

Final Draft

1979 Inaugural Address

State of Minnesota

Governor Albert H. Quie

Mr. President, Madam Secretary, Mr. Chief Justice, Associate Justices, Members of the 71st Minnesota State Legislature, Fellow Constitutional Officers, distinguished guests, good friends and neighbors.

Before I begin my formal remarks, I would like to express a personal comment.

The seven weeks between the election and the beginning of the term of a new governor are a hectic time. The pressures of the transition period have been greatly eased for me and my staff by the excellent cooperation we have received from Governor Perpich, his office staff and his agency directors. For this thoughtfulness, I am grateful.

I am also indebted to former Governors Wendell Anderson, Harold LeVander and Elmer L. Andersen for the counsel they have given me. Finally, I owe a great deal to my transition staff, many of them volunteers, who have spent some long hours to make sure the necessary work of transition was done. To all of you who have helped me, I express my deep appreciation.

I am also deeply appreciative of your invitation to proceed with this address before a joint session of the legislature even though the House has not yet completed its organizational tasks.

We come together today with a clear understanding of the people's expectations of us. Don't let anyone tell you that we are confused -- that the mandate is not clear. We understand that no matter how America changes its form, what the spirit longs for, remains. We have entered a period of unprecedented wealth and find it is not enough. We have employed extraordinary technological proficiency and found that it was not enough.

We now know as never before that no nation, no state, no people can achieve greatness unless they believe in something -- something that touches the spirit. For 200 years we have held the conviction that each person should be free -- free to make the choices that affect that person -- free and able to participate in government's decision, that every person should live in dignity and that every individual ought to be able to fulfill the promise that is in him or her. But though we have agreed on these ideals for over two centuries, we have not been true to them.

We did not free the slaves until 1863.

We did not allow women to vote until 1920.

We did not pass civil rights legislation until the 1960's.

And so I come to you today with no new pronouncements, no clever twists, but a plea that we rededicate ourselves to our basic values. We must build these values through our legislative action and our budget decisions. This is the great work of this generation as it has been the work of our forefathers and will be the work of our children -- to be true to the commitment to build through a just, self governing society.

Let me illustrate how this overriding responsibility runs through eight of the major issues before us.

Taxes

Our people want a greater independence, a greater voice in making their own economic decisions. They make a compelling case for tax relief. Minnesota has one of the highest income taxes in the nation. And because of the continued impact of its progressive nature and inflation, for every 10% increase in personal income, taxpayers pay 14% more in income taxes.

Our first responsibility is to provide permanent tax relief for our people by indexing inflation out of our income taxes. We must take away government's ability to profit at taxpayers expense through inflationary dollars which push them into higher tax brackets. After we index taxes it will no longer be possible for government to easily initiate new programs or to freely expand old programs by the inflation "bonus". After we index

taxes then elected government officials will have to vote for any additional taxes and be willing to let the people judge that vote. That's the way tax decisions should be made under our democratic system.

Another way the citizens can control government is to make it more difficult to raise taxes. Therefore, I propose two constitutional amendments - one amendment will require 60% vote of approval before any tax increase can be put into effect - the second amendment will limit the increase in state government spending to the amount of personal income increase. But make no mistake. The primary commitment I have to the people of Minnesota is to reduce taxes. I proposed a 10% individual income tax cut in my campaign. I was elected - as many of you were - with a promise of a tax cut. The budget I will present to you in three weeks will provide for such a 10% tax cut. Because this issue is of paramount concern, I want to work with you in the next few weeks to develop a sound tax proposal. These recommendations will then be presented in a special message on taxes for your consideration.

While I understand the interest in seeing the full details of such a plan now, I would rather take the time to build with you the best tax reduction program possible.

For the final test of our responsiveness to the people's call for tax reduction is not what we say in the first week in January, but what we have produced by the last week in May.

Education

By the last week in May I hope we will have made great strides in improving the quality of education. Education is worthy of its name when the individual is enhanced. Therefore, the impact of my educational proposals hopefully will recognize each child's uniqueness by increasing individualized instruction, expanding local decision making and encouraging parental involvement.

The education of our children has always been a chief legislative concern for me. I believe it remains one of our people's chief legislative concerns.

In a recent poll 62% of the citizens of Minnesota indicated they did not want a tax cut if it meant a reduction in support for our children's education. This positive response to education is expressed despite declining enrollments.

For the people realize that while enrollment is declining, the population of the state is not. This means that if we merely continue present state spending for education in constant dollars -- more is available per child.

Where is the greatest need? I believe it is at the kindergarten through third grade level where the average class size is 24 to 1 and where the basic learning skills are taught. Although research does not show that simply reducing class size will improve the quality of learning, there are some points that stand out:

One -- a reduction in class size has the greatest impact in kindergarten through third grade.

Two -- a reduction in class size has more impact when accompanied by inservice training for teachers/so that they can adapt their methods to provide more individualized attention.

Three -- whenever parents are involved in the early grades, student achievement is accelerated and retained.

Does this mean that parents ought to spend more time in the classroom? Not necessarily, although parents should always be welcome. I believe however, it means that teachers ought to spend some time in their students' homes with the parents. I will propose legislation to help achieve that end.

In addition, my budget will provide for inservice training to elementary school teachers. Furthermore, the budget will make money available to local schools so they may reduce class size in the early grades. In such a manner, the state can provide the resources to enable local communities to make their own best decision.

For it is my philosophy gained through experience as a school board member, a former state legislator, and a congressman that education is a state responsibility, a local function, and a federal interest. You who have worked hard to make Minnesota assume its responsibility in financing education are to be commended.

Women and Special Human Needs

Our people are concerned about children, but also about women and other groups with particular human needs. I am deeply concerned that women in Minnesota have the opportunity to pursue the career of their choice, whether it be in the home, in the community in business or government.

For those women who choose to participate in government, I want to make state service an attractive work place. As a major employer, I want to recruit interested women into public service. So far, we've done fairly well. Of the 17 members of my professional office staff, 8 are women and 9 are men. A woman is responsible for overseeing the appointments to advisory boards and commissions and a woman will be in charge of the State Department of Personnel. The recruitment process we are using for the selection of department heads is designed to encourage women, minorities, and handicapped to apply. And I will be asking all my department heads to staff their departments with able, competent people. To make state service an attractive workplace I shall encourage the use of full-time and part-time options.

And as one responsible for making legislative recommendations, I would urge you to consider carefully the need to eliminate discrimination in all forms. I particularly want to mention today that I have provided for the full funding of the program to aid battered women. We simply cannot overlook the desperate needs of a woman and children threatened by family violence.

I have spent considerable time talking about women but we must also be mindful of the needs of the minorities, the poor, the handicapped, the elderly. I want to reassure all citizens of Minnesota that our budget constraints will not jeopardize their well-being.

And I emphasize that the legislation I shall recommend shall come out of this philosophy:

We must involve the disadvantaged in the building of advantaged communities and neighborhoods. Each individual is of infinite worth, a creation of God. Each of us should have the opportunity to tap our potential as human beings.

Thomas Carlyle in his classic, "The Great Ideas of Western Man" stated it well:

"Let each become all that he was created capable of being: expand, if possible, to his full growth; and show himself at length in his own shape and stature, be these what they may."

Job Climate

Another responsibility we share together is to provide an environment in which jobs can be generated and maintained. If we want to reinforce the individuals independence, the state must encourage the creation of jobs. Historically, our state has withered economic storms because we have had a diversified job market. We must continue to encourage the creation of new jobs, and we must free working people from the fear that jobs may suddenly disappear. We must attract women, the young, minorities, the elderly, the poor and the handicapped. We must keep the skilled and talented people already established in Minnesota jobs, by keeping business economically competitive with other states. And we must work closely with the leaders of both business and labor to assure a competitive work force. This also means that we should make certain in doing this, that the working man and woman not lose any of the hard fought benefits they have already achieved.

Perhaps the major barrier to doing this has been the attitude state government sometimes expresses toward private enterprise. My tax message will reflect my concern for stimulating the private

sector - and my administration of the Executive Branch of state government will monitor closely the impact, cost and necessity of government regulations.

Agriculture

Agriculture is Minnesota's most important private business. During 1977, Minnesota's farmers produced agricultural products worth \$5.4 billion.

Modern science and technology have enabled our farmers to continually produce more, so that Americans spend a lower portion of their income for food than any other people. The United States is the world's largest exporter of food. Minnesota's production is of utmost importance to a world which is expected to double its population to 8 billion people in 30 years.

Minnesota needs the technology and talents of large agri-business to continue supplying world needs.

But certainly as important, are the smaller family farms of Minnesota. We cannot afford to lose the economic, social and moral values that family farm life give to our rural communities and our state.

I am committed to assist farmers. I express that commitment in selecting as Commissioner of Agriculture, a working farmer, who has

grassroots knowledge of the family farm, farm organizations, agri-business and an appreciation of the problems farmers face. I will also support legislation for farmers to compete on an equal basis with the state for acquisition of abandoned railroad rights-of-way. Farmers think present trespass regulations do not properly define agricultural land. I will support legislation that will better identify and protect cultivated lands.

I grew up on a family farm - this was my life until my election to Congress. The knowledge and understanding of life I absorbed, the skills I acquired, the discipline I learned, the shared concerns of people for one another I observed, the family unity I was a part of and the love of land and nature that became a part of me made it one of the most important experiences in my life.

Just as we can affirm and support agri-business enterprises and family farms, we also can understand, encourage and support other farm life styles that serve the needs of our rural communities.

One Minnesota firm is willing to invest a considerable sum to create a new family farm concept -- small acreage, intensive cultivation, high technology, low energy consumption and modest capital requirement.

That this initiative comes from the private sector appeals to me. We have learned that dumping societal problems on government can be costly and unsuccessful. That must change. Minnesota can lead the way to encourage private initiative and cooperation in meeting society's challenges.

Energy

Another major concern Minnesotans face is guaranteeing a low cost, uninterrupted supply of energy. We know Minnesota is an energy dependent state producing only 2/10ths of 1% of the energy we consume. We have learned that Canada says that after 1981 her exports of crude oil may be cut off. Canadian crude oil presently supplies 65% of Minnesota's crude oil needs. We project that our natural gas supply which also comes from other states, is expected to shrink in less than 20 years to less than 1/3 of our present supply. We know that everyone wants the economic opportunities and personal comforts which depend upon energy, and yet no one wants a transmission line, a power plant or a pipeline as a neighbor. Therefore, there is no area in which the process of resolving public policy issues is more critical than in energy. We need to review the effectiveness of our decision making process. We cannot hurry into a premature, ill-conceived master plan which is not responsive to the needs of the people or which has been developed without the consultation of the people.

Conservation

We must take seriously the conservation of energy. Also, we must develop alternative sources of energy so that we can provide a more stable supply. Therefore, we need to explore the possibility of peat (keeping in mind the serious environmental questions that must be resolved), support the development of solar energy through tax credit legislation which I will submit to you and study the feasibility of district heating.

Environment

One cannot speak of energy without considering the question of the environment.

Because I am so concerned with a variety of land use and water issues that confront Minnesota, I want to devote a special message to environment. I want to be especially responsive to the needs of the people in northeast Minnesota who have suffered great uncertainty about the future of their lands, their waters and their livelihoods.

Urban Policies

I also want to devote a special message to the question of urban affairs. Minnesota does not have, but genuinely needs a coherent urban policy; one that views cities not as social laboratories but as neighborhoods in which people live. (PAUSE)

For the last several minutes I have been speaking of my concerns to have government reflect on sustaining values in the areas of taxes, education, opportunity for women and special human needs, job climate, energy, agriculture, environment, and urban policies.

But our people are not just interested in what government does, but how government works. They believe state government is out of touch. They believe laws are passed and regulations adopted with little appreciation for their local problems. Ironically, this frustration with government is coming at a time when Minnesota has made great strides in opening up government. But the people are saying, "We not only want to watch what happens, we want to participate in it. We want a greater voice." We can provide people with more tools to make self government work. One tool is to allow our citizens to intitiate legislation. Another tool is to allow citizens to hold a referendum on present legislation. Usually there is interwoven into legislative decisions, public discussion and dialogue which permits legislators to respond to the public will. Occasionally, the process breaks down and the public will is not heeded or is misjudged. Initiative and referendum are safety valves that enable people to intervene if they believe government has made a serious mistake -- a mistake that jeopardizes them and the local institutions they value most highly. I ask that we provide our people with the important instruments.

The people want a greater voice in the selection of government personnel. Recognizing this, I have pledged to establish a Judicial Nominating Commission to seek out and recommend to me the finest available people to serve as our trial judges. The selection of persons of outstanding merit and unquestioned integrity will insure that our courts have the continued respect of the people.

We can in this session respond fully to the people's will. A healthy dialogue among us is imperative. I read in the newspaper that Senator Coleman was quoted as saying "The DFL doesn't have any corner on the truth" I can tell you the govenor doesn't either. All of us can and should learn from each other. I look forward to our deliberations.

In closing I am reminded that our first territorial Governor, Alexander Ramsey summarized his goals for the legislative assembly of 1849. When Govenor Luther Youngdahl was inaugurated one hundred years later on January 16, 1949, he quoted Governor Ramsey. The statement is as true in 1979 as it was in 1949 or 1849. I will to restate them to conclude my own remarks:

"I would advise, therefore, that your legislation should be such - as will guard equally, the rights of labor and the rights of property, without running into ultraisms on either hand - as will recognize no social distinctions, except those which merit and knowledge, religion and morals, unavoidably create - as will repress crime, encourage virtue, give free scope to enterprise and industry - as will promptly, and without delay, administer to and supply all the legitimate wants of the people - laws in a word, in the formation of which will be kept steadily in view of the truth, that this Territory is destined to be a great State, rivalling in population, wealth and energy, her sisters of the Union; and that, consequently, all laws not merely local in their objects, should be framed for the future as well as the present....."

The state of the people -- that is our charge, our concern, our challenge. Let us now be about the people's business!