

Inaugural Address of Governor Henry Drury Hatfield

March 4, 1913

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Before proceeding to the qualification that the Constitution prescribes for the chief executive, I want to express my deep sense of appreciation of the confidence reposed in me by a majority of the voters of this state - the commonwealth of which I have the honor of being a native son.

The campaign that resulted in my election was peculiarly one of vilification and misrepresentation not only on the part of my opponent but on the part of some who claim to belong to the party of which I have the proud distinction of being a member. I am especially gratified that similar tactics were not indulged in by me or by my supporters.

Issues and principles were advocated and promises were made that, if I should be elected, the right of a majority of the people to rule would be preserved, and that, so far as was within my power, I would use my best efforts to guarantee the exercise of their deliberate judgment in controlling their government, and those representing it, and assuring the people political, social and industrial justice.

I shall strive to conduct my administration in a way that will meet with the approval of the great masses of the people and not the politicians. I am a Republican, believing, as all well-thinking Republicans do, in the onward and upward trend of the progressive principles that have marked our party's achievements since its inspiration by Lincoln.

In the patronage of my administration the representatives of my own party shall have first consideration, but the execution of the trust delegated to me will be fairly and impartially meted out. No party, class nor creed shall have special consideration. All shall be treated alike. Careful consideration will be shown to all in the dispatch of the public business, with special favors to none.

Our state, situated as it is in one of the richest mineral zones in the world - outside of the precious mineral class - contains more bituminous coal than Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia combined, and ranks second in coal production but thirty-fourth among the states in the value of its manufactured products. It is a daily occurrence that a great bulk of raw material, shipped out of the state, is returned from the manufacturers of other states to be sold to our citizens after having been converted into finished products. Again, we see train-loads of our coking and by-product coal shipped into other states to supply the great iron and steel industries, at prices that are not remunerative to our operators, and at the same time fixing a standard of wages for the miner that is an injustice to him, by reason of the long railroad haul to market.

Statistics will show that the coal industry of this state is anything but prosperous under present conditions. As a matter of demonstration, the United States government reports will show that Illinois coal is twenty per cent inferior in grade to West Virginia coal, yet in 1910 Illinois received \$1.14 per ton for her coal while West Virginia received only 92 cents per ton. What does this indicate? Simply that Illinois has no long railroad haul, and, again, that she has

factories to consume her own coal. The bulk of coal consumed in West Virginia is utilized by locomotives in carrying the raw material from our state to the manufactories of other states. This is strong language to use, nevertheless it is true.

Our state is the possessor of more than 300,000,000 tons of excellent iron ore. In petroleum we are fifth in order of production but first in quality; and as to natural gas, after wasting quantities amounting to many millions in value, we produce for the market more than one-third as much as all the other states in the Union. We have limestone of the best quality in unlimited quantities which is adaptable to any purpose for which lime can be utilized. As to clays and shales for making brick and tile, we have them in quantities beyond estimation. In glass sands there is no limit to quantity and nothing superior in quality.

The ruthless destruction of one of the greatest forests in the world has taken place within our state. It has been reduced from its original acreage of fifteen and three-fourths millions to less than a million and a half.

But rich as we are as West Virginians in our natural resources, it is indeed lamentable to relate that more than eighty per cent of our fuel and raw material is utilized outside the state. If this condition is left unchecked, what will be the ultimate result to the state and its citizens? What are we going to do? Are we to permit this injustice to go on without any restraint until it is too late? I wish to say that if my efforts can accomplish anything, these conditions shall not endure. It seems to me that all good citizens should be willing to enthusiastically join hands and turn the channels of this great natural wealth into a new channel that will enrich our own people instead of impoverishing them.

I appeal to the entire citizenship for assistance in making our mountain state - unsurpassed in natural wealth by any other state in the Union - an empire of industry of the finished products class, in which we will convert the raw material into products of that character for the markets of the world.

I solicit the support of the good women of West Virginia; and permit me to say right here that I am an advocate of woman suffrage and feel that the time is near at hand when women will be accorded the same privileges at the ballot box in West Virginia that male voters have today. I am looking to the women for assistance in my many responsibilities for civic betterment, knowing that the principle is in accord with the upward trend of all nations.

The rapid evolution that has been developing in the minds of the people cannot help but strike us very forcibly. We are continually reminded of the fact that political parties are not the ultimate force in the conduct of governmental affairs. Behind and above them stand the people, who insist that certain inherent principles shall have more consideration than has been given by those who have been in control of the destinies of political parties in the past.

The great tendency of the American people today is more toward constructive socialism than ever before. Public opinion is the mind and conscience of the whole nation, and the parties and their representatives, to a great extent, have not kept inviolate the promises made by them. The unrest that exists today is directly traceable to this fact.

In my campaign I presented to the people a summary of promises and principles that will be made good. A part of them have been enacted into law by the recent Legislature, under the administration of my distinguished and worthy predecessor, William B. Glasscock, who, as an executive, has been faithful, zealous and true to every duty imposed upon him by his official position. His keen sense of justice, equity and fair play toward all men struck me very forcibly during my association with him while I was a member of the State Senate, and later as President of that body.

West Virginia is blessed with the most picturesque landscape and gorgeous mountain scenery that can be found anywhere in the world. I confidently look forward to the time when we shall have good macadam roads traversing every section, and predict that the time will come when our mountains and valleys will be filled with admiring tourists from everywhere. The new road laws, that had my personal attention, will be given much consideration during my administration. The road department will be connected with our university in such a way that it will give university students in the engineering department the advantages of practical training in such a capacity as has never been afforded them heretofore.

The workmen's compensation act was a promise made and fulfilled, as well as the utilities commission act. This is the beginning of better conditions and more consideration for the citizenship of our state.

Conservation of our natural water power must be had. The repeal of the act of 1907, by the legislature, affecting this important subject, is to be commended. I am not sufficiently informed on the subject matter of the water power bill passed at the recent session of the legislature to know whether it will fully reach the demands and commendation of the people, but there is one thing that I do know: the act leaves this important subject in the grasp of the board of public works, who can prevent any injustice being done until proper legislation can be had. The people may be assured that this important subject shall have my immediate consideration, and no effort will be spared by me until our natural water powers are properly protected. This is a most vital subject and one that promises to play an important part in the future of the state if properly guarded and conserved.

A primary election law, a corrupt practices act, a county salary law, legislation economizing the running of the state government, together with the adjustment of taxation and finance, in an equitable way, will come in the no distant future, after a full and free discussion has been had at an extra session of the legislature, and after the plans have been carefully worked out, taking the business and working people alike into our confidence.

I am not in favor of large commissions to administer the laws, but feel that better results are obtained where power is concentrated so that responsibility cannot be evaded. In the compensation and utility acts I recommended a commission of three instead of six for the administration of those important measures.

Our method of enacting laws should be changed. We should have an official draughtsman for legislative enactments. This appointee could be designated, if the legislature chose to do so, by the joint assembly, and when this official draughtsman is not busily engaged in duties pertaining

to the legislature, he could be appointed by the chief executive as the head of some other department of the state, such as archives and history. It is not the number of divisions of representatives in office that accomplish the best results; on the contrary it is concentration under one executive head who should be surrounded by competent assistants.

There is no reason why we cannot dispense with the engrossing and enrolling of legislative bills and other unnecessary, cumbersome details that are now essential to the passage of an act by the legislature. It could be arranged that the printed bill, pertaining to any subject, could be permitted to become the official act of the legislature, with a materially reduced expenditure to the state. After a bill has been amended on second reading the type used in printing it could be changed to conform with the amendments, and the same printed bill could then be made to represent the engrossed and enrolled bills, leaving the forms that printed the original bill intact, after their correction to conform with the amendments made by the legislature. This same printed bill could then be presented to the governor, after its passage by both houses, for his signature. With the adoption of this scheme and with the type still standing from which the original bill was printed for the consideration of the legislature and the public, the people could have the advantage of advance copies of the acts passed by the legislature within twenty-four hours after their passage. By this method legislation would be simplified and a considerable amount of money saved to the state.

As a member of the State Senate in 1909 I made a special effort to prevent the lavish expenditure of money in the employment of unnecessary attaches. In 1911 the Senate broke the record in the reduction of expenditures and I was hopeful that at the late regular session the legislature would pass a bill properly governing the employment of attaches and prevent the waste of money that has heretofore been indulged in by the representatives of both parties.

Our educational department has made wonderful strides. The state superintendent is to be commended for his excellent work. Our school laws are bunglesome and should be rewritten and the school system placed on a business like basis. The state Superintendent very much favors a proposition of this kind. I shall go into this matter in detail in the near future. The laws should be so amended that poor school districts will have the same opportunities as those more fortunately and favorably located in industrial sections or along the lines of railroad. By this re-arrangement the boys and girls of the rural sections would have the same advantages of high schools that the boys and girls of more favored sections have.

Court decisions are slow and the proceedings are cumbersome. If our constitution will permit it, steps should be taken to modify and simplify court procedure in order that equity and justice can be had within a reasonable time but if the constitution will not permit of this arrangement, it should be amended, with the idea of readjusting the courts so as to guarantee the rapid dispatch of business coming before them for adjudication.

A business commission should be created from the legislative body, to act with the governor, for the purpose of inquiring into the problems of state affairs, and to prepare practical data from which the legislature, when it meets, could obtain valuable information. If a plan like this should be adopted, it would guarantee more equitable and uniform laws and eliminate immature

legislation that can only be perfected by amendments at each succeeding legislative session; whereas, if maturely considered, primarily, as I suggest, the necessity of amending laws would be practically obviated.

Our state should be run like a big business institution. I shall require a monthly report from all my appointees. No executive can keep in touch with an organized business of any magnitude unless he be frequently informed as to the condition of the different departments for which he is responsible. I am willing to take the responsibility; but when I do this I must have loyal and good support from my appointees, as well as promptness in response to directions from the executive. When I am supported loyally by my cabinet of officials, the public will be guaranteed a more satisfactory and business-like administration, conducted on an economic basis, than it otherwise could possibly have.

In the matter of progress we must place our state where she rightfully belongs as a peer of any other state in the Union.

After careful and mature consideration, the patronage of my administration will be distributed in a geographical way so as to give consideration to all alike; but my appointees must understand that all of them must work and give good account of their stewardship and service if they expect to remain in the employment of the state during my term as governor.

I shall dedicate the next four years of my life to West Virginia as its chief executive, with one object in view, and that is, that in my declining years I may have the pleasure of receiving the commendation and blessing of the citizenship of my native commonwealth; and that my efforts during my administration may be impressed upon the people as a sincere, earnest endeavor upon my part. If I should be able to reach this goal I shall feel amply repaid for the efforts that I shall have made.

Now, invoking the blessing of Almighty God upon all our people, in private and public acts, I am ready to take upon myself the oath of office and assume the responsibilities of chief executive of the state.