

## The Governor's Message

Only two years earlier Governor Ray had made history when he became the first chief executive to address an annual-session Iowa legislature in its even-numbered year. On January 10—the opening day of the 1972 legislature—Ray made history again when he became the first two-term Governor to address the second even-year meeting of an annual-session legislature.

There had been much anxiety in 1970 over what form the Governor's address would take since there were no constitutional guidelines for such a message to an even-year legislative session. So Governor Ray set precedent by choosing to make his address serve a two-fold purpose: On the one hand he had discussed the state's economic health, which is what the constitution requires of each Governor upon completion of a term in office; on the other hand he had outlined a program for the legislature's consideration, required by the constitution of each Governor at the start of a term.

So, where there was anxiety over the form of his address in 1970, there was none in 1972. Clearly, legislators expected him to follow the precedent he had set.

His public statements during the previous six

months indicated that was exactly what he would do. They had included several warnings that the state treasury's condition remained at low ebb. Simultaneously, they had voiced his ideas on the kind of program the legislature could enact at a minimum cost.

If confirmation was needed, it came on January 4 when one of the Governor's chief lieutenants, Representative Andrew Varley, Stuart farmer and leader of the Republican majority in the House, released a list of 18 "Major Issues To Be Considered by the House" during the 1972 session. As it turned out, nine of the 18 issues were duplicated in the 25-point program Governor Ray outlined in his message. First, however, the Governor directed his remarks toward the state's economic condition, but only after taking note of an empty seat in the House chamber, where he addressed the joint House-Senate session.

He was saddened, he said, to see "one very special face that is missing among you, and that is of course the Dean of the Legislature, Dewey Goode"—who was in ill-health at his Bloomfield home. Representative Goode, whose 30 years in the legislature constituted the longest service record of any incumbent, did not make it to the 1972 session. His death took place March 26—two days after the legislature went home.

Governor Ray sounded the 1972 keynote when he observed "it is time for action and not for

words." He said people the nation over have made it clear that "they are turned off by inflated rhetoric . . . They expect their government—at every level—to come to grips . . . more aggressively, more effectively, than ever before . . . with issues and problems that affect people in their every day lives."

The people no longer are willing to grant public officials "the luxury of evasiveness" in this day of action, he continued. "They not only question the credibility of government; they increasingly question the gap between promise and delivery. They increasingly demand that the gap be closed . . . the greatest service which you and I can render to the people in . . . the present session is to keep our words and our deeds harnessed together."

Turning attention to the state's fiscal health, the Governor reported, happily, that current revenues were up, saying: "Unlike a year ago, I no longer shudder when I hear the knock of the comptroller at my door."

During the economy lag in 1971, the Governor observed, he and the legislature "faced the problems this drop in revenue created; we took drastic measures to live within our means as Iowans expected us to do. Today, though we are far from being a state with overflowing coffers, our bills are being paid and the state's financial condition continues to improve" as indicated by revenues running slightly ahead of last spring's projections.

Implementation, in 1972, of new programs enacted by the 1971 legislature would result in huge savings, the Governor predicted. These programs included (1) better balancing of judicial loads through rearrangement of judicial districts; (2) a "massive reorganization" of the Iowa Liquor Control Commission and (3) the establishment of the General Services Department which, alone, "will enable us to do a better job at a potential savings of \$3 million a year."

Another kind of savings would result, he continued, from implementation of the new soil conservancy law in a broad program of better land use.

His report on the state's condition completed, the Governor proceeded to unveil his 25-point program for legislative action. Although the 25 points "were not of equal importance," he listed them in this order:

*Judicial Reform:* A unified trial court system is needed to replace the present archaic, outmoded judicial structure that is older than the state itself.

*Department of Environmental Quality:* Protection of the environment will continue to be a foremost human concern for the remainder of this century; a well-muscled new department is one essential needed to assure that protection.

*Amusement Ride Safety:* Last summer's three tragic accidents demonstrated the need for mandatory safety inspection and regulation of amusement rides.

*Junkyard-Billboard:* There is no doubt that the federal government will deny Iowa its full share of highway aid until legislation is adopted for junkyard beautification and billboard control.

*Home Rule:* The municipal code of Iowa needs redrafting to implement the home rule amendment ratified by the people in 1968.

*Civil Rights for the Disabled:* The civil rights act should be extended to provide equal educational opportunities for disabled individuals according to their abilities.

*Department of Transportation:* The several state agencies dealing on a piece-meal basis in this area should be combined into a single department.

*Pornography:* Iowa needs a law to control the sale and distribution of obscene material.

*Adult Rights for New Voters:* A person old enough to vote is old enough to be vested with other responsibilities, privileges and obligations of adulthood.

*Vietnam War Bonus:* Iowans voted bonuses to veterans of World Wars I, II and the Korean War. They should be given the opportunity today to do the same for "those young men who went off to a widely unpopular war in Vietnam."

*Bargaining for Public Employees:* Iowa needs a structure for collective bargaining with public employees. This is a time when that question can be debated rationally and intelligently without the pressure of a crisis.

*Ombudsman:* The soundness of the idea of an ombudsman (citizens' aide), to help the individual who is frustrated "in trying to pierce what is—to him—a faceless wall of public bureaucracy" is no longer in question. A \$50,000 appropriation is needed to set up the office in statutory law.

*Drunken Driver Reform:* Special schools should be established where convicted drunken drivers can earn back the right to operate motor vehicles.

*Concealed Weapon Permits:* Some limitations need to be placed on the issuance of permits to carry concealed weapons.

*Uniform Fiscal Year:* To clarify budgeting procedures, a uniform fiscal year should be established in law for all levels of government.

*World Food Expo '76:* The concept of a World Food Exposition is breath-taking in scope and promises long-term benefits to this state. The legislature should appropriate \$250,000 to the Iowa Bicentennial Commission to take land options and to begin preparations for a World Food Exposition in 1976.

*Iowa Crime Commission:* A \$600,000 appropriation is needed to match federal funds for local crime commissions.

*School Lunch Assistance:* A \$575,000 appropriation is needed to enable the state to comply with the national school lunch act.

*School Budget Review Committee:* A \$500,000 appropriation would enable this committee to aid

individual school districts that have special problems too diverse to be covered by present law.

*State Park Users Fee:* Legislation should be completed to provide a modest user fee for state parks.

*Tax-Exempt Properties:* Municipalities, counties and school districts, and the people living in them, cannot afford the luxury of providing services required for much of the real property not now on the tax rolls. Tax exemptions of real property extend beyond the original intent of the law.

*Commerce Commission—Interest Rates:* The commission should be given power to establish a fair rate of interest to be applied on customers' money on deposit or to be refunded.

*Low-Rent Housing:* The public referendum requirement for approval of low-rent housing projects for elderly and low-income citizens should be repealed.

*County School Districts:* The county school system is outmoded and should be eliminated. Provision should be made in any repeal legislation, however, for continuance of special education programs historically carried out by county boards.

*Uniform State Building Code:* Iowa needs a uniform state building code to bring order out of the confusion in this area. Also, the state housing code should be modernized.

While his program was "not all inclusive," the Governor said it was reasonable and attainable—

even during a short legislative session. He suggested that legislators were familiar with most of the items listed, which smoothed the way for "informed debate."

There were other important matters deserving the legislature's attention, Governor Ray continued, that he did not include in his program since he recognized "time and reflection" often is necessary "to achieve legislative and public support for important proposals . . . however much I would prefer immediate results." He settled for a brief mention of these items "which you have, or I am sure will want to have, under legislative study":

*Educational Television:* It is imperative that we continue to move toward establishment of a statewide television network. Within a few days the present network will be reaching 65 per cent of the state's population, leaving 35 per cent without access to its programs.

While the Governor did not go all out for immediate expansion of the Iowa Educational Broadcasting Network, probably because of the low ebb of the state treasury, citizens in Northeast, Southwest and Northwest Iowa did.

These were the areas not receiving educational television and people arrived in droves several times during the session to let legislators know it. They demanded of the House-Senate Schools and Appropriations Committees that IEBN be expanded promptly.



Anna Smith of Clarinda, a teacher at Iowa Western Community college, told the House Schools committee: "We'd like to be a part of Iowa instead of Nebraska. Our children get educational television from Lincoln, Nebraska, and they think Lincoln is the capital of Iowa. What do we do to bring educational television to Southwest Iowa?"

"Southwest Iowa is better off than we are," suggested Representative John Mendenhall of New Albin. "We can't get educational television from either Minnesota or Wisconsin."

In the end, the delegations proved that pressure from the people is productive. They persuaded the legislature to put up funds to expand the network.

*Penal Code:* It is heartening to see that an extensive study of proposals "to revise the penal code, and penal reform, is under way in this body . . . much can be done to improve our system to condition transgressors for return to society." The Governor said he still believes the regional jail concept is right.

*No-Fault Insurance:* The legislative study committee on this subject will await analysis of the experience of other states before recommending a change in Iowa laws. In the absence of legislative action at this session, then, the Governor expressed the hope that insurance companies themselves would move in this area.

His program launched, Governor Ray philoso-

phized on the good life in Iowa. In his travels around the state, he said, he had observed "a healthy change in attitude toward this very special place we call Iowa." Iowans no longer underrate themselves and their state. This is not to say "we are free of problems and difficulties for we are not. But we still have a society with the capacity to deal with them.

"Professor Laurence Lafore, a newcomer to our state, who wrote the article in *Harper's Magazine*, that has been widely circulated across the nation, expressed so well a feeling of Iowa when he said: 'Iowa is a unit of consciousness; it has a culture of its own' . . . then he added: 'Nobody in Iowa has any sense of being anybody's social inferior.' To this I would add: 'Iowa is a place where everybody is somebody.' "

The Governor concluded:

"It has been said that Iowa is a wise partnership of land and people, a place for human beings to live as well as to exist. And that is what Iowa is all about.

"In the days of this session and in the days beyond, I know that we, too, will strive to work together in a like partnership to continue building here in Iowa the good society. And that is what Iowa is all about."