Lieutenant Governor Nicholas, President of the Senate presiding, presented Governor Beardsley, who delivered the following inaugural address:

MR. PRESIDENT, MR. SPEAKER, SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY, MR. CHIEF JUSTICE AND JUSTICES OP THE SUPREME COURT OF IOWA, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

On this occasion when we begin a two year period of association together in the service of the citizens of Iowa, we are in the midst of a national emergency. The two million six hundred thousand citizens of Iowa, associated together as one of the forty-eight states of our nation, must bear their full share of responsibility in sustaining our American way of life.

It is beyond the scope of our assigned responsibilities in this legislative session to determine the policies which are to be followed by our nation in the international field. Our task is to make Iowa strong.

The governmental affairs of the state of Iowa basically are in sound condition. Building upon the contributions of legislative and executive work of our predecessors, we have pursued diligently the work of giving to Iowans the maximum in good government.

Notwithstanding the achievements of the past, we would be unwise to rest on our laurels and claim that we had arrived at a state of near perfection.

The fact is that in a changing world good government is a continuing process of study, adjustment and decision. Keeping in mind the stern necessities of the hour, let us examine the areas of action which are afforded to us in our program to make Iowa strong.

CIVIL DEFENSE

Special legislation will be required at this session in order to make secure the civilian defense of our state. My associates and I in the executive branch of the government have been working diligently in cooperation with officials of our adjoining states and officials of the national government to determine the methods by which civilian defense can be achieved in the most efficient manner. These plans are being completed and will be transmitted to you for your consideration at the earliest possible moment.

SOLDIER’S BONUS

By an overwhelming vote the citizens of Iowa approved the payment of a soldier’s bonus to those individuals from Iowa who served our nation during World War II.

Pursuant to this authorization and the action of the Fifty-third General Assembly, 229,208 claims for payment of soldier’s bonus in the aggregate amount of $84,609,126.35 have been made. There still remain unpaid claims aggregating approximately $7,768,918.73. I recommend the immediate enactment of enabling legislation authorizing the payment of the balance due on the soldier’s bonus out of unappropriated funds in the State Treasury. It is my hope that this legislation can be enacted in time to permit the mailing of all approved checks in connection with the payment of the soldier’s bonus before January 31, 1951. Payment of these claims will discharge debts of honor incurred in the dangerous hours of World War II.

FINANCE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

My recommendations with respect to budget estimates and the report of the financial condition of the State of Iowa are ready. These recommendations have been based upon an intensive study of the requirements of our individual departments and agencies. Because of the very large number of vital matters which will require your attention, I trust you will be able to conclude your consideration of appropriation matters early in the session. In order to accomplish this objective, I am pleased to advise that the budget recommendations, appropriation bills, and pertinent matters relating thereto will be submitted to you on your reconvening next week.

EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT

Your present state administration is committed in principle to the proposition that tax monies should be wisely and efficiently spent. The reports of the Governmental Reorganization Commission and the Municipal Code Study Committee, authorized by the Fifty-third General Assembly, have been transmitted to you for your consideration.

In your deliberations on these reports and recommendations related to them, there are certain fundamental principles which should be considered.

First, we need to set up targets and objectives which we seek to accomplish. Reorganization or code revision, for reorganization’s sake only, would change the mechanics of government and might result in no improvement. Any adjustment in the organization of our state government and municipal government should be designed to accomplish the maximum reduction in expenditures which will result in the maintenance of and improvement in service to our citizens.

Second, economies must be achieved while at the same time we assure adequate compensation to our loyal public employees.

Third, services of the state government and its political subdivisions to the citizens of Iowa should be reexamined to see that the state performs those services which it is equipped to do well, leaving to the individual citizens and other branches of government responsibilities which they can best perform.

Fourth, we need continuing study and effort in a program of personnel improvement. Decisions as to reorganization and methods of securing efficiency in government can be made only by legislative processes. Those decisions can be put into operation *only* by employees of government. We must move forward in a program which will train our people to do their job better. We must reward the efficient by adequate promotions and compensation. We must encourage introduction of improved methods and new techniques.

I must be frank with you in stating that I do not seek personal power through any reorganization of government. Many, many times during the past two years citizens of Iowa have written me requesting affirmative action to correct certain problems. In some of these situations, powers granted to me did not permit me to be of help in working out solutions. You will in your deliberations examine our governmental structure and determine the extent to which modifications will be wise in our program of reaching the goals mentioned herein.

MODERNIZING IOWA LABOR LAWS

The growth of Iowa industry in recent years has been a source of gratification and pride to all of us. It has meant for us a more balanced economy. In the critical days immediately ahead it appears certain that further expansion of our industries will occur. In the program of making Iowa strong, industrial peace is of primary importance. Iowa must take all steps necessary to improve relations between management and labor.

We recognize fully the useful place of labor organizations in our economy. The right to collective bargaining is inherent. It seems clear that when any given labor organization has been chosen in a free and secret election by the employees of any individual industry to represent them in dealing with their employers, then all the employees of such industry should contribute to the cost of maintaining such organization or union. I, therefore, recommend that the union shop be legalized. I further recommend that the individual workers be protected against arbitrary expulsion from unions and consequent loss of jobs. The inherent right of the individual American working man to think for himself and his constitutional right to express himself must be protected.

During the biennium just closed through the help of public spirited citizens we have demonstrated that conciliation of labor disputes by state action can be helpful in solving industrial disputes. I renew my former recommendation that a state conciliation service be established.

KEEPING IOWA AGRICULTURE AT PEAK EFFICIENCY

In this hour of emergency, it is already apparent that our nation will be dependent to a great extent upon the productive resources of our great agricultural industry. In World War II all-out production was a top priority. Conservation and rotation practices were to some extent deferred or neglected. The present crisis may last for years. Lack of attention to the preservation of our soil may be seriously detrimental to the long range future of our state. Therefore, I recommend that you consider ways and means by which our conservation of natural resources can be accelerated even in this hour of national crisis.

EDUCATION

Two years ago I clearly stated my belief in the need of increased state aid for schools—to assure equal and adequate educational opportunities for all the boys and girls in Iowa. Today, one-fourth of the costs of operating Iowa’s public schools are covered by state funds provided by the Fifty-third General Assembly which supported me in this program. It is difficult to measure how much this state aid for schools program has meant in terms of improved education for the children in many areas of the state—and in relieving the burden from many property tax payers. Because our schools reflect the quality of our teachers—this administration also recognizes the necessity of taking the proper steps to assure better qualified teachers—and to attract the most capable people to the teaching profession.

Our institutions of higher learning—the State University, the State College at Ames, and the State Teachers College—have all received substantial appropriation increases. The by-products of the work of these institutions in the form of applied research and the development of improved techniques of production and distribution, which are being used by the citizens of our state and nation, clearly demonstrate the need for adequate support of higher education.

In this field, the State Board of Education conducted last year the Strayer investigation. And, while the state institutions of higher learning are of great importance, we also have more than 20 private institutions which likewise serve the citizenry of the state in the very important field of higher education. Moreover, a survey has been under way, dealing with the work of junior colleges, which also form an important segment of advanced education in many areas of the state.

In my judgment, we cannot properly survey the future needs and the proper use of advanced educational facilities until we see all three segments in their proper proportions and know of their future plans. Therefore, I recommend that during the next biennium a study committee be appointed to make the necessary survey in this very important field, that we may more wisely plan our advanced educational program for the future.

SCHOOL REORGANIZATION

Four years ago the General Assembly enacted legislation which established a procedure for the reorganization of school districts. The results have been disappointing, in that reorganization has moved very slowly.

There has been much controversy in the state, and much concern, and probably much misunderstanding, about the goals of this reorganization program. The people of Iowa are overwhelmingly of the opinion, and rightly so, that control of the schools should remain in the local communities. Nevertheless, the people are conscious of the importance of education and have a sincere desire to improve the educational facilities of the state. There is a widespread realization of the importance of improvement through reorganization.

Therefore, I recommend that this General Assembly carefully canvass this very important field of public service; that it simplify the laws providing for reorganization and, in doing so, maintain the fundamental principle of local self-determination. The people themselves must continue to have, as they now have: the final voice of approval in any program affecting their own local schools.

ANNUITY AND RETIREMENT BENEFITS FOR

PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

Bearing in mind the importance of our public employees, and the benefits to which they are entitled under our state employees’ retirement program, we must review this program periodically to determine the extent to which it can be improved.

I recommend that the present law be amended to enlarge the benefits to public employees, to at least equal the benefits which they would receive by reason of the present provisions of the federal law.

Likewise, I recommend that casual employees be relieved from the operation of the fund, either through exclusion from the payment of employee’s portion, or by adequate provision so that casual employees will be entitled to receive refunds upon leaving public employment. I am advised the actuarial estimates show no increases in contributions will be required if we liberalize the state retirement program in accordance with these recommendations.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

In my biennial message earlier this week, I observed that our state has been freed of syndicate gamblers and the federal government has enacted recently a law forbidding the interstate shipment of slot machines. Still, in my judgment, it is desirable to lock the barn while the horse is out by enacting a state law providing for the cancellation of all business licenses, in cases where gambling equipment is found in any business establishment.

Another urgent problem in the field of law enforcement and legal justice is the problem of sex crimes and all criminal convictions of like nature. I recommend that before the convicted parties in such cases are sentenced, that they be properly screened by the state staff of psychiatric physicians. These physicians, who are competent to properly diagnose the individual cases, are now doing this work in our penal institutions *after* the offenders have been sentenced and committed. In my judgment, it would be highly desirable for the courts to have the benefit of these case reports before determining the sentence and the place of incarceration.

AID TO PERMANENTLY AND TOTALLY DISABLED

Recent federal Social Security legislation has made provision for a new type of public assistance—Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled.

In my two years as Governor, many cases of a pitiful and distressing nature in this category have been called to my attention. This new aid program can be set up on a basis similar to the Aid to Blind program, and I seriously recommend that this General Assembly enact legislation to provide for aid to these very worthy and unfortunate citizens—the permanently and totally disabled. I am pleased to advise that the necessary information is available for the consideration of the proper legislative committees.

CHILD WELFARE

While we have made definite progress in the field of Child Welfare in the past two years, it is desirable that we accelerate our program of placing boys and girls from our two children’s institutions in the homes of citizens of our state. Scores of children, who today are wards of the state in these institutions, will be far better off in the homes of citizens who yearn for the admission of these children to family life.

In our Aid to Dependent Children program, we should provide for 100 per cent aid, and I am so advising the State Board of Social Welfare, which is charged with the responsibility of administering this very important program.

During the past two years, an average of approximately 100 unfortunate children each month have become dependents of the state because of desertion by their parents. In order to check this deplorable condition and require parents to assume their proper responsibilities to their children, I suggest that the State Board of Social Welfare be granted authority to direct the county attorneys to prosecute deserting parents in those cases where, after due consideration, such prosecution seems advisable. Unless this or some alternative solution is found, the next General Assembly will find it necessary to appropriate an additional one million dollars a year for support of dependent children.

Two years ago, when the Assembly adopted the uniform criminal extradition law, we hoped we had found a measure of remedy for the problem of child desertion. But this legislation was not as effective a remedy as we expected. Experience during the past two years has demonstrated that further legislation is necessary.

Appropriation recommendations in connection with Aid to Dependent Children, Old Age Assistance and other social welfare responsibilities will be dealt with further in my budget message to you next week.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Although Iowa has achieved a high standard of traffic safety, compared with other states, the continuing tragedies on our highways require affirmative action for the further protection of the safety of our citizens.

Almost 600 persons were killed, and 17,873 more were injured, as a result of highway accidents last year. The main contributing factors to these fatalities and the great number of accidents are: Driving while under the influence of intoxicating liquor, speeding and reckless driving, misjudgment of distance in passing, and mechanical defects. This legislature should take every possible step to correct these conditions.

Toward that end, I recommend that the number of state highway patrolmen be increased from 160 to 225. As a means of meeting the additional cost of this increase in the patrol force, I recommend that you increase the annual charge for a driver’s license from the nominal sum of 25 cents to 50 cents a year. This will be a good investment in greater safety on our streets and highways.

Within the limits of its manpower, our Highway Patrol has attained a high peak in efficiency and performance. Its fine personnel merits and enjoys the confidence and respect of our entire state. It is vital to the enforcement of the law of the road.

However, there are other aspects of highway safety which are the responsibility of every citizen of our state. I refer to the importance of Safety Education.

Actually, safety begins between the ears. We must inculcate safer driving habits in the people of Iowa through broad programs of safety education, such as the work now carried forward by the Iowa Safety Congress and numerous cooperating organizations in the state. We must all work to the end that everyone in our state becomes a safe, prudent and careful driver. The Highway Patrol alone cannot accomplish this task.

In regard to the correction of mechanical defects in motor vehicles, there has been proposed the establishment of safety inspection stations throughout the state. However great are the merits of this proposal, it would necessitate the hiring of hundreds of additional state employees.

At the same time, in every county in the state, there are well-equipped garages which are qualified to do this work. I urge that you seriously consider the adoption of a program which would make use of these existing facilities. The responsibility for administration of such a program should be placed in the proper enforcement agency, the office of the Public Safety Commissioner. He should be directed to license established firms in the hundreds of communities throughout the state where adequate facilities exist, and to require a bond from these firms to insure adequate standards of safety inspection.

It would be a relatively simple matter and a great convenience to the public to make use of existing garages for this purpose. And it could be done at a nominal cost.

TAXATION

The subject of taxation is always of importance in the deliberations of the General Assembly. Primarily, we should always seek to equally distribute the tax burden, for, surely, the power to tax is the power to destroy, and in your deliberations it is well to constantly bear this fact in mind. It is necessary to provide the tax funds for the support of the government. However, as the taxing power of government is a paralyzing force on the economy and further development of the nation, we must proceed cautiously and wisely in all tax matters.

It is of paramount importance that we maintain the present sound condition of the financial affairs of the state. We must continue to operate the state government within the current income of the state, and avoid the necessity of levying new taxes or increasing the tax burden of the people. This can be done and should be the number one goal of this General Assembly.

In a few words, my recommendations are: a sound budget; no new taxes; and no increases in taxes.

HIGHWAYS

Highway legislation is also of great importance. We live in an age when transportation is a modern necessity. The highway legislation enacted by the last legislature placed Iowa ahead in the parade of states in highway and road programs, and is proving so beneficial, as the program develops, that in my judgment, we need no major highway legislation in this session, and the work can properly be limited to minor corrective measures.

GENERAL

As legislators, it is your duty and responsibility to serve the best interests of all the people of Iowa. That is also my duty and responsibility.

You are the duly elected and constituted representatives of the people in the General Assembly. In that capacity, it is your obligation to make laws for all of the people and constantly bear in mind your responsibility to all of the people.

In your deliberations, I am sure that you will approach all public questions which come before you with open minds and considered judgment. By so doing, you can do the greatest good, and fully discharge your high duty to the citizenry of our great state.

On the one hand, let us have a minimum of contention and division. On the other, let us have a maximum of good will and understanding, tolerance and consideration.

If we would be worthy of our trust we must serve these lofty purposes. Only on the exalted plane of public service and devotion to duty can we merit the confidence which the people have reposed in us.

BE FAIR

Be fair! It is not pity that men need

But a revival of the shining creed

Of chivalry and honor through the earth.

Be fair! He who would rightly know another’s worth

Must see in him the man he strives to be,

Possessed of courage, truth and loyalty.

Be fair! Give faith for faith, meet trust with trust.

Who best serves his state must first of all be just!

Let us be eminently fair and just. Let us be considerate to the nth degree of the interests and the welfare of all the people. And if, by precept and example, we meet the challenge of the day, we shall deserve the gratitude of all our fellow citizens. We shall win, moreover, a place of respect and appreciation in the memories of those who follow us.

At this hour of inaugural I am very humble before God and man. I appreciate the confidence which the people have reposed in me. My fervent wish is to serve the interests of the people and may Almighty God in His infinite goodness give me strength and wisdom to do my duty.