Lieutenant Governor Blue, President of the Joint Convention, presiding, then presented Governor Hickenlooper, who delivered his inaugural message.

GOVERNOR’S INAUGURAL ADDRESS

MR. PRESIDENT, MR. SPEAKER, MR. CHIEF JUSTICE, AND THE HONORABLE JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT, MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, STATE OFFICERS, AND FELLOW CITIZENS OF IOWA:

In full keeping with the orderly progress of self government under a free system, the sovereign people of Iowa have again passed judgment on their public affairs, by the election of their officials to conduct the public business for the ensuing term. They have expressed their opinion and their confidence in accordance with the American way. They have placed the responsibilities of the administration of government upon the elected officials and they have a right to assume that these responsibilities will be faithfully discharged.

To fully express my appreciation of the honor that has been given me today is beyond my ability. But I do appreciate it and I appreciate the trust and confidence that accompany it. While it carries honor, yet that honor can be sustained only so long as the great responsibilities and obligations it imposes are faithfully met and discharged.

Not since the second administration of Governor Kirkwood, in Civil War days, has an Iowa administration begun and a legislature convened, with our country at war. Because of this, the problems that confront us are peculiar. For more than a year the united effort of all has been absorbed by the war effort. The emergency, and its necessary demands, have changed our economic and social attitudes and these changes will increase daily as the fight goes on. Usual peacetime activities and commodities have been restricted, many thousands of our men and not a few of our women have joined the armed forces. Our money has been poured out in ever increasing millions to meet the cost, and our fertile fields have responded to the untiring work of our farmers by producing the greatest volume of food in our history. The efforts and production records our farmers have made—and their determination to do even more in spite of a desperate shortage of help—is one of the great patriotic contributions to the cause of freedom.

Iowa labor is far below the national record of lost man-hours. Its leadership and the rank and file have demonstrated that they are interested in the long range welfare of the working man and the war effort rather than in jurisdictional disputes.

Our industry has proved its genius and ability to produce far beyond quotas or expectations and often in spite of the mysterious bottleneck of priorities.

In every community patriotic and unselfish citizens are contributing, without pay, untold time and energy to ration boards, selective service, civilian defense, and other vital public activities. At great personal and financial sacrifice to themselves they are doing a magnificent job under difficult circumstances. They deserve the public thanks.

Throughout the state thousands of women are sewing, doing Red Cross work, acquiring proficiency in first aid, giving of their efforts and ability wherever they can best be used.

The untiring and patriotic service of the ex-service men of our state in every community is an example for all.

These unusual and vital activities have been, of necessity, the important work of our people and the citizen has responded with patriotism, zeal and unbounded effort. The results speak for themselves and thus the great voice and united action of the individual citizen is answering the challenge to our security and freedom.

The national government is demanding sacrifice, restriction and curtailment of our normal civilian goods and activities, as a necessary part of the war effort. Rationing of food and other commodities in support of our armed forces and the United Nations has been and will be gladly complied with by a willing public that has efficiently administered such programs locally as a patriotic duty.

Restriction of non-essential activities by the public is vital in this emergency. By the same rule, however, the national government must ration and restrict its non-essential activities. Government must devote its full zeal and effort to winning this war. Government cannot be profligate while the people sacrifice.

Our first concern as a state and as individuals is to win this war and return our boys to their homes. It is the most colossal task the American people have ever faced. It can be accomplished only through sacrifice, production, and intelligent cooperation coupled with unselfish non-political and able national leadership.

The curtailment of normal civilian activities, construction and venture means also that normal government activities and venture must be curtailed. This does not seem to be the time for experiment in public affairs. The necessary business of government must be cared for, but innovation or change during this period should be examined carefully and should be measured by its reasonable necessity or advantage to the public welfare, or the more efficient operation of our state. I believe the public demands such action.

Respecting, as I do, the province of the Legislature as the supreme law making body of the state, I do not believe a complete and detailed program of legislation nor any attempted direction of specific enactment to be proper in an inaugural address. The formulation and passage of legislation is the sacred province of the elected representatives of the people. Some general suggestions, however, may be helpful at the beginning of the legislative session and may serve to present certain subjects for consideration and for such action as the General Assembly may determine.

First, may I say that I see no present necessity for any additional taxation for the coming biennium. Knowing the care with which you will guard public expenditures I am confident as to your attitude in this respect.

The cost of living, due to war conditions, has increased materially and will go higher. This increase reflects itself in state government in two fields. First, our state employees, and especially those in the lower salaried brackets, are facing financial difficulty. Consideration should be given to the necessity for increases in salaries to relieve this situation.

Second, the cost of food and supplies for our institutions under the Board of Control has increased by a percentage greatly in excess of the increases to the general public. This is occasioned by the fact that, prior to the present emergency, our Board of Control was able to buy surplus commodities in larger quantities at prices usually far below the ordinary market. Under present and future conditions of shortages and demands, however, their purchases now must be made as and when supplies are available, and the regulation of costs and the demand for goods is such that no comparatively advantageous prices can be had. Serious consideration should be given to this matter so that our obligation to the unfortunate wards of the state can be fully met. In my budget message to the Legislature I shall make recommendations with respect to appropriations to meet these conditions.

The bookkeeping and accounting system of our state is antiquated, cumbersome, and inefficient. It has grown through the years with the expansion of state government, and the resultant confusion and maze of detail is proof that the faults should be immediately corrected. A simplified, efficient system, even though the cost of installation be substantial, would return big dividends of efficiency, convenience and simplification and could probably be operated by a reduced personnel.

With federal taxes already at unprecedented heights, and warnings of still other and higher levies to come, state government, if possible, should do all in its power to minimize the tax load of its citizens without, however, endangering the necessary and vital functions of state government. The condition of our treasury, the surplus on hand and present and reasonably anticipated income, indicate that, at least for the years 1942 and 1943, a substantial reduction of the income tax can be had. I suggest that this reduction, by such amount as, in the judgment of the Legislature, will not prejudice the other necessary functions of government, be made by way of a credit on the return rather than by alteration of the rate. Such method would be simple and would require no expensive administrative changes.

Because of the reduction in the amount of gasoline tax collections, some concern has been expressed with respect to the obligations on our highway bonds. I can say to you that present receipts and anticipated receipts of such taxes indicate that there will be sufficient money from such sources to maintain our highways and meet our bond commitments. I am confident that, in keeping with the pledges made to the people of Iowa 15 years ago and repeated periodically since, the burden of paying our road bonds will never be translated into a direct property tax.

In accordance with Chapter 311 of the Forty-ninth General Assembly, the Supreme Court has compiled a system of rules governing civil proceedings in the courts of the state. Their report will be filed with the General Assembly. These rules represent exhaustive study and conscientious effort on the part of the court and of a committee of distinguished and able public-spirited members of the bar, all of whom have devoted their time and talents without compensation and for the sole purpose of expediting and simplifying the rules of procedure for the benefit of the public. I believe this action to be a progressive step in the interest of justice and recommend the serious and thoughtful study and investigation thereof by the members of the General Assembly.

Substantial sums, heretofore appropriated for capital improvements, such as the state office building and other construction, remain unspent due to war restrictions. I recommend that these unspent funds be safeguarded and invested in public securities as a trust in order to make them available, at the end of the emergency, for the purposes for which they were appropriated.

With the birth of our state, education became of prime importance and Iowa early became known as one of the foremost states with regard to the opportunities for learning open to its young people. We have maintained our vigorous interest in and support of our school system. In response, however, to the feeling that modern progress indicated a need for correction of certain inefficiencies in that system, the Forty-ninth General Assembly established a committee to look into our needs and to report its findings and conclusions. That report has been made. It is the result of exhaustive hearings and study by the committee and has commanded the untiring effort of the members as well as valuable assistance from qualified persons in the education field. I recommend careful study of this report by the Legislature to the end that such progressive and beneficial changes may be made in our school program as may, in your judgment, be required. Our objectives should be, as they have been in the past, the highest educational opportunities and facilities for our children. Education is the foundation and safeguard of a free government.

I suggest careful attention to the problem of aid to underprivileged children. The counties are now spending approximately $900,000 annually, in the aggregate, for pensions to widows with children in need of aid. These expenditures, plus the state funds now provided for child welfare, might be reorganized and, at very little extra cost, establish a program for aid to all underprivileged children. Federal funds are available under certain conditions, but the substantial and practical administration and control of any such program should be retained by the state.

The problems, difficulties and confusion that occur in connection with our long primary ballot should, as soon as practicable, receive consideration by this or succeeding Legislatures. Efficient public government is best served when there is the greatest possible opportunity for informed voting by the citizen. This sentiment has been expressed by countless Iowa voters. A fair correction of this situation, in such instances where confusion does exist, would be a progressive step in the satisfactory exercise of franchise by the people but would probably entail substantial changes, in some instances, in our election laws. The Legislature may consider that, under the tension of this emergency, such changes should or should not be made. I call it to your attention as one of the fields for improvement in our public government.

Because of the rapidly changing and unpredictable demands of a wartime emergency and the possible vital need for immediate action, or necessity of the war effort, during the legislative interim, provision, no doubt, should be made to meet such contingencies as may arise. There are many peacetime standards and regulations in our statutes that should not be lowered or abandoned except under the imperative, temporary demands of emergency. This problem is important and should receive definite consideration, in the state and national interest. I believe the Legislature can devise such means as will solve this problem without invasion of or danger to the fundamental sovereignty of our law-making body.

The various social and humanitarian services maintained by the state should not be neglected. Their needs should be carefully reviewed and any deficiencies corrected. Increased living costs affect the needy as well as the employed.

One of our greatest potential fields of economic progress is that of the industrial use of agricultural products. Its substantial development through constant experimentation should be encouraged by the state: we should increasingly support and strive to obtain the establishment of more industries for the processing of our products. We have ample raw materials, labor and transportation. We are advantageously situated. The development of this field could go far in the solution of many of our peacetime economic problems.

There are many other matters that will command your attention. Time and this occasion will not permit a proper review of them. I am sure that consideration of these specific problems is already being given.

With over 100,000 of our men now in service and before this emergency ends, if we raise an army of 8 to 10 millions, then no doubt over 200,000 in service, it would be unfair to experiment with or substantially alter functions of government in their absence. Our citizens in the armed forces have earned their right to every consideration we can give. They have a right to voice their opinions on important issues and to participate in important changes when they return. Their numbers may constitute nearly one-tenth of our population. Their interests and their right to full participation are in our charge. and we must be faithful to that trust.

As a state government, established and operating under the American system of local sovereignty, we face a serious challenge. The principle of government of laws enacted by the elected representatives of the people is threatened by a growing national tendency toward bureaucracy by which government is conducted under orders and regulations, promulgated by appointed officials, rather than by clearly defined statutes. I do not refer to the emergency powers of war but to the growing peacetime tendency that is continuing with respect to non-war controls.

The federal government has been invading the province of the state to an alarming degree. If continued it can eventually result only in the destruction of local self-government and bureaucracy can end only in tyranny.

We are a sovereign state, united with the other sovereign states to form a free, self-governing union. The safeguards of the constitution and of legislative law were established to protect the individual against the autocracy of edicts.

We can best protect our system by maintaining the efficiency with which it meets the requirements of our citizens. When state government fails in this respect it invites encroachment of federal authority regardless of whether or not such authority can solve the problem.

As part and parcel of this great nation it is our duty and our privilege to do our full share in man-power, in production and in money, for the defeat of its enemies and the preservation of its ideals. No state has surpassed us in performance of this duty. The citizens of no state have a higher sense of obligation nor a greater willingness to sacrifice in its discharge. We are an inseparable part of a united people unswervingly obligated to maintain the institutions of freedom.

The responsibilities as well as the benefits of free government rest upon the collective judgment, vision and wisdom of the individual citizen. The blessings of our American way of free enterprise and opportunity were secured through the sacrifice and the struggle of the individuals who, collectively, banded together to form and establish a government guaranteeing these rights. That system, born in the wilderness of a new continent, and here developed to the greatest degree of perfection ever known, is now being threatened by a foreign, barbaric vandalism that would destroy it and substitute therefor a system of slavery and human exploitation of a so-called “new order.” With each passing day we as individuals, and collectively as one people, must fight and sacrifice with an unalterable determination until Naziism and the evils of its black magic have been destroyed and there is a total permanent eclipse of the “Rising Sun.”

The brilliance and heroism of the men in our armed forces has already enshrined them in the temples of liberty. The brilliance of their deeds in our defense will light the path for future generations. They will keep the faith and hold our ramparts. We, in turn, must keep the faith with them. The destiny of human progress for countless future generations is in our keeping today and is our responsibility. The vigor with which we discharge that responsibility will determine the opportunities for freedom to be enjoyed by generations yet unborn.

We have heard much of theorizing, we have heard much of visionary planning; but we must not lose sight of the fact that Utopia cannot be created solely out of the mist of dreams. There are no privileges, there are no comforts, there is no progress except those which are earned. Our forefathers worked and sacrificed, as we have worked and sacrificed, to obtain the comforts and blessings of opportunity and free enterprise. They had and there is no Genie of the Magic Lamp to produce the heart’s desire, at command.

While our all-consuming present duty is the destruction of treachery and barbarism in the world and the restoration of peace and the “Pursuits of Happiness,” yet we must also consider the problems of that peace in order that they may be met and solved in the interest of a happier world.

Modern progress has decreed that in the world of tomorrow we will have greater responsibilities to, and more extensive participation in, the international problems of nations. Communication and transportation have eliminated distances and have reduced the world to a small globe, indeed. Mistakes of the past must be analyzed and corrected. Future policies must be based less on selfishness and more on cooperative understanding of the problems of our neighbors.

In this adjustment, the voice, ideals and influence of the people of this state, as well as the other states, must be asserted and felt in order that we have a part in the fabrication of reconstruction. The diplomacy of a cloistered few, secretly arrived at and acuated by their own selfish motives, should not again be permitted to impress itself upon trusting peoples. Iowa is but a part of our great national unity, and yet it is a sovereign and equal part of that unity and we are entitled to an equal voice in the maintenance and protection of our ideals.

In conducting the affairs of our state, legislative, judicial and executive, we must not lose sight of the benefits of the separation of powers. We must jealously guard its preservation because only through such a division of power are the rights of the individual guaranteed, maintained, and protected. Concentration of power in any of the three divisions or the encroachment of anyone upon the other leads to so-called regimentation and centralization of governmental authority which is destructive of the basic principles under which we demand to live. We have carefully guarded these principles in our state. We shall continue that vigilance.

In beginning this administration I appreciate the opportunity afforded me in the past of serving in both Houses of our Legislature with a large majority of the present members of each House. It has given me a respect for and an appreciation of the prerogatives of your independent branch of government. This Fiftieth General Assembly is composed in the main of veteran lawmakers; your judgment, sincerity, and zeal in the public interest has been proven in the past. Due to the care and vigilance of the administration of the past four years, our state is in splendid condition to meet the contingencies that may occur. I know that you will guard the public interest with judgment and integrity; I shall respect your province and your responsibilities. It will be our mutual objective to conduct the public affairs of Iowa in the public interest, for the preservation of the ideals of free men and for the happiness and progress of those who follow us. Guided by the faith and wisdom of our “Fathers”, inspired by their courage and our own appreciation of our heritage, led by the proven tenets of Divine mandate, we can discharge our debt to those who gave us freedom by preserving it for ourselves, by perfecting it as a greater heritage for posterity.