President Hickenlooper then presented Governor George A. Wilson who delivered the following message:

GOVERNOR WILSON’S MESSAGE TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

Greetings and congratulations to you all. My greetings to you for the evident spirit of earnestness with which I know you are entering upon your important public duties. My congratulations to you for the opportunity that has come to you for real service to your community, your State and your Nation. You have been elected by the people of Iowa to be their representatives for the performance of a duty of importance to all of us. They look to you with confidence. They will be proud of your accomplishments and will applaud your work.

Because Iowa is a very influential part of the world’s greatest republican system of self government, you of the Legislative branch have before you an opportunity seldom faced by any body of officials. Never before has it been so important that we contribute only good to the cause of freedom as upheld by our united Nation. We can help by a sound and sensible program within the limited borders of our own state.

A wholehearted determination on the part of all to maintain unimpaired our system of government by the people must be ours. We need here, as in every place where government by the will of the people prevails, unity of purpose in all that pertains to the public welfare. If we bear this in mind, we will in a small way, show our appreciation for the sacrifices of our forefathers in handing down to us the best form of government ever devised.

In the accomplishment of this high purpose, to which you and I, all of us in places of responsibility are committed, I pledge you my best efforts. The task before us is a plain, hard job, calling for the best that is in all of us, but we can make it lighter all around by a wholesome spirit of cooperation and tolerance.

It is the requirement of the Constitution of Iowa that the chief executive “shall communicate, by message, to the General Assembly, at every regular session, the condition of the State and recommend such matters as he shall deem expedient.”

The Constitution further requires a report to the General Assembly of each case of reprieve, commutation or pardon granted, which has been dealt with in a separate report which will shortly be upon your desks. Such actions have been taken with due regard to the public interest and the circumstances of the individual case, and in accordance with the recommendations of the Board of Parole, or of the Judge of the District Court, the County Attorney responsible for the prosecution, and the Sheriff.

BUDGET

It is not necessary that I here go into detail relative to the appropriations for the biennium, for with the assistance of the Comptroller, there has been laid upon your desks a complete budget, giving to you our judgment of the amount of money necessary to be expended to maintain the efficiency of the various departments and adequately take care of the essential demands, insofar as they may be anticipated.

It is our deliberate opinion that consideration should be given to the needs of these departments before any other expenditures be authorized by the Assembly. It is our hope that the Legislature will take up immediately for consideration, through your committees and by action of the respective branches of the Assembly, these appropriation bills. If this is done, I know you will agree with me that the functions during the latter period of the session will proceed more smoothly, and the askings and needs of all departments will receive more thorough consideration. Any material increase in one department, must be taken from another, or the revenues of the state must be increased by additional taxes, and I know that you agree with me that the crying need of today is not more taxes. We must not permit ourselves, however, to make expenditures without accepting the responsibility to levy taxes to meet such expenditures.

To do otherwise. is unfair to the generations yet to come and most certainly will, if continued for any considerable duration, result in embarrassing deficits or worse and possible liquidation. Iowa can and should proceed upon a pay-as-you-go basis in the matter of current expenditures for operation of the state government.

ECONOMY

I am aware of the difficulty many have of understanding or appreciating the savings that have been accomplished by bringing under the budget system a number of important departments whose expenditures had not previously been subject to the scrutiny of the legislative authority. It is not a jugglery of bookkeeping, as some have been led to believe, but a genuine step for economy that ought easily to be understood. In the interests of the taxpayers of the State, it may be pointed out that a consistent record of economy has been achieved as a result of the suggestion of two years ago and of the action of the last session of the Legislature in requiring departments heretofore having no control to be budgeted for the first time. I need not remind you that a total reduction of annual expenditures by $1,000,000 was achieved by this step.

Inclusion in the appropriations bill, or budget, means only that such departments, instead of paying their administrative expenditures from fees, or a percentage of fees collected, must come to the Legislature, the elected representatives of the people, and make a showing as to the amount essential for such expenditures. The Legislature then determines their necessities. This is but representative government.

Certain other departments of state are not yet under the budget. May I suggest that you give careful consideration to the end that all departments of the government be brought under the same control and requirements as to administrative costs. If this be done, a further economy and savings to the taxpayers can be had as a result.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

By proper action of the last Legislature, you requested the Legislative Committee on Retrenchment and Reform, and the Executive Council, to make investigation and to report as to the building needs of our state institutions and departments.

You will have before you the report and recommendations of the Legislative Committee for a program of building both at the Capitol and at the various institutions.

I most heartily agree with many of the recommendations relative to the state institutions, and if the proposals on which the committee reported were the only ones which require expenditure for state money, perhaps I could join in the recommendation of all. Other departments and functions of State, however, must be taken into consideration. In brief, I say to you that in my considered judgment the amounts recommended in the budget are such as will substantially take care of the immediate institutional needs.

The Legislative Committee and the Executive Council caused a survey to be made relative to the building of an office building on the State House grounds. A copy of such report, together with blue prints, will be placed before you. I am firmly convinced that the efficiency and economy of government can be increased by having all departments housed upon the State House grounds.

The tragic conflict prevailing in the old world and the continued dislocation of our national economy have forced upon us a revised consideration of our own needs. While the funds are available to build a building on the State House grounds, I would suggest that the Assembly give careful study to the trend upward of construction costs, the absorption of both labor and material in the national defense program, and other factors involved. If, after such inquiry, it should appear to you that it would be advantageous to postpone the erection, I would strongly recommend that the funds now available be held intact.

COMPTROLLER

Confusion exists as to changes that have been effected in recent years in the handling of state finances. It is difficult to determine the facts about state income and expenditures. Even those who are skilled in financial matters and familiar with accounting systems often differ as to their conclusions.

From time to time there has been adopted for one department or another modern accounting systems, but there has not always been coordination; and it is now time to give attention to the whole problem and to provide for a uniform and simple form of accounting and a uniform way of conducting public business.

I recommend immediate installation at the State House and all departments of state of an adequate system of bookkeeping and accounting, simplified so that all can understand, and permitting and requiring the presentation of information, at stated intervals, which will readily give the picture of the income and disbursements of the state.

The office of the State Comptroller has been charged by law with duties pertaining to the control of state expenditures, and the preparation of the budget for each forthcoming biennium, efforts which in the interest of economy and efficiency are worthy of eternal vigilance.

It would be proper, and would tend greatly to efficiency in the existing control, to vest the Comptroller with the functions of supervising state accounting and conducting the audit of state departments, other than his own. The duties are one, yet there is separation which has caused duplication of effort and loss of efficiency.

CENTRAL PURCHASING AGENT

Control of the purchase of materials and equipment for the use of the State is now vested in widely scattered personnel and departments. The advantages of central purchasing are obvious, and have been favorably accepted in many other states. I would therefore recommend your earnest consideration of the creation of the office of Central Purchasing Agent, under the Executive Council, to coordinate and combine the purchases of the various departments, and to obtain for the State and the taxpayer a resultant lowering of costs.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

The department reports are for the information of the public now or in the future. These reports should be so prepared that they may be easily understood and be of real interest. Some of them are needlessly long, complicated, obscured by statistics or deficient in important facts. There is, in some cases, costly duplication of material. An overhauling of the whole is due.

Responsibility for preparation of these reports necessarily rests with officials and employes who are chosen for their skill and ability in fields other than printing and journalism. I suggest the attention of the Legislature to the wisdom of causing these reports to be prepared with the counsel and advice of some proper and competent authority in the field of editing of documents.

CAR DISPATCHER

Under legislation advantageous to the interest of the State, there was established in 1939 the office of State Car Dispatcher. There is available to you for study the results of this enactment, and it will suffice to say here that there has been removed from the road no less than 82 motor vehicles formerly operated at State expense, and a general reduction of costs in other respects. Additional savings can be accomplished by strengthening and broadening the scope of the law. I recommend that the subject receive the full consideration of the proper committees of the Legislature.

INSURANCE PREMIUM TAX

The last session of the Legislature transferred from the Insurance Commissioner to the Tax Commission the collection of the tax upon premium income of insurance companies. As a result the Tax Commission must go to the Insurance Department to get the data, thereby necessitating duplication of this work. This should be transferred back to the Insurance Department and the tax should be made payable as of January 1st of each year.

LICENSES AND COMMISSIONS

Licenses for drivers of motor vehicles, issued for a two-year period, expire on July 5, 1941. When it is considered that more than 1,000,000 licenses expire on the same date, it is clear that at the renewal period there is required numerous additional temporary employes, with resultant congestion.

It would appear that licenses could be made valid for a period of two years from the date of issuance, and licenses already issued could be staggered as to date of expiration. By so doing, the regular employes can handle the work and the congestion be relieved without lessening the effectiveness of the law.

A similar situation exists with reference to nearly 13,000 notaries public in the State, all of whose commissions expire on July 4, 1942. There is involved the seeming injustice confronting a person desiring to become a notary public during the latter stages of the term, and who obtains a commission good only for a short duration, and there is also the administrative difficulty that renewals must be handled by a temporary staff.

INVENTORY

The State is owner of a large amount of property, the absence of inventory of which is not in line with good procedure. Each and every department of state should be required to make an inventory of all property and equipment had, owned or used by it, in such manner and under such rules as may be adopted by the Executive Council. Once each year a copy of such inventory should be furnished to the Executive branch of the government. The heads of each department should be responsible for such supplies and equipment.

STATE GUARD

Under the terms of the Act entitled Public Resolution Number 96 of the 76th Congress, approved August 27, 1940, the National Guard of Iowa has received orders under which it will be temporarily removed from within the borders of the State and placed into the Federal Service for a period of at least one year.

It is therefore suggested that early attention be given to the problem of providing for the duties properly and worthily discharged by the personnel of the Guard when within the State. Measures should be enacted which will enable the Commander-in-Chief to organize home guards in the number and at such times as may be considered, with due regard to the circumstances involved, to be necessary.

SOIL CONSERVATION

Conservation and improvement of the soil resources of our land which nature favored so well, and the restoration of destroyed lands, together with the prevention and checking of soil erosion, is of public importance. Weare the temporary custodians; the basic wealths belong to our children as much as ourselves.

The last session of the Legislature passed a Soil Conservation Districts Act. The work thereunder is progressing satisfactorily. The bill needs clarifying and the members of the Commission will submit to you certain recommendations. These should receive your early consideration.

ADVANCEMENT OF RESOURCES

Two years ago when addressing the joint assembly, I called the assembly’s attention to the necessity of advertising Iowa’s resources and opportunities. At that time I said: “We must campaign aggressively to recognize, preserve and advertise to the nation Iowa’s resources and opportunities. Such effort is within the proper scope of governmental activity. Due to a lack of correlation, the many existing agencies not only do not work toward a common goal in development of the resources of our commonwealth, but are actually working at cross purpose, thereby eliminating definite benefits available through the activity of one agency. Our efforts must be organized and unified so that the maximum efficiency can be obtained.”

I so believed then. I am more thoroughly convinced of the necessity now. I would recommend that the Legislature give to this prompt attention, formulating such laws as will bring the desired results.

TRADE PRACTICES

One result of the economic dislocations of recent years is the growing practice by merchants of selling, or offering to sell, merchandise at less than cost. Any legislation to correct this evil should not be in any sense discriminatory or price fixing. The question is submitted to you with the hope that you will give it your serious and earnest consideration, and attempt to relieve the practice which if continued, in my opinion, means bankruptcy, increased unemployment, and ruinous prices for the farmer and producer.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

The Unemployment Compensation Commission is required, by law, to file a report annually, for the year ending December 31. This the Commission is unable to complete before the opening of the Legislature.

We are, therefore, transmitting a preliminary report by the Commission which we trust will be helpful to the Legislature in its consideration of Unemployment Compensation statutes.

FARMSTEAD OWNERSHIP

The prosperity and glory of our country depend upon the number of people who are owners of homes. Around the fireside cluster the private and the public virtues of our people. We should raise our sons to be independent, to pursue some enterprise for themselves and upon their own account, to be self-reliant, to act upon their own responsibility, and to take consequences like men. We should teach them above all things to be good, true and honest husbands—winners of love, and builders of homes.

A state wherein each family owns its own homestead is the commonwealth we should keep for our ideal. In furtherance of this, may we report to you that under the law and by negotiation with the Insurance Companies, there has been accomplishment in the orderly liquidation of corporate holdings.

This program has resulted in the sale of 4,862 separate insurance company farms, an area greater than two Iowa counties, from April, 1939, until December 31, 1940. These farms averaged 154 acres. The average price was $81.00 per acre. Approximately 80 per cent of the sales were to tenant farmers on long time contracts at low interest rates.

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW INDUSTRIES

The State of Iowa has by no means reached the limit of its productive capacity. We have been producing surpluses in agricultural industry, in cereals, fruits, vegetables, livestock and all related things. We are capable of wresting from the soil still larger surpluses. The problem of how to make the best use of surpluses is one that we should be able to solve in such manner as to increase the marketable value of the surplus and at the same time create new industries with opportunities for more employment of labor. I recommend a reasonable appropriation for chemical research for the development of industries or uses for the surplus products of our farms and our mines. Iowa has a commanding position as a producer of real wealth and with our unequaled diversity of products we should utilize all to the very limit.

AID FOR THE NEEDY

The problem of aid for the needy is still one we must recognize and seek to solve. In this as in other functions the government all that we do should be predicated upon the principle of pay-as-you-go. The state has a duty in this connection, and Iowa has and always will give heed to that duty; but the primary responsibility for relief is upon the local subdivisions of government, where all the circumstances of the groups and individuals are best known. We cannot, and we must not, proceed upon the theory that measures for general relief such as are now necessary are to be permanent. Our relief work should be coordinated with effort to so enlarge industry that it will absorb all labor in private employment. In the meantime we should continue to entrust to local authorities the administration of relief funds, under proper supervision. To that end I recommend that the provisions of Section 2, Chapter 4, Acts of the 48th General Assembly be continued for another two years. This will approximate local control and local responsibility, and will secure more efficiency and economy and a more sympathetic administration.

EDUCATION

The perpetuation and success of the freedom of our people is predicated upon the teaching of the fundamentals of American citizenship and the cultivation of the abiding loyalties required in moral gains. Thus it follows naturally that schools are the bulwark of our government.

In these days of crisis, schools have an increasing role to play. They cannot perform their proper function if they are weakened through lack of support or equipment or if their teachers are not adequately trained, sustained, and made secure. The American system of republican self government requires education be kept going at full speed. Society places a heavy responsibility upon the teachers in the discharge of their obligation to protect and enrich the American way of life and our free government.

The whole point of view is that of the child. It is not that of the teachers as a class, but to safeguard and improve schools through adequate standards for entering the teaching profession, with the elimination of the unfit, protection through certain elements of tenure and continuing contract. Measures of this kind are but the insurance of the future of our schools.

In doing all of this, let us not forget that one of the fundamental principles to be kept steadfastly in mind is that the control of our educational institutions must be kept in the hands of the local communities.

School laws have accumulated through many years, and many sessions of the Legislature, thus resulting in unrelated statutes frequently in conflict and obscure in meaning. I suggest for your consideration that the changing character of our social organization, the trends and shifts of population, necessitate change and improvements in curriculum, teaching personnel, organization, and financing to permit the efficient operation of a school system that will accomplish objectives of society.

THE IOWA CENTENNIAL

The State of Iowa is now in its ninety-fifth year of statehood. Three years ago the people celebrated the territorial centennial by a great variety of events, staged in cities in the State, all having the general purpose of reminding our people of the passing of history and the accomplishments of Iowa people in the past century.

The centennial of statehood is still more significant and it will afford a good opportunity to make our people history-minded and conscious of the greatness of their own state and its interesting and instructive story.

We are engaged in preserving the source and materials for that history at the State Capitol and have accumulated a vast amount of the public records, not only for daily use but for reference by the historians, and all this should form the basis for a year of celebration five years hence. I respectfully call your attention to this and suggest that the time is here for starting on a program for our centennial year. Committees of the Legislature should make a study of this subject.

CHILD WELFARE

There are, within the State, many children who, through circumstances not of their own making, have become dependent upon other than their immediate families for that support which is essential to their equal opportunities. These children command the sympathy of all right-thinking persons, and their needs are deserving of your careful inquiry.

SAFETY

The prevention of accidental loss of life, injury and property damage is a proper function of government. Many factors are involved, touching the fields of scientific inquiry, enforcement of law, and education.

Following the close of the last session of the Legislature, and to administer properly the appropriation voted for the purpose, there was appointed by me a Coordinating Committee composed of the State Commissioner of Public Safety, the President of the Iowa State Safety Council, and a citizen with a liberal training in safety.

The Coordinating Committee subsequently created what is known as the Governor’s Safety Commission, a fact-finding advisory body composed of experts in the various professions related to the problems of safety.

The two groups, operating without expense to the State, have cooperated with many other organizations and individuals in the State in the promotion of safety.

On behalf of the people of the State, I deem it appropriate to publicly acknowledge our debt of gratitude to these individuals and to these Committees and Organizations, for their fine, energetic and unselfish activities in this worthy effort. Their work deserves your continuing support, and your sympathetic encouragement.

COUNTY OFFICERS

The efficiency of county government is of highest importance, and a problem deserving careful attention. The question of tenure of office has recently been raised and sound reasons concerned with efficiency and economy have been properly advanced for the proposal to make the term of office of county officials four years.

The reasoning which has led to these proposals is sound. I recommend that such laws be enacted as will make such plan effective, beginning, so far as possible, on January 1, 1943.

FARM-TO-MARKET ROADS

The last session of the Legislature very properly enacted a farm-to-market road bill. This was the first such law to be enacted by the State.

There is now available to the Legislature for its study and attention the record of the administration and accomplishments of the program.

The total of farm-to-market road funds available for the years 1939 and 1940 was $4,560,040, of which $2,500,000 was from state and $2,060,040 from federal sources.

There have been 510 farm-to-market road contracts awarded in the 99 counties for a $4,009,272.20 program, exclusive of right-of-way purchases. The contracts provide for the grading of 808.48 miles, the surfacing of 621.95 miles, the construction of 154 bridges, and the building of 699 culverts other than small pipe culverts.

The average cost per mile of the work under these contracts is as follows:

Grading (including small circular culverts) $2,199.83 per mile

Surfacing . 956.19 per mile

Bridges 1,501.49 per mile

Culverts (exclusive of small circular culverts) 500.77 per mile

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Total $5,158.28

The acquisition of right-of-way on all such projects has averaged $392 per mile of road graded and a total of $166,711.93 has been paid for such purpose from the farm-to-market road fund, or 62.6 per cent of the total cost of all right-of-way. Counties have elected to pay the remaining 47.4 per cent of right-of-way cost from county funds. A total of $158,267.86 has been paid from farm-to-market road funds for engineering, inspection and administration costs.

It will readily appear, then, that of the total funds available, all but a small portion has been obligated by contracts awarded, with the work in progress or completed.

The principle upon which the farm-to-market road law is based is sound and should be continued. We should speedily push forward our efforts to improve that portion of the road system which, in bad weather has prevented the farmer from having access to his market, his school, his neighbors and his church.

UNITY FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

Iowa people are law abiding, and their desire is that our laws shall be just and reasonable that all persons, whatever their occupation or interest, may work together in harmonious relation and always advance the common good.

For convenience we refer to at least three important units of our social fabric—agriculture, industry and labor. In Iowa, perhaps more than in some other states, there are not clear dividing lines between them.

The farmer is a capitalist of the purest type. Commercial, manufacturing and mercantile business must always be very close to the farm market. Labor cuts across both units and we recognize that the hand laborer of today may easily become the manager or the employer of tomorrow. And there is a very large and useful class in a group between the lines.

We must recognize each of these classes, if they may be so called, as dependent each upon the other. In fact all of us, no matter what we may be doing, must work together for our own good and for that of the whole community. All who engage in honest toil in whatever field of endeavor, contribute to the happiness of all. The prosperity of workers, managers, tillers of the soil, and all others, makes for the betterment of our State, the strength of our social structure, and the contentment and happiness of the people.

In the enactment of laws and in the handling of the financial affairs of the community we should seek to be helpful to all interests. We should do our utmost to see that agriculture receives a fair share of the national income, and both the state and the nation should see to it that such laws are enacted as will establish and maintain an equitable balance between labor, industry and agriculture. We should aid industry by encouragement of manufacture and trade and the avoidance of unjust or hampering taxes and maintaining freedom from unnecessary governmental interference.

Where wage earners find it necessary to organize into groups for advancement of legitimate rights, the rights of collective bargaining should be protected and assured. In all these things the central fact should be kept in mind, that government is for all the people not for any group or class. We have had in Iowa harmony and cooperation and regard of the few for the welfare of the whole, far more than in some places, and less of profiteering, racketeering and the efforts of one group to dominate or dictate to others. That spirit can be maintained by just laws, well considered, and fairly administered. The policy of all working together at all times and all ready to counsel together for the common good should be continued.

COUNSEL AND INFORMATION

One could take more than the allotted time in reviewing and commending the work of the various departments. I wish now to publicly acknowledge the fine spirit of cooperation of each of these departments.

It would be tedious if I were to analyze each and every department of the State. The law requires the departments to file either annual or biennial reports. These have been printed and are before you. They are worthy of your careful study. If they do not detail all the information you desire, I know that the departments will be glad to furnish any additional information or explanations. We have encouraged the several departments to write the story as it really happened, for the policy of this administration has been that of honesty, with the business of the State transacted in the open without favor and without concealment.

CONCLUSION

The census taken last year by the federal authorities found and listed in the state of Iowa more than 2,500,000 persons. Other statistics are yet to be compiled. It is quite certain that when published they will show that Iowa ranks very high among the states in all things that make for prosperity, for comfort, for good home life.

Iowa demonstrates every year the immense fertility of the soil and the capacity to produce not a few of the necessities of life, but very many different things. We are growing more grain and forage, marketing more livestock, making more butter, and finding new and different crops of value. Our people are finding out how to save their farms from deterioration and to build up their herds and flocks.

Under guidance of our colleges and universities, and with the inspiration of our many great fairs and exhibitions, plus the unselfish work of organizations devoted to farm betterment and especially the associations of the boys and girls, Iowa continues her leadership in all that makes for prosperity. The industrial, commercial, mercantile, banking, building, and other activities keep pace with the general advancement.

You as Legislators are fortunate in that you are called upon to direct the affairs of state for a community that is progressive and prosperous, but fully determined upon making still greater advances and capable of higher achievements.

You have met in pursuance of the definite direction found in the State Constitution and your duties are clearly defined. You will find that your work is not all attractive and romantic, and that there may be wide difference of opinion as to measures that it was thought would meet with unanimous approval. You will counsel with each other and with state officials and others who have the same interest in the public welfare that you have. You will apply yourselves diligently to the tasks of the day and form your conclusions with open mind. In this, you will have served your state well.

The interests of the State of Iowa and of the United States of America are closely woven together, and all that you can do to strengthen and advance our state will be of benefit to the whole nation, and for that matter to the whole world of free nations. We have a role here in Iowa that may have its influence far away. We can engage in effective teamwork through unity and cooperation, or we can choose to dissolve our energies in rivalries and petty dissensions.

We live in a world sorely distressed by the clashing of arms and the brutal crushing out of human lives to satisfy the lust for power and the urge of hate. Let us not be downcast nor given over to despair.

Sometimes it appears there is a complete blackout of civilization and that the human race is doomed. There are forces at work from without and from within to destroy the ancient landmarks, and, under the guise of setting up a new order, to compel for society a return to the primitive ways of rule by might.

The crisis calls for courage, for tolerance, for wisdom in our work, for faith in the resolves and the ideals of our forefathers, and these, under the guidance of the Divine Love, will charter the ship of state into the placid water of peace, contentment and happiness.

The Governor was escorted from the Chamber by the committee previously appointed.