

Inaugural Address of Governor William Casey Marland

January 19, 1953

GOVERNOR PATTESON, FRIENDS:

It is most difficult to find words fitting to this occasion. To say that the responsibility of carrying out the administration of your Government for the next four years is one which cannot be assumed lightly or to say that that responsibility is approached with a deep sense of humility is, I suppose, fitting, but that does not convey the real degree or intensity of that which I now feel. Possibly you will understand if I express it in this way - it will be the aim of myself and every member of the executive branch of the Government to make the people of West Virginia as proud and happy over their choice in the last election as I am now proud and happy to assume this task.

West Virginia, as all other States in this great Union, has problems not easy to solve. This statement has been made by every Governor since our beginning and I suppose will always be fitting in an inauguration address. But today our problems come not only from our needs in matters strictly within the province of states, but they are affected very seriously by national and international affairs. As in most governmental affairs the primary concern stems from a need for financial resources to carry out the services that our people demand. This demand is becoming more and more every day, not only to increase those services which we now furnish, but to add new services commensurate with demands of our people. That, of course, can be summed up in the word "progress" and will be ever present in a Democratic form of government.

The national and international picture, as I have said, reflects itself very materially in the solution of our problems. The international field is now the scene of a struggle between two ideologies - one slave and one free. The national scene reflects this international picture in increased spending so that we may take our part of the burden thrust upon the free world to fight those powers that would enslave us. This, of course, has brought on, in our efforts to arm and feed the world, a tremendous rise in the cost of everything that we attempt to do. As we see increased cost in business, Government, being only another type of business, is also faced with increased cost. All governmental units are caught between the increased costs of doing that which they now do and the demand of the people that it serves that that particular unit do more. This problem runs the gamut of every political division of our government.

An increase in the price of office supplies, automobiles, machinery, building materials is reflected very clearly in the budget of any business. So it is with State Government. Increases in the cost of food, housing, etc., are reflected directly in the budget of State Government because government workers must, just as workers in private industry, be paid enough to maintain a fair standard of living and if their costs increase, their pay must increase. As it is in private business - so it is in Government and the budget for this next biennium is, in many respects, a direct consequence of these increased costs of doing business.

Economies can be effected, of course, in the administration of our Government on the State level. Over the past twenty years our Government has grown by leaps and bounds to meet the

demands of our citizens. This very growth of Government has caused departments to overlap and responsibility to be divided. Such a situation does not make for the most efficient government. In many cases Government has grown without proper planning and has become more cumbersome than it should be. In my opinion, the executive branch of the State Government should, in the next four years, be dedicated to consolidating and streamlining our State Government in order that sensible economies may be effected. It must be remembered that economies can be effected either by the broad sword approach of overall and across the board cuts in services, or by the surgical approach of cutting away dead tissue and leaving that which is vital. Sensible economies can only be effected by the second method and to use that procedure requires a thorough study of the problems. It is slower, but I do not believe that the accumulation of ills in twenty years of progressive growth can be cured overnight - only serious study can indicate what duplications and unnecessary services are to be cut out. Our citizens will not and should not be satisfied with Government less efficient than any other business and to that end we must work. This is the primary responsibility of the executive branch and it shall be given that importance in the next four years. The executive branch, under our system of government, is charged with the responsibility of studying and carrying out such economies and it is that branch that the most significant strides toward efficiency can be made.

There are instances where money must be spent to provide more efficient government just as business finds it necessary to make outlays in order to increase efficiency and promote economy. Our highway department is in that condition now. We have seen much progress in essential governmental services, such as schools and roads, during the past four years. However, our roads are still the number one problem of this State. We have reached the point where prohibitive costs have made it impossible to do more than maintain what we have, if that can be done. This is due, for the most part, to the fact that bonded debt service is taking approximately one-third of every road revenue dollar. Thirty- three and one-third per cent of every dollar taken in for the highways of West Virginia goes immediately to pay interest on bonds and to retire bonds. Unless this outpouring of money for interest and retirement of bonds can be supplemented to an extent that will place our roads on a pay as you go basis, we face a dark future for highway construction in West Virginia. This supplementing can be done, to some extent, by making the most efficient and economical use of road money now available, and to that extent the problem is the sole responsibility of the executive department, but, for the most part, legislation will be necessary to raise additional revenues. It is a situation where money must be spent in order to economize in Government. We cannot continue to pay out our road revenues for interest on bonds to the extent that we now do and still give our citizens the road program to which they are entitled.

Insofar as our schools are concerned, they, too, are sadly lacking in revenue. I believe that our Boards of Education and our County Superintendents are, by and large, doing the best they can with that with which they have to do. We must augment their resources. The time has come when our school foundation program paid for by the State must be placed on a sound basis and the counties of the State must assume more responsibility for the finances of our schools. I realize there are two schools of thought on this and that some people will continue to look toward the State for all school revenue. However, the fact that there is an argument between our citizens on the way in which this augmentation of revenue can be accomplished does not solve

the problem. Our children must not suffer while we argue. I will have specific recommendations to the Legislature on what the State can do in regard to more aid to the counties for the school system and beyond this, I do not believe our State Government can venture. Two-thirds of our present budget is diverted to schools, leaving only one-third for all other governmental functions. This, of course, is primarily a matter for the Legislature, as is the problem of road finances. The executive branch can only recommend that which it believes to be best as a solution to either problem.

There are other departments with which I shall deal in my message to the Legislature a few days hence - Workmen's Compensation, Employment Security, Conservation, and many others too numerous to mention here. In the matter of increased services and the addition of new services in any of these departments, while the executive branch can and will make specific recommendations along that line, I am not unmindful of the fact that the acceptance or rejection of any recommendation is the primary responsibility of the Legislature of West Virginia. Our Legislature decides whether these recommendations should be enacted into law. They, of course, must solve the financial problems before they can solve any problems of increased costs on any services. I will make specific recommendations as to the sources from which any moneys might come to finance any programs recommended, but in the last analysis, it is the Legislative branch of the Government that has the final responsibility of saying how much will be done during the next four years for any particular program.

We who have been elected to conduct the affairs in the executive branch must be ever mindful that our job is well defined in the Constitution and must be carried out regardless of what any other branch of Government may or may not do. If we can be steadfast to our own responsibility; namely, giving the most efficient and economical administration of the laws and the Constitution of our State that we can possibly give, then we will be able to say that we have discharged the oath that we take today.

There are those who believe that Government should stand still for a while, but in my opinion, this cannot be. We must move forward or we will fall backward and by moving forward, I refer particularly to increased efficiency of administration and the necessary laws to provide for that increased efficiency as a law is needed. In our democracy we must move forward in a direction indicated by our citizens. They have chosen the program of the Democratic Party and to that the next four years must be dedicated.

I accept that responsibility on behalf of the executive branch of the Government today and during the next four years we will, with the help of our fellow citizens and Divine Guidance, bend every effort to accomplish as best we can the objective that I believe is the primary responsibility of that branch of the Government that I have today taken an oath to discharge.