

# INAUGURAL ADDRESS

of

Governor Karl F. Rolvaag



To the Legislature of Minnesota

Monday, April 1, 1963

St. Paul, Minnesota

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STATE OF MINNESOTA

*the 63rd Legislature*

**INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF GOVERNOR KARL F. ROLVAAG,  
DELIVERED AT A JOINT SESSION OF THE  
MINNESOTA STATE LEGISLATURE  
AT 12:00 NOON MONDAY, APRIL 1, 1963**

*49p.*

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, and Members of the 63rd  
Session of the Legislature of the State of Minnesota:

We gather today under the most unusual circumstances in the 105-year-old history of our State. It is, indeed, one of the most exceptional meetings in the annals of our Federal Republic!

The anguish that has been Minnesota's---the uncertainties which have been ours---have not been experienced previously in the history of our nation. It is true, there have been longer election contests; but none has strained the body politic such as that begun November 6, 1962, nearly five long and difficult months ago.

Never have our democratic processes been put to such strain, never have two great political parties been put to such stress.

Commendations are in order to a number of individual Minnesotans---and Minnesota institutions---for the manner in which they have responded during these weeks of quandry and crisis.

First of all, I would like to pay a particular tribute to the former Governor, Elmer Andersen, for his conduct during these last few weeks. Certainly, those weeks must have contained an agony which only he can measure and describe. Mr. Andersen withstood the test well.

Once again, I want to express my personal wish, for him and his family, for health and happiness in the future.

Second, I should express to you, the members of the 63rd Session of the Legislature, my sympathy and understanding of your difficult position during these indecisive weeks. Your lot has not been an easy one. Legislative leadership is, under the most favorable circumstances, perplexing. But you have proceeded with deliberation in considering the many problems besetting our State, its institutions, and its citizens.

During the several years I was honored to serve as President of the Senate, it was my good fortune to become well acquainted with the legislative process, as well as the leadership of both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

I do not concur in all that you have done, but I respect your right to hold your own views. There is much room for honest disagreement, within the framework of Government, by those who seek to resolve the complexities of modern society.

Third, commendations are most certainly in order for Minnesota's judicial system for the strength displayed during the troubled period since last November 6th. Both the Supreme Court and the Lower Courts have dealt with every challenge systematically, methodically, and expeditiously. At times tempers have frayed but our Courts have responded with integrity and conduct reflecting the highest and best traditions of a noble profession.

On June 3, almost 105 years ago, Governor Henry Sibley, in his first message to the Legislature, said, "Having been elected to the position of Chief Magistrate of the new State of Minnesota, I enter upon the discharge

of the duties devolving upon me, with much diffidence of my own abilities, but with a full consciousness that they will be honestly performed. Expecting to be held to a rigid accountability for the course of my administration, I shall exact from those officials for whose action I may be in any manner responsible, an equally strict execution of the trusts that may be imposed upon them." Governor Sibley continued, "I have no object and no interests which are not inseparably bound up with the welfare of the State, and it is my highest ambition so to conduct her public affairs, that, when my official term shall expire, there will be found no blot on her escutcheon, and no departure for which I can be made justly responsible, from those principles of integrity and sound democratic policy, which have been the means, under Providence, of placing the American Union, in the high position it now holds in the estimation of the world."

Today, on the 1st day of April, 1963, before this Joint Session of the 63rd Session of our Minnesota Legislature, I take the same pledge as did Governor Sibley.

Being Governor of this State has been a most solemn and a most awesome responsibility for all who have held this high honor.

In the unquestionably unique situation facing us today, it is incumbent upon us to examine the questions, "Where do we stand?" -- "Whither do we go?"

A legitimate government has existed in our State for the past five months. I do not believe that there can be any serious question but that the administration, incumbent during this critical period, has left its mark on Government--its legislation and operation--for at least the next two years and perhaps much longer.

Operating concurrently, and largely cooperatively, with the previous administration has been this Legislature, led by members generally adhering to a political party and philosophy more conservative than mine.

Major legislation has already emerged. For example, a taconite statute, agreeable to most, and an amendment, agreeable to many, have issued from this legislature. This has largely removed this delicate and complex matter from the partisan political arena.

Further, complex programs and budgets have been scrutinized and studied rigorously and carefully. Countless hours of hearings already have been held on major departmental proposals.

For some time, it has been the expressed consensus, by knowledgeable observers of this Session, that the sands in the hour glass are running out. Literally hundreds of bills have been prepared, processed and are poised for passage. Without question, this 63rd Session of the Legislature of the State of Minnesota is moving rapidly toward adjournment---perhaps in a matter of weeks.

I find myself in the dilemma of desiring to compliment the members of this joint convention on their striving to complete, rapidly and judiciously, the State's business. On the other hand, I would like nothing better than to turn back the clock and begin again. Of course I know that this is a practical impossibility.

There seems to be only one way to proceed in the face of these circumstances: I intend to cooperate fully, yet act firmly. I intend to use all the resources of my Office to recommend, in the time left, such positive programs as I deem proper and necessary for the further development of our State.

Eight months ago, almost to this day, I presented an extensive outline of a comprehensive program for promoting the growth potential of our vast human and natural resources. This program was designed with the idea that it be fully developed and implemented over a ten-year period. I designated this intensive, 10-year effort to realize our State's great potential as a "Full Employment of Resources" program.

At the time I first made this proposal, I believed that positive action to implement it was of extreme urgency. As I survey the situation facing our State today, that feeling has intensified.

Allow me to touch, but briefly, on some of the highlights of this comprehensive program for Minnesota growth and development. It includes proposals for progress in the areas of Natural Resources: Lake and Stream improvement, Improved Game and Fish habitat, Forests and Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Development, and establishment of a Resort Development Agency for expansion of our resort industry.

Special emphasis in this program is placed upon uplifting the economic level of Northeastern Minnesota but this is not its only goal. Among the recommendations is the creation of a Mineral Redevelopment Authority, patterned after the familiar Urban Redevelopment Authority. The MRA would be established to help resolve the problem of combining unused or diverse ownership of potentially productive mineral lands so they may be beneficially developed by private industry and provide further economic activity.

In addition, the program provides for increased emphasis on the resources available through the Area Redevelopment Act to provide step by step diversification of business and industry throughout the affected areas of our State.

A Full Employment of Resources program would provide for the establishment of a full-time staff representative of State Government in Washington. This representative would aid and advise in obtaining Government contracts for small business throughout the State. Federal Legislation provides specific methods by which contracts may be set aside for businesses located in areas of under-employment and unemployment. This method of developing new business has been successfully employed by Michigan, New Jersey, and the cities of San Francisco and New York.

Among other recommendations necessary to assist Northeastern Minnesota, are adequate funds for the Attorney General to fight the discriminatory freight rates which have helped keep an economic stranglehold on the area for decades; increased funds for promoting and stimulating increased trade activity at the Duluth Port; badly needed appropriations to expand the physical plant and upgrade curriculum at the University in Duluth. Such appropriations are necessary to meet the growing needs of the community and the infant electronics industry in Northeastern Minnesota.

The Full Employment of Resources program outlines the need for further developing the Junior College system to meet the demands certain to be placed upon an already over-burdened system of higher education. These demands must be met to accommodate the avalanche of students and the requirements of our modern industrial complexes.

I believe that each and all of the proposals contained in the 10-year Full Employment of Resources program merit your most serious consideration. This program will benefit not only the currently under-employed areas of our State, but all of our people.

Many of these recommendations and proposals are already before you, incorporated in many bills submitted by various authors, Liberals and Conservatives.

Within this week I shall submit to you further detailed and specific proposals in this area as well as several others. Specific messages on these other subjects will be forthcoming with as much dispatch as humanly possible.

It is extremely unfortunate that I must forego, at this time, a discussion of the all-important subject of the budget for the coming biennium. At this late date of the Session, little can be done to cause major revisions. But I am concerned that revenues and appropriations shall be in balance.

I was shocked and dismayed last week, after taking office, to learn that current revenue estimates were not available, and may not be for several days to come!

The Tax Commissioner has informed me that he must await the release of estimates on the Gross National Product from the Federal Government before he can suggest whether we will have \$86, \$90, or \$100 Million of economic growth.

If revenue estimates are not forthcoming from the proper and usual source within the Executive Branch this week, we shall have to turn to other areas for estimates and information, perhaps to areas where we will receive more willing co-operation.

Prudent and sound fiscal management of our state programs should not lead us to depend upon a possible Federal tax cut - in unpredictable amounts - at an unknown date in the hazy and dim future.

In these concluding weeks of this Legislative session, as we wrestle with what often seems to be the mundane and commonplace, let us not forget that in these complicated and complex years, the world about us changes with almost frightening frequency.

In our society, we are a part of the total and the whole. We cannot isolate ourselves in a world in which it has been said that, "Time, the simple mathematical device by which men measure their days, has vanished."

Colonel John Glenn, the American astronaut, pin-pointed the problem when he remarked that in a space of time of less than five hours he had witnessed and experienced three sunsets, three dawns, three Wednesdays and four Tuesdays!

Time indeed, as a measurement of our days and years, has vanished! To compound our problems, all this has happened in a generation which is only once removed from the sod hut and the ox-drawn prairie schooner, from the hardy pioneer who cleared our forests and established our state.

Yet, as legislators and executives, we are charged by our constitution with the solemn obligation to deal promptly, effectively, intelligently, and perhaps most importantly democratically with the social consequences of the explosive growth of science.

If we and our institutions are to survive, the addition of knowledge in a particular discipline must be applied in a practical way to the entire fabric of the structure of our economy and to our culture.

With proper application and understanding of our new knowledge we have the means with which to defeat man's ancient enemies - the afflictions of pain and poverty, the afflictions of ignorance and illiteracy, the afflictions of unemployment and under-employment, the afflictions of fright and fear.

In the discharge of our responsibilities, we must demonstrate the same raw courage of our pioneering grandfathers who settled the frontier, the same inventiveness, the same resolute determination to build.

We surely cannot confess that we are less resolute, less capable of meeting our opportunities and our challenges.

Men who confess their fear of government should take the next logical step and confess themselves afraid to govern, confess themselves ill-equipped in the face of tough, difficult decisions grown men and women must make in the interests of society.

Our problems are real, but they reflect a healthy growth and change. Those afraid of change are not equipped to govern.

Let us resolve on this day and in this hour that we shall conduct ourselves in such a fashion that when future generations examine their heritage - their institutions of law and justice, their institutions of government, their institutions of aid, their institutions of learning - they will say of the men and women of Minnesota in 1963. "there were Giants in the Earth in those days."