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

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

It is with a feeling of humility and sincere appreciation that I have taken the oath of office and assume the further responsibility as Governor of this great state. I am extremely grateful to the people of Iowa for the confidence which they have reposed in the leadership of my administration. I wish to assure all of you present and the citizens everywhere in our state that I am motivated by but one desire and that is to serve the best interests of all of the people of Iowa to the very best of my ability. To that end I pledge my tireless efforts. History is the record of recurring struggles by mankind to assure a better kind of a world. We live in a dramatic period in history. Our nation, in the past few months, has re-asserted itself by electing to the office of President of the United States a truly great American. I am confident that under the peerless leadership of Dwight D. Eisenhower our nation will be able to resolve every problem which confronts us today and resolve them in a constructive and satisfactory way. I am firmly of the opinion that the international situation can be stabilized and that free men everywhere can once more pursue the pathways of peace. A strong America must be a dynamic America, worthy of its rich traditions and history—capable of its opportunities. We must secure not only a peaceful world, but we must attain tranquility at home so that our nation, vigorous, strong and confident as it is, can achieve its destiny. We must have confidence in the American way of life. We must believe in the ability of the American people not only to discharge their responsibilities as a people today, but at the same time to build for a strong, progressive and constructive nation in the future. With this encouraging national background, we, as Iowans, have reason to face the future with every confidence of success and accomplishment.

As one who has served in these legislative halls, I have a sincere, profound respect and appreciation for the legislative bodies and share with you the pride of accomplishment in the cause of good government which has been achieved in these very chambers. On behalf of all Iowans, it is a privilege to congratulate you members of the Fifty-fifth General Assembly on your election to the offices which you now hold. It is a great opportunity for service to the people of Iowa and I know of no finer honor than to have the privilege of serving in the General Assembly.

In the important work ahead, it is highly desirable that we have close cooperation between the executive and legislative branches of government.

Both branches have a joint responsibility in serving the interests of the people to the end that we will meet the problems of the day and build wisely and well for the future. The ideal way, the constructive way, the American way of achieving these goals is to judge every public question by the standard of what is best for Iowa. Let us, in these hundred days which are ahead, approach every public question from that viewpoint. If we do, we will have merited the honor and the trust which the people of this great state have reposed in all of us.

We cannot escape the fact that, in the final analysis, present day government is a business operation. To give it the finest administration we must approach public questions and the administration of public affairs from the standpoint of sound and proven business principles.

TAXATION, FINANCE AND BUDGET

Fortunately, for Iowa, we are in a sound financial condition. During the recent inflationary years we have met the problems of the state without unwise expenditures and have been able to operate the state government pursuing sound fiscal policies and respecting sound financial rules. In all of this period the State of Iowa has met its problems and has confined state expenditures to the income of the state. As we look to the future, it is imperative in my mind that we continue this policy of no deficit spending and the maintenance of sound budgetary programs. Equally important, we must seek every possible means of continuing and expanding every essential service provided by state government without the necessity of any new taxes or increases in sales or income taxes.

Shortly, I will present my budgetary message to you, and it will be predicated on the policy of no increases in sales or income taxes, and no new taxes. We must constantly bear in mind that the power to tax is the power to destroy and unless we maintain a policy of balanced budgets, living within our income without increase in the tax burden, we will fail the people of our state.

ROADS

It is impossible, in this address, to deal with all of the legislative problems which will be considered here during the next one hundred days. However, there are certain matters to which I wish to refer specifically on this occasion. One of these subjects is that of roads.

We live in a period when transportation is of greater importance to the citizenry of our state than ever before. Four years ago, in the Fifty-third General Assembly, we enacted into a law a program which has proven effective in actually building roads. Our pay-as-we-go program which was adopted at that time has brought great improvements in the highways and roads of Iowa. These have been the busiest road construction years in the history of our state. This program, balanced as it is, has proven especially satisfactory in farm-to-market and secondary road construction in our state. Likewise, it has been successful in the improvement and further development of the primary road system. But there is tremendous public interest in further highway construction and improvement.

The citizens must be advised of the fact that any further acceleration of highway construction and improvement in Iowa will require additional funds which, in one way or another, the people must provide.

You, as representatives of the people, must be responsive to the will of the people. A sound public policy requires that highway users pay for highway improvements. Diversion of public funds collected from highway users by the federal government is improper.

As a major step in obtaining the funds which should be applied for road construction purposes, it would seem appropriate for this General Assembly to consider the adoption of a joint resolution memorializing Congress to enact laws returning to the states the taxes now levied against road users and which have been diverted for other purposes.

In the case of Iowa, the adoption of this legislation alone would make available increased funds for highway purposes in excess of $17,000,000 annually. Today I have telegraphed the Governors of every state in which legislatures are now in session or are scheduled to convene shortly, urging them to take similar action.

During the past year, a special citizens’ study committee examined the toll road programs in other states and studied the possibilities of a modern toll road in Iowa as another means of solving present day transportation problems. As more and more freight, mail and passenger traffic, which once moved by railroads, has started moving over our highways, it has been increasingly clear that highway construction engineered for lighter traffic loads, was inadequate. By siphoning off our heaviest traffic to new heavy duty highways we can preserve our existing roads and extend the useful life of these roads.

The Toll Road Study Committee has made its survey and the report has been filed with the legislature. It is my opinion that a careful perusal of this report will indicate that this program should be studied further. Iowa stands athwart a main east-west artery of highway commerce of our nation. If we do not furnish the cross-country link it is probable that other states will do so. With the rapid development of toll road systems in the various states of the nation, we should be prepared to deal with any and all eventualities. This calls for constructive action on the part of the Fifty-fifth General Assembly.

EDUCATION

In the field of education it is imperative that we continue to provide funds as liberally as possible, within our means. We must continue to provide adequate support for our institutions of higher learning, including funds for productive research.

Again referring to the Acts of the Fifty-third General Assembly, we adopted a comprehensive program of state aid to the public schools of our state. As a result of the inflationary forces which have run rampant in this country the past four years, this formula has fallen behind. It is desirable in my judgment that we increase the amount of state aid for schools to restore the percentages in the formula which was adopted in 1949.

Within the past twelve months, the Federal Communications Commission has made available channels for educational television. Because of the promise which television holds for both public school and adult education, and because the value of audio-visual education has been well established, it is timely that you give the matter most serious consideration. There is a time limit on this situation as it confronts us now. To avail ourselves of educational television facilities under the present federal plan, we must indicate our desires by proper legislative action before July 1, 1953.

MENTAL HEALTH

Iowa, in recent years, has made great strides in the field of mental health, and in the care of the mentally ill. Using the resources at our command, we have expanded and improved all of the programs in our mental health institutes. Four screening centers have been put into operation and in-patient and out-patient clinics are a regular function of the hospitals.

There is great promise in the field of research. A pilot program of research, using cooperatively the facilities and personnel of the psychopathic hospital and medical school of the University of Iowa and the Mental Health Institute at Mount Pleasant, is in the planning stage.

To further augment this service, we need also to expand the professional staffs at all of the mental health institutes and two children’s mental schools. This expanded program in the field of psychiatry and other professional fields will accelerate the program of mental health treatment.

I recommend this program for your most serious consideration.

NEEDS OF AGRICULTURE

No session of the General Assembly should conclude without a careful review of each phase of the state laws which affect the efficiency and prosperity of Iowa’s great farm establishment. Our first billion dollar corn crop should emphasize our responsibility. Farm prices have been subjected to continuing adjustment in the market places of the nation, the welfare of our farm population in terms of purchasing power and income has been affected proportionately.

The fixed tax load must be kept at a minimum; the marketing of farm products must be facilitated, and practices for the maintenance and use of our precious resource in the soil of Iowa must be re-studied in the light of the tremendous strides of science in this modern age.

INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

Our state now enjoys a substantial development of industry built upon a fine labor force, adequate transportation and our available natural resources. One cannot travel this state and fail to notice the hundreds of small manufacturing enterprises which are under way. State government touches industry in many ways. We must continue to lend every effort to promote the growth and development of industry in our state.

HIGHWAY SAFETY AND SAFETY EDUCATION

In the field of safety education and accident and fire prevention through cooperation of the agencies of state government and many private organizations, we have made great gains. The benefits of this have been most reassuring and should impel us to even greater effort in the future.

Every step to advance the cause of safety, such as the establishment of an inspection service for motor vehicles and all programs for expanded effort in these important fields of endeavor, merits the most serious consideration by this General Assembly.

CONSERVATION

In the field of conservation and flood control, Iowa has advanced to the stage where we can measure accurately the possibilities of further development in the future. Fortunately, because of the programs of the past ten years and the legislative action of recent general assemblies, we have formulated a program of natural resources development which has placed Iowa in a position of leadership in this very important field. The program is predicated on local control and based on the wholesome principle of working with nature instead of against nature. With this program, we can pursue the intelligent development of our watersheds which will not only add to the fertility and the abundant production of Iowa soil and make its contribution to present day society, but will conserve our resources for generations yet unborn. This is a prime necessity.

The benefits of our preliminary work are now very much in evidence. We should, within the next two years, by the necessary work, by setting all the pins which are necessary in our program on all of the watersheds of the state, complete the state-wide blanket or quilt of enduring soil conservation.

LABOR

In the United States today there is a genuine realization that in this industrial age we must continue to explore and expand the fields of conciliation and progress in labor-management relationships. In my judgment, it would be constructive if this legislature would review our labor laws and make such changes, in line with the principles set out in the 1952 majority political party platform, as will put them in conformity with the federal laws relative to labor-management relations.

LEGISLATIVE RE-APPORTIONMENT

Our constitution provides at periodic intervals that the legislative representation should be re-apportioned in accordance with certain definite principles.

During the present biennium the national census has been completed. As these census results are now available, it is my hope that the Fifty-fifth General Assembly will put this responsibility on its agenda for completion before the termination of the session.

REORGANIZATION

During the past two years we have made major strides in the various departments of state government in upgrading the public service, in effecting economies and in improving efficiency. This has been done within the present law. However, it is desirable always for the legislature to give due thought to programs for reorganization, in order to assist in solving the problems of administrative efficiency in state government.

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Another field in which it seemed desirable for the legislature to have the benefit of advance study was the question of a public utility commission for the State of Iowa. Iowa is one of two states which does not have such a commission. The magnitude of work required to treat intelligently and successfully with this problem made it necessary, in my judgment, for a pre-study to be made. With that thought in mind, I appointed a citizens’ Public Utility Study Committee for the purpose of examining this broad field and making a report to the Fifty-fifth General Assembly. That report is now before you.

Because the municipalities of the state cannot have the technical and engineering staff necessary to provide the proper regulation of utility rates, it is my judgment that the legislature should seriously consider this question. You will find the work of this committee very beneficial to you in furnishing basic information as to the needs of the people of our state. In most states, public utility commissions are for the sole purpose of regulating private utilities within the states. In my judgment this is a sound policy. However, municipalities and REA organizations should have the privilege of availing themselves of the advantage of rate regulation if they elect to do so.

STATE RETIREMENT PROGRAM

Former years have demonstrated the necessity of having expert counsel in specialized fields of public interest and administration. I have referred already to the study committees on toll roads and the public utility commission. Also, the last two years we have had a study committee, authorized by the Fifty-fourth General Assembly, on the Old-Age Survivors and Insurance Program of the state. That report is also before this legislature.

In your action on this subject, I recommend you conserve the interests of all the beneficiaries who have paid their good money into the system, and maintain the financial stability of the system. I am confident that this General Assembly will deal wisely with this very important problem.

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

The results of these study committees, and study committees in former years, demonstrate the importance of research and factual information in arriving at intelligent decisions in public affairs. Based on that experience, I recommend for your most serious consideration the establishment of a Legislative Research Department. Such an agency, with a small staff of able researchers, could perform, in a broad field of legislative action, the services of research which have been performed by special committees in the past. This would speed up the work of future legislatures and better enable them to deal adequately and constructively with public questions in the future. The services of such a department should be available equally to the executive and legislative branches of state government.

CONCLUSION

In this assembly today are men and women of many faiths, of many ages and of varying political convictions. Throughout the length and breadth of Iowa, in its ninety-nine counties, in the homes in the cities and towns and on the farmsteads, are the men and women and children of this state who have entrusted to us the responsibilities of leadership and decision.

We cannot measure up to the challenge of this hour unless we have targets for our tomorrows—targets based upon hard realities of today, upon a vision of the better days to come; and upon a faith that by working together we can reach those goals.

No plans for the future will be good unless they make it possible for the young men and women of today to have homes, opportunities, independent businesses, the joys of little children, and the richness of American freedom. No plans for the future will be good unless they will give to your children and mine the kind of a state in which we would like to live. Let us together share the planning and the work by which that future can be ours.

We have severally taken our oaths of office to support the laws of the State of Iowa and to serve honestly and faithfully to the best of our abilities. As I have renewed my pledge I am humbled by the realization that only with divine guidance is it possible for me to do my task. In my daily work I shall seek your help and counsel. In that way a safe and sound course will be charted. In that way we will make the American way of freedom and opportunity live.

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