The committee waited upon Governor Ray and escorted him to the Speaker’s station. President Jepsen then presented Governor Ray, who delivered the following state of the state message:

STATE OF THE STATE MESSAGE

by

THE HONORABLE ROBERT D. RAY

GOVERNOR OF IOWA

Delivered before a Joint Session

of the Sixty-Third General Assembly

Second Session

January 12, 1970

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chief Justice, Senators and Representatives, State Officials, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I congratulate you on being trail-blazers of history.

You enter this second session having done a great amount of homework during the interim which should aid you in your deliberations and action to accomplish that which is necessary in a short session.

It is fitting that this innovation of annual sessions should occur at the beginning of a new decade. Our minds boggle at grasping the changes in human life which have taken place just in the last 10 years, and they would boggle more it they could foresee the changes which will take place in the next decade of even swifter accelerating transformation.

The increase in population in the next 30 years will equal that of the last 970 years. Iowa is not itself a victim of this population proliferation, but Iowa and Iowans cannot escape its many unsettling—and even potentially devastating—consequences. This nation’s leading scientists, meeting in Boston over the year-end, passed a resolution calling for concentration in the Seventies on problems of violence, armaments, war, pollution, hunger, malnutrition, and the quality of life.

Some have called this new decade “the last, best chance for a new age.” Ecologist Dr. Barry Commoner recently said, “the time has come . . . to forge a great alliance in this nation. . . . The obligation which our technological society forces upon all of us—young and old, black and white, right and left, scientist and citizen alike—is to discover how humanity can survive the new power which science has given it.” Commoner is confident that this obligation can be met, if only humanity grasps the truth of Pogo’s classic remark: “We have met the enemy and they are us.” Commoner sees the environmental crisis as a great opportunity. “From it we may yet learn that the proper use of science is not to conquer nature, but to live in it.”

Since government is simply people working together to solve problems which they cannot solve individually or in smaller groups, the warnings raised by Commoner and a host of others become a pressing concern for all of us, particularly those of us charged with the conduct of public affairs. We have a joint responsibility to help guide this commonwealth and its people wisely into the seventies. Most of the work of every legislative session—like most of the work of every Governor—is, inevitably, hard and grinding detailed attention to the nuts-and-bolts of public administration. But we can bring a new dimension and a fresh gleam to those nuts-and-bolts—both for ourselves and our constituents—if we frame them in the context of our broader purposes, our deeper commitments.

This is the true significance of the new state symbol and its accompanying theme: “Iowa—A Place to Grow.” The artistically simple design graphically illustrates Iowa’s attunement to the world in which we live in this final generation of the Twentieth Century. The symbol is our outward manifestation of an inward determination to achieve real progress by creating positive and progressive attitudes throughout the state.

I have not intended nor attempted to embody in this message to you today all activities of this past year or matters that will or should come before you during this session.

Against that backdrop, let me discuss with you briefly some of the specifics of state government.

FINANCES

One year ago I presented to you a balanced biennial budget. In order to mount constructive programs essential for the welfare of our Iowa people, the budget we provided substantially increased appropriations in education, public safety, social services—including coverage of a $2.5 million Medicaid deficit—and in reality increased financing for all services and aid provided by the state. This includes additional support for education at the local level, which was increased from $130 million to $163 million. More than 50 percent of state dollars goes to education, and more than 60 percent of all general revenue of this state is returned to the local level. While the surplus at the end of the biennium will be thin, we are operating within our means, and we did not raise taxes. I am as insistent today as I was a year ago that we not have a general tax increase, and I am confident that the recent revenue and expenditure figures released by the State Comptroller’s Office support my position that this can be accomplished.

Some adjustments within departmental budgets have been necessary within this biennium, as has always been the case in any previous state budget. These adjustments are being handled regularly by my office, through the State Comptroller. Also, it may be necessary to submit some readjustments to you in the form of amendments to current appropriations.

I stand firm that there shall be no general tax increase, and I will not approve one this session. Within our present tax structure, however, we continue to press for additional revenue and funds from sources not anticipated a year ago.

For example, revenues can be affected by changes in the federal income tax law, federal revenue sharing should it become a reality, and at the state level, from efficiency measures generated as a result of the Governor’s Economy Committee recommendations.

I have instructed the State Comptroller’s Office to keep you, as well as me, apprised of our financial posture. If additional funds become available, my first two priorities are: first, additional assistance to old age recipients; and second, aid to cities and towns for water pollution control facilities. Any change in appropriations that I might submit to you will, as has been my practice, be accompanied by a method by which it can be funded.

BETTER GOVERNMENT

American experience in the Sixties—some of it traumatic and tragic—carried the clear message that government must be made more responsive to the will of the people. Converting this facile phrase into reality is not simple.

People must have an access to government—a feeling that there is a place in the awesome and seemingly impersonal structure of government where they can go to voice their complaints, to receive answers to their questions and results from their pleas.

We must not forget that government exists to benefit, not alienate, its owners, and I, therefore, repeat my request for an Ombudsman.

Also, if we are to continue mounting the constructive programs essential for the improved health, education and welfare of Iowa people—and if we are to do so without taxing ourselves into oblivion—a reform of state government operations is absolutely essential. Such reform will result not only in dollar savings, but also in viable and improved governmental services kept constantly responsive to the changing needs of the state.

We cannot any longer afford to use new and higher taxes as a deceptively simple substitute for the harder, but more rewarding, discipline of making certain that our dollars produce maximum returns in program benefits.

I cannot praise too highly the contributions of the leading business citizens who comprised the Governor’s Economy Committee. Iowa businesses donated 60 of their most talented executives and sufficient funds to form the committee, which has worked with our many departments of government in an exhaustive study to determine better, more efficient ways to operate. The committee has already released four reports which show how the state can benefit by streamlining and updating operations of the Iowa Liquor Control Commission, the Iowa Highway Patrol, the Iowa Motor Vehicle Registration Division and the State Agriculture Department. I will submit legislative proposals to you to implement the suggestions made in these four reports. The committee’s complete report—containing changes to be brought about by legislative and executive action—is being put into final form now. Because of the large number of legislative recommendations in the final report, it will be impossible for you to consider all the suggestions this session, but to the extent feasible, we will propose legislation to implement this report during this session.

I can also report again in the interests of efficiency, that state officials are working out a pilot program to improve the budgeting system for higher education. If this proves successful, we will implement a system of program budgeting throughout state government. Our goal is greater budgetary relevance, reliability and realism.

I now ask, in the interests of better government for all our citizens, the following legislative actions be taken:

1. Enactment of the recommendations of the Governor’s Economy Committee in these areas:
   1. The restructuring of the Iowa Liquor Control Commission and re-related suggestions which can result in savings and additional revenue to the state of nearly $2 million annually.
   2. The issuing of license plates for a period of five years and related recommendations dealing with the Motor Vehicle Registration Division and the Iowa Highway Patrol, both in the Department of Public Safety, which show potential savings for the state of $2.2 million a year and annual net revenue increases of $1.1 million.
   3. The shifting, among other changes, of the Department of Agriculture’s Marketing Division to other agencies of government, which can result in a more concentrated agricultural marketing effort and in savings and net income increases.
2. An increase in benefits for employees under the Iowa Public Employees Retirement System (IPERS).
3. An incentive awards program for state employees.
4. Four-year terms for all elective state officials.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In 1968, Iowans changed our State Constitution to provide home rule for cities and towns. I believe this action on the part of our people vividly illustrates their desire to have more freedom of action in their local governments.

Consistent with the principles of home rule, I support:

1. The Municipal Statutes Study Committee created by this legislature in its work to make our state laws relating to municipal affairs in tune with home rule.
2. Giving cities and towns the authority to levy optional local taxes, subject to a vote of the people.
3. Sharing with cities and towns the cost of sewage treatment facilities in order to participate fully in the federal appropriation for this purpose.
4. Clarifying and strengthening the functions and services of the office created last session to assist counties and communities and to call this office the Department of Local Affairs.
5. Inaugurating a state-sponsored community development program to assist and challenge every community to improve itself during the Seventies—its appearance, its pride, its quality of living, its use of human resources.
6. I favor, what I understand will be one of your first orders of business, the correction of the county salary bill to accomplish for our county officers what you originally intended last session.

LAW ENFORCEMENT, PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE COURTS

The Crime Commission was created as a separate entity of state government during the last legislative session, and since that time notable progress has been made.

Eighty-two County Crime Commissions are now active or in the process of formation, 29 local planning projects are underway, and all local action projects are achieving significant results.

The Commission is working on improvements in these areas: the apprehension of suspects, partly through consolidation of police radio facilities; the computerization of identification; up-grading of police investigative procedures; action to speed criminal justice and the financial support of the criminal code revision; cooperation and coordination among the state highway patrol, county sheriffs and local police, and the establishment of state crime laboratory facilities.

In this connection, I would recommend the following:

1. That the analysis of our criminal penalty laws and the drafting of the revisions, including any revisions of the sex offender statutes, should be completed as rapidly as possible.
2. That enabling legislation for the establishment of the crime laboratory be passed.

In my Inaugural Address I stated we must constantly seek ways to upgrade our judicial system, and I recommended an integrated court system. We must provide a court system that functions justly and efficiently—one that commands the respect of our citizens. I, therefore, again urge you to provide a unified trial court system.

Good news is the fact that Iowa suffered 90 fewer traffic deaths in 1969 than the year before. I called for, and you enacted, legislation strengthening the laws affecting drunken drivers. There was an increase of 400 OMVI arrests last year and a 60 percent increase in convictions is predicted.

In this connection I would like to publicly commend the Highway Patrol for the outstanding service it is giving the citizens of Iowa. I would also like to recommend the following:

1. That the Highway Patrol budget be adjusted in order to reduce the attrition rate of veteran patrolmen in accordance with recommendations of the Governor’s Economy Committee.
2. That photographs on drivers’ licenses be required, and that voluntary identification cards for non-drivers be made available.
3. That the restriction of limiting the hiring of chiefs of police only within their own city be lifted.

It is with pride that I today announce word from Washington, D. C., that not only has Iowa’s highway safety plan been the first approved in the Middle West by federal authorities, they have also rated it as outstanding.

Increasingly, Iowa is following enlightened practices in the confinement and treatment of adult violators of the law. An essential part of this program should be to provide necessary, more adequate, and modern correctional facilities.

I urge the Legislature to take the necessary steps to employ the imaginative idea of providing an area system of jails which I enthusiastically support.

TRANSPORTATION

Safe, modern, convenient transportation systems are essential for the state’s continued economic growth and the well-being of our citizens.

I ask that the Legislature start planning for a needed consolidated Department of Transportation.

I urge you to clear the air on truck reciprocity, but to keep in mind Iowa cannot afford the loss in revenue created by the recent reversion to fleet miles within the compact. If this matter cannot be resolved at the state level, I will support preemptive federal legislation which, however undesirable, in philosophy, may ultimately offer the only viable solution of an interstate problem that has reached a staggering level of complexity.

Legislation providing for the functional classification of highways should be adopted during this session.

The transportation of dangerous and lethal phosgene gas across our state created a hazard to our citizens, particularly in light of the deteriorating condition of unregulated railroad rolling stock, tracks and roadbeds. As a result, attention nationally, as well as in Iowa, was focused on the need for uniform rail safety regulations.

The Iowa Commerce Commission and I are encouraging the legislation in Congress to provide regulations for railroad safety.

Depending upon the outcome of this legislation, the Commerce Commission could well submit a state railroad regulation proposal to this Legislature.

EDUCATION

The Governor’s Educational Advisory Committee, comprised of 30 laymen from throughout the state, is hard at work analyzing, evaluating and examining the entire spectrum of Iowa schooling.

A first statewide conference on education was held in October, 1969, when critical areas were identified for the committee and 450 other interested persons by an array of more than 50 distinguished speakers. The Advisory Committee is now considering a range of subjects which includes school financing, administration, organization, goals, curricula, personnel, students, equipment, and physical facilities, including the possibility of a college in Western Iowa. Its findings will form the foundation of an improved educational policy, which will greatly aid the Legislature and the Governor in determining educational priorities.

My faith in advocating tuition grants for needy students to attend Iowa’s private colleges and universities is justified by the fact that during the present academic year no fewer than 1,913 Iowans received tuition grant awards.

Besides enabling these worthy young people to engage in higher education, the project has helped to instill new life into Iowa’s invaluable private institutions of higher education.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

Let me mention to you several accomplishments in this broad category of Health and Welfare.

1. Work Incentive Program—This program is designed—as you know—to move people from welfare rolls to payrolls. It is estimated that 3,000 families receiving Aid to Dependent Children will be enrolled in the Work Incentive Program by 1971, based on the present rate of involvement. In this 11-state, two-region area, Iowa has the highest percentage of training slots now filled—680 out of 700—with the lowest cost per enrollee, and—most importantly—Iowa has the highest retention rate among enrollees. Moreover, we rank nationally in the top one-third of this program, even though some states have been involved in it for two or more years. Thus far, we can point to 105 persons who have completed the course, are off the rolls, and fully employed; and another 28, being now partly self-supporting, thereby reducing their welfare payments.
2. Rubella—Because the vaccine for German measles was not available earlier, the federal government did not provide sufficient funds for a mass immunization program as has been the practice in the past.

When the vaccine did become available, I was determined to prevent the predicted epidemic of 1970-71, and requested an appropriation of $100,000 from the Executive Council’s contingency fund to launch an immediate statewide program.

Through the combined efforts of government, volunteer groups and individuals throughout this state, this program is on schedule and we will complete a statewide immunization program that will prevent untold misery and human suffering.

1. Alcoholism—The new program on alcoholism and the new $1 million you accepted in the Governor’s budget is achieving significant results. From July 1, 1969, to New Year’s Day of this year, records show 900 alcoholics have received hospital treatment; 1,900 were given rehabilitation help in 16 local service centers and 850 benefited from board and residential care in seven half-way houses throughout the state.
2. Drug Abuse—The Legislature in its wisdom revised the law during the last session to provide more reasonable penalties for first offender users of Marijuana. This represented an important step forward in dealing more rationally with the drug abuse problem in our state.

Because of the growing magnitude of this problem, we have begun an all-out attack against drug abuse and drug dependency in this state. We must concentrate on the pursuit and conviction of peddlers and pushers and embark on a comprehensive educational program to reach all of our citizens, particularly our young people so that they will be aware of the harmful and deleterious effects.

In another area, recognizing the importance of the family as the basic foundation for a healthy society, it is my belief that problems between members of family units can be dealt with through a family court division of our district court system which I urge you to create.

I also urge that you adopt needed divorce reform measures in this connection.

While this biennial budget provides increases for the infirm, the aged, the disabled and the dependent, the results of the Medicaid cutback, that developed before this administration, forced an increase in the number of old age assistance recipients. I have insisted, nonetheless, that there be no cut in their benefits. In addition, as I have already mentioned, an increase to these citizens has my priority should funds be available.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Thanks to your assistance, the Iowa Development Commission has been remodeled and is now functioning productively.

In our drive for balanced economic growth in Iowa, the IDC is promoting strongly “Iowa . . . a place to grow,” a place to grow in agriculture, in business and industry, in communities throughout the state, both small and large.

1. Agriculture—With pride I tell you Iowa is a leading agricultural state in this nation, unequalled by any in many crop, livestock, dairy and poultry production areas.

We are emphasizing improved marketing programs for our agricultural industry, and recently the IDC held a highly successful farm marketing workshop.

The market for Iowa’s agricultural products is unlimited, and improved and increased promotional activities can benefit the farmers and our entire economy.

1. Labor—No state can boast of higher quality work or better or more productive workers than can we in Iowa. Little action was taken on the items listed under the category of labor in my Inaugural Address.

It is imperative you take action to increase benefits under Workmen’s Compensation for injured employees and their families.

Also, employees have a right to be protected from losing wages that they have earned. This can be done without penalizing legitimate and reputable businesses.

I repeat my expressed support of collective bargaining rights for public employees.

1. Business and Industry—In order to evade a continued exodus of talented Iowans we must continuously seek new jobs and job opportunities in our state. Indications are that the elimination of the new construction tax is an encouragement. Our most recent report from the IDC discloses 11,000 new jobs created in Iowa in 1969, compared with 7,000 the previous year.
2. Tourism—Already four times as many people visit Iowa’s parks as visit Yellowstone National Park each year. Add to this our lakes, our historical points of interest, and now our new lakes, and the discovery of the Bertrand and the fantastic underground caverns and our tourism potential is skyrocketing. To take full advantage of this growing potential we recently held a highly successful statewide Governor’s Conference on Tourism.

BETTER LIVING

No problem will be greater for the rest of this century than the protection of man’s environment from mindless destruction. Therefore, you will not be surprised that I have asked our newly appointed Health Commissioner, Dr. Arnold Reeve, to make pollution control his first order of business. I would beef up our fight against pollution by the consolidation of the Water and Air Pollution Control Commissions into a State Environmental Quality Commission.

I am pleased that you are setting up a special standing committee in each house to deal with our environmental problems. Your immediate action indicates that the people of Iowa and you are concerned.

I have been impressed with expressions by your leaders that this session will be concerned with people. I trust this will include the protection of the consumer, and I highly recommend it for your consideration.

In this regard I also ask that you provide by law protection for the land owner whose land, or easement thereon, is sought by outsiders through use of eminent domain.

YOUTH

In this broad category, I proudly report that the 1969 Governor’s Summer Youth Opportunity Program involved 22 projects, employed more than 1,100 disadvantaged youth, and the money with which you supported the program was matched by federal and local funds. The summer’s success of this program we initiated last year will extend into many more communities and reach many more of our young people this coming summer.

Besides providing another example of inter-governmental cooperation joined with voluntary citizen participation, the Summer Youth Opportunity Program illustrates our commitment to youth—which mast rank alongside our commitments to environmental protection and the relief of human suffering as the most basic of all our obligations. In that context, it is important that any so-called voter reform bill must not in any way disenfranchise any qualified voter or deprive anyone from voting at his place of residence.

Once again I call upon you to speedily complete action to lower the minimum voting age to 19 years. The Senate has already expressed itself in this regard telling young people that they are welcome in our political processes. Participation is a far better teacher of realism than alienation. It would be a pity if we refuse our young men and women who want to turn toward electoral politics. Beyond all other challenges, you and I must meet the challenge of beckoning Iowa’s young to plunge headlong into the mainstream of public affairs, for we shall desperately need their vigor, their enthusiasm and their idealism in the testing years which lie ahead. I call upon you to join with me in answering affirmatively the offer of Iowa youth, as recently voiced by Karen Ann Conner, who wrote—in a letter to an editor:

“You have given us a heritage. We, in turn, offer a dream. Let us work together to make them a reality. This is my challenge, and this is my hope.”

So said a young Iowa lady, speaking for her generation. I answer her—on behalf of all of us—that we shall work with her—we shall work with all who will join together to make these dreams for a better world a reality and to build in Iowa and America a society worthy of the heritage which we prize beyond all price.