants. Government is for the good of all the people and not for the advancement or financial gain of special interests or the ambitious few.

I again assume the duties and responsibilities of this high office. We have the opportunity of leadership to see to it that tolerance replaces intolerance, that love supplants hate, that our generation contributes its full share to the advancement of our State and Nation, and proves worthy of the esteem of our children and our children’s children.