President Hart then presented Governor Beardsley, who delivered the following address:

MR. PRESIDENT, MR. SPEAKER, MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

On the occasion of your assuming your duties as members of the Fifty-fourth General Assembly, I am indeed happy to extend my personal greetings and best wishes to all of you. And I should like, especially, to congratulate each and every one of you on your preferment in being chosen to serve and represent the people of Iowa in this Assembly. This is a great honor, and with it come great responsibilities.

As one who, in former years, had the privilege of serving in both the Senate and House at different times, I am mindful of the responsibilities and prerogatives of your offices. Furthermore, I have the most profound respect for the representative form of government—the American, the Iowa form of government—as exemplified by the work of this Assembly and the balance of responsibility and power between this and other branches of our government.

For the past two years, it has been my privilege to serve the great state of Iowa as Governor. I am deeply appreciative of the cooperation I have received from the people of the state, and particularly from those of you in the legislative branch of government. I am grateful, too, for the constant cooperation and assistance of department heads and other persons who hold positions of responsibility in the state government. And I want to express my appreciation to the many individuals who, responding to the call of duty, have taken important places and heavy responsibilities in administering the affairs of our state.

Without your cooperation—without the help of the various department administrators—without the loyalty and support of the people of our great state—we could not have made the substantial progress we have made here in Iowa in these past two years.

In the final analysis, we are all servants of the people. We must be motivated always by a sincere desire to serve the best interests of all of the people all of the time, and thus prove ourselves worthy of the honor and responsibilities conferred upon us. We need to dedicate our every effort to the highest type of service it is possible to render.

In the light of this high obligation, it is gratifying to review today the gains and progress made in the past two years by our state and our people. Truly, these have been fruitful years. Our great agricultural industry and our great industrial establishment have moved steadily forward, making an ever greater contribution to the economic strength and development of our state and nation. In the field of education, in the field of science, in the professions, in every avenue of human endeavor, we have continued to make substantial progress. And today, in this historic Assembly, we have occasion to review in a general way the material progress we have made in tbe field of government and public administration.

EDUCATION

In many fields of governmental activity, developments of these two years have richly justified the broad programs and wise decisions enacted by the Fifty-third General Assembly.

One outstanding example is the increased program of state aid to schools. I am happy to report to you that this program has been carried out with efficiency and dispatch, and already has proven its great benefits to the people of our state. As a result of this program, educational opportunities have been improved. The children of our state now enjoy the advantages of better schools and better teaching. At the same time, by this same program, the burden of educational costs has been equalized by the easing of local property taxes for the upkeep of our schools.

As the state aid program continues, we can look forward with confidence to still better schools and school equipment and an adequate and balanced supply of well-trained teachers.

HIGHWAYS

In the field of highway construction, the program enacted by the last legislature has placed Iowa at the head of the parade of states in highway modernization. No state in the Midwest—no state in the Union has a more comprehensive and constructive program. No state is doing more to meet the needs of our people in an age when highway transportation is both a social and an economic necessity.

We have improved five times as many miles of farm-to-market roads in the past two years as we did in the preceding two years. It is entirely possible that within the next two years, an additional 25,000 Iowa farm homes will have all-weather roads. And this will have importance, not only in our economy in general, but in aiding and accelerating the development of better educational facilities.

In the field of primary road construction, we have likewise made great advancement. Last year, the construction program really got under way. This year, in 1951, the program calls for five times as many miles of new and modernized permanent primary roads as were built in 1950.

Thus our entire road program—primary and secondary roads alike—is going forward at a constantly accelerating pace. The only uncertainty in tilt continued expansion of this program is the danger of new and more critical developments in the national defense emergency. Up to the present time, it has not been necessary to slow up our progress in any material way. And there is encouraging evidence that highway improvement will be given military priorities as a critical requirement of the national defense.

Our progress in modernizing Iowa’s fine network of highways has been accomplished on a pay-as-you-go basis. In November 1950 the last primary road bond issued by the state of Iowa was paid off in full. Now, we are carrying on with current revenue a program of construction and modernization that will give our people, in succeeding years, the new and better highways they will need.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

From the standpoint of law enforcement, too, I am glad to report that Iowa compares very favorably with other states of the nation. In this field, too, we have made notable progress during the past two years.

Early in the summer of 1949 the Attorney General, who is the chief constitutional law enforcement officer of the state, apprised me of the fact that syndicate gamblers were moving into our state. He feared a condition might develop similar to the disgraceful conditions we have observed in certain other states.

I canvassed with the Attorney General the impossibility of the state alone coping with this problem successfully with a force of only about a dozen state agents. Furthermore, in our state, we are dedicated to the principle of local self-government. Enforcement of the laws is the responsibility of local law enforcement officers.

It was necessary, therefore, that the cooperation of local officers throughout the state be secured. This was done, and the results of this drive against gambling in our state are well known to all of you. No doubt you are as gratified as I am that this was accomplished under the existing laws of our state.

The Attorney General and all of the local law enforcement officers are entitled to much credit for their good work. Today, we have one of the finest and cleanest states in the Union. And we must be diligent in seeing that this condition is maintained and even further improved.

CONSERVATION

In the field of conservation, new programs are going forward. Today we have a coordinating program which, in my judgment, holds much promise to our people for the intelligent development and conservation of our natural resources. Under this program, we are dealing with all aspects of the conservation problem in a scientific and natural way. We are working with nature, not against nature. We are coordinating the closely related problems of flood control, soil conservation, stream and lake pollution control, and natural recreational facilities. Through all of these avenues of endeavor, we are taking important steps to provide wholesome recreation for our people and preserve the precious soil and water resources which are so necessary for a productive agriculture and a strong Iowa.

ADMINISTRATION

I would be derelict, indeed, if I did not report to you that the State of Iowa is in a sound financial position. It must be reassuring to you, as it is gratifying to me, to know that we have maintained a sound business administration of state affairs. Your state government is comparable in size to the largest private business operations in the state. Good sound business practices are just as necessary here as in the management of any private business. We have constantly sought to bring sounder and more economical methods into operation, and we shall continue to do so.

In this connection, I especially want to call your attention to the work of our budget examiners. Provision for these examiners was made in the appropriation for the Comptroller’s office two years ago. This step has made a marked improvement in the administration of public affairs. The savings resulting from the work of these examiners have been tremendous. It is almost unbelievable that savings of such magnitude could be accomplished at so little expense. This work, along with intensified application on the part of administrators, has brought not only many economies but also a high degree of added efficiency.

Further, I wish to point out for your consideration the special importance of our budget laws—the importance of budgetary control in its application to your government.

Among all the states of the Union, Iowa stands at or near the top in the healthy condition of its finances. We are operating, as you know, on current income, and levying no state property tax. Surplus funds were drawn upon for prompt payment of 50 million dollars in bonus money to the veterans of World War II—thus saving the taxpayers the millions of dollars in interest that a bond issue of that size would have required. We have a 30 million dollar tax stabilization reserve—a rainy day fund to insure our citizens against the danger of sharply increased taxes at some future time of economic emergency.

HUMAN RESOURCES

In the field of human resources we have made constant advancement. Especially in our board of control institutions our progress in the past two years has been outstanding.

Under the programs now being carried out in our mental institutions, the children’s institutions, and the training schools, we are making tremendous strides in restoring unfortunate individuals to normal, useful places in society.

We have succeeded in reversing the trend in mental treatment. In spite of the fact that more patients were admitted to our mental hospitals during the past year, we have less patients in these institutions today than we had a year ago.

Institution staffs have been increased. Facilities have been expanded and improved. Modern methods of diagnosis and treatment have been provided. We have stopped the practice of placing curable patients with incurable patients and thereby rendering them all incurable.

Under the screening-center program, persons with mental and nervous disturbances now come to our institutions of their own accord and receive the highest type of psychiatric and neuro-psychiatric treatment on a voluntary basis. Their relationship with the hospital physician is the same as their relationship with their family physician. Happily, these patients can now receive consultation and treatment either on an in-patient basis or an out-patient basis.

As a result of these improvements, more and more of the patients who come to these institutions are very soon restored to their loved ones and to their normal pursuits in their home communities.

In our children’s institutions and training schools, too, the professional staffs have been enlarged and facilities have been improved. Vocational programs have been modernized and expanded.

All of this progress is going forward continually, and I know of no function of government which holds more promise for the people of our great state.

In dealing with the affairs of government, as a rule we think of problems relating to the people as a group. However, in these programs I have just mentioned and in many others, the function of the state is a matter of helpful service to individual citizens. Actually, we have many highly specialized departments of government which deal almost exclusively with the individual. As another illustration, I should like to mention the work of the vocational rehabilitation division of your state government. During the past year this division has helped to restore almost a thousand individuals to vigor and activity. Vocational rehabilitation has made these individuals self-supporting citizens again, contributing to the productive power and over-all well-being of our state.

In measuring our programs and our plans for the future, let us keep in mind that we must be sure those activities of our state are administered with due consideration for the need to preserve the dignity of the individual citizen.

GENERAL

Our time today does not permit a complete review of all the functions of our government. On the occasion of my second inauguration and in my budget message, I shall offer certain recommendations and suggestions.

Your decisions, as members of this Fifty-fourth General Assembly, will be vitally important to the further advancement of existing programs and the initiation of new programs to assure an ever brighter future for our great state.

Meanwhile, on this occasion, I am pleased to have had the privilege of giving you this report of the condition of your state government. I have enjoyed working with these problems of government for the past two years. It has been a rich experience for me, and I am deeply grateful to you people of this great state for your interest in and loyal support of these broad programs. This interest and support should be a source of inspiration to you, too. Because, in the final analysis, it is the General Assembly that makes the appropriations and performs a most important function in planning and developing a better state.

The next 100 days will be busy days for all of us. But they can be productive days. I shall deem it an honor to work with you in fulfillment of the responsibility we share—the responsibility of serving all the people of Iowa to the very best of our combined abilities.

The full resources of the executive department will be available to you to assist you in working out the problems ahead of us. To each and every one, I extend a sincere invitation to come to the Governor’s office at any time to canvass any matters of public importance. You will always be welcome. This is a sincere expression, to you of the opposition as well as those of my party.

In reviewing today the progress and problems of your state government, I am cognizant that in this critical mid-century year, the overwhelming urgency of national and international affairs is uppermost in the minds and hearts of all of us. However gratifying our gains at home may be, every loyal and patriotic citizen must give heed to the growing threat to our national security and our way of life.

It is tragic indeed that in this Twentieth Century all nations of the world are not willing to take their proper places in the society of nations; assume their proper responsibilities; and make their proper contributions to the peace and betterment of mankind.

From its arsenals of tyranny behind the Iron Curtain, the communistic world is challenging our very right of survival. All of our gains since the birth of our republic are imperiled by the sinister forces across the seas.

Communism poses as the benefactor of the masses. It embellishes its false and dangerous propaganda with all the promise of democracy and freedom. Yet its iniquitous plan is not only to stop the march of human progress, but to turn back the clock of time to the age of tyranny, when the people were cruelly exploited and hopelessly enchained in slavery. If communism is successful in its aims, humanity will forfeit every spiritual advancement and every social gain since the Renaissance.

It is regrettable indeed that our military establishment has become so impaired that the enemy has dared to challenge our leadership. It is regrettable that so many of our officials and leaders in the nation appear to be busy playing the political fiddle. It is regrettable that fear is clutching at the hearts and minds of so many of our people.

This is no time for political bickering. This is no time for anyone to seek temporary political gain at the expense of national security. This is no time to squander our energies, in Iowa or at the national capital, in jockeying for personal or political advantage at the expense of the public interest.

These are days of decision. We must be realistic. We must put first things first. We must look well to our duties of citizenship and our responsibilities to the people. This is a time to give the very best that is in us to meet the communist threat.

Today the people of this state and the entire nation are looking for leadership—honest, courageous, intelligent leadership. In this legislative assembly are the men and women of Iowa who, with similar bodies in other states and the nation, furnish the political leadership of today.

Almost daily I walk through the stately corridors of this state capitol. Inscribed over an arch near the Governor’s office are these words: “Nothing is politically right which is morally wrong.”

There, in eight words, is the standard for our political leadership if it is to succeed. “Nothing is politically right which is morally wrong.”

Let us dedicate ourselves to the great task before us, bearing our course upon the highest standards of moral conduct. Let us dedicate our every effort and our constant attention to the building up of the military and economic and moral strength of our nation. Toward that end, let us do everything in our power to maintain the economic integrity and spiritual traditions of our state. As men and women, as public servants, as free citizens, let us unite in a common endeavor to preserve the American way of life.

Then our leadership will be fruitful. Then we shall have done our duty. Then, future generations will say that in this year of 1951, we did not fail our people in a time of critical need. Then, our state and nation, our daily pursuits, our spiritual lives, our children, will survive and go on to greater days which must surely lie over the horizon just ahead.

Truly, we have a tremendous job to do. Together, let us see it through.

Governor Beardsley was escorted from the chamber by the committee previously appointed.