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STATEMENT

BY

GOVERNOR WENDELL R. ANDERSON

TO THE

67TH SESSION

OF THE

MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE

MAY 4, 1971

THANK YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO HEAR ME TODAY.

I ASKED TO ADDRESS A JOINT SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE TODAY, BUT MY REQUEST WAS DENIED.

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SAID IT WOULD SERVE NO USEFUL PURPOSE, THAT I WAS TRYING TO PRESSURE THE LEGISLATURE. PART OF MY JOB AS GOVERNOR IS TO PRESENT AND FIGHT FOR A PROGRAM THAT SERVES THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE. IF THAT IS PRESSURE, HE IS RIGHT. I AM TRYING TO PRESSURE THE LEGISLATURE.

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY CHAIRMAN CHARGED THAT I WAS REALLY TRYING TO SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE, AND NOT ONLY TO THE SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES. I PLEAD GUILTY. OF COURSE I WANTED TO SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE. I HAVE DONE THAT FOR FOUR MONTHS, ALL OVER THIS STATE.

I AM SPEAKING TO THE PEOPLE TODAY AND I WILL CONTINUE TO SPEAK TO THEM IN THE DAYS AHEAD--TO FOCUS PUBLIC ATTENTION AND CONCERN ON UNMET NEEDS--ON FAILURES. I HOPE THE PEOPLE WILL HEAR ME TODAY. I HOPE THEY WILL TALK TO THEIR LOCAL LEGISLATORS, AND WRITE TO THEM. I HOPE THE PEOPLE WILL LET THEIR LEGISLATORS KNOW THAT THEY ARE WATCHING AND WAITING.

SOME CALL THAT "PRESSURE"--AND RESIST IT. I WELCOME SUCH PRESSURE. I ENCOURAGE IT. IT'S DESPERATELY NEEDED.

IF THIS SESSION ADJOURNED TODAY, IT WOULD BE ALMOST COMPLETELY VOID OF PROGRAMS TO MEET THE NEEDS AND WISHES OF THE PEOPLE OF OUR STATE.

WHERE ARE THE BILLS THAT HELP PEOPLE?

WHERE ARE THE BILLS THAT MAKE OUR GOVERNMENT MORE RESPONSIVE, THE BILLS THAT PROVE OUR SYSTEM WORKS?

WHY IS IT THAT--

--A BILL TO GIVE LIMITED POWER TO CONDEMN LAND FOR PARKS IS FLOUNDERING, BUT A BILL GIVING THE PIPELINE INDUSTRY GREAT POWERS OF CONDEMNATION PASSES EASILY.

--BETTER HEALTH CARE IN MINNESOTA IS NOT ONE STEP FURTHER ALONG THE ROAD, BUT A BILL ALLOWING MINORS TO PLAY MUSIC IN BARS IS READY FOR PASSAGE.

--A PROGRAM FOR ACTION ON DRUG ABUSE HAS NOT PASSED, BUT IT IS ALL RIGHT NOW TO DRINK IN PUBLIC BARS ON CERTAIN ELECTION DAYS.

--WE CAN'T GET A BILL FOR IMMEDIATE TAX RELIEF FOR SENIOR CITIZENS, OR AN ETHICS BILL, OR PARTY DESIGNATION, OUT OF A HOUSE COMMITTEE. BUT PARI-MUTUEL BETTING IS ON THE FLOOR OF BOTH THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE.

--FUNDS FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION ARE CUT. BUT BILLS ON INTEREST RATES--BILLS FOR LENDERS--FLOW SMOOTHLY THROUGH THE LEGISLATURE.

--BILLS THAT SINCERELY TRY TO SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT ARE SCOFFED AT, OR SHUFFLED FROM COMMITTEE TO COMMITTEE. INSTEAD, VALUABLE LEGISLATIVE TIME IS DEVOTED TO EXEMPTIONS FROM USURY LAWS AND THE CARE OF CEMETERIES.

WE HAVE BEEN IN SESSION NOW FOR FOUR MONTHS. TODAY IS THE 87TH LEGISLATIVE DAY. ONLY 16 WORKING DAYS--16 DAYS--REMAIN TO SERVE THE NEEDS AND HOPES OF THE PEOPLE OF OUR STATE.

WE HAVE TURNED JUST 202 BILLS INTO LAW. I HAVE USED MY VETO ONLY THREE TIMES. ALMOST ALL OF THESE NEW LAWS ARE LOCAL IN NATURE. THEY ARE MINOR FOR THE MOST PART--UNIMPORTANT AND INSIGNIFICANT TO MOST OF OUR PEOPLE.

IN SPITE OF ALL OUR WORK THIS LEGISLATURE HAS TAKEN ONLY TWO MAJOR ACTIONS--THE STATE'S CHALLENGE OF THE WAR IN INDOCHINA AND RATIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO GIVE 18-YEAR-OLDS THE VOTE.

ON A FEW ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE, THERE HAS BEEN EXCELLENT PROGRESS AND CONSIDERABLE AGREEMENT.

SEVERAL HOUSING PROPOSALS APPEAR ON THEIR WAY TO THE FLOOR. AN ACCEPTABLE PROGRAM TO PROVIDE SEWAGE TREATMENT FACILITIES IS EMERGING. LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE LAWMAKERS ARE CLOSE TO AGREEMENT ON SOME PARTS OF THE DRUG PROGRAM IN COMMITTEE.

THERE ARE OTHER INDIVIDUAL EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE WORK AS WELL.

BUT FOR THE MOST PART THE CONCERNS OF JANUARY ARE STILL THE CONCERNS OF MAY.

THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION HAS NOT BEEN A SUCCESS SO FAR. THE LEGISLATURE KNOWS IT. THE PRESS KNOWS IT. THE PUBLIC SENSES IT.

THAT IS WHY I AM SPEAKING TODAY.

I WANT TO FOCUS PUBLIC ATTENTION ON THIS FAILURE AND TRY TO PREVENT IT.

I WANT TO ENCOURAGE THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK, SO THAT WE CAN USE THEIR ENCOURAGEMENT IN TURN TO SPEND THE NEXT 16 DAYS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

I AM NOT INTERESTED IN TONGUE-LASHING ANYONE TODAY. I'M INTERESTED IN PASSING PROGRAMS THAT HELP PEOPLE, PROGRAMS THAT MAKE THIS GOVERNMENT WORK.

THIS MORNING SOME HOUSE CONSERVATIVES OUTLINED AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE TAX PROGRAM I PRESENTED TO THE LEGISLATURE IN JANUARY.

THERE ARE NOW JUST SIXTEEN DAYS TO CONSIDER THIS ALTERNATIVE AND ANY OTHER CONSERVATIVE PROPOSALS THAT MAY STILL DEVELOP. SIXTEEN DAYS ARE TWO DAYS MORE THAN WE HAD TO CONSIDER THE SALES TAX IN 1967, AND I SUPPOSE WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR THEM. I SINCERELY HOPE THAT THESE TWO DAYS WILL HELP THE CONSERVATIVES EXPLAIN THEIR PROPOSALS MORE ADEQUATELY THAN THE

SALES TAX WAS EXPLAINED TO OUR LEGISLATURE AND OUR PEOPLE.

I WILL DO MY BEST TO COMPARE THE CONSERVATIVE TAX BILLS WITH MY OWN AND TO HELP EXPLAIN THEM TO ALL MINNESOTANS. I DO NOT WANT SECRET DISCUSSION OF LAST-MINUTE PROPOSALS TO SOLVE OUR MOST IMPORTANT STATE PROBLEM.

IF PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THOSE PROPOSALS VIOLATES A TRADITION IN THIS LEGISLATURE, SO BE IT. THE END OF THAT TRADITION IS LONG OVERDUE. WE CANNOT MEET OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR PEOPLE UNLESS WE CHANGE IT.

AND THERE IS PRECIOUS LITTLE TIME TO GIVE THEM ADEQUATE PUBLIC SCRUTINY. THAT MUST BE ONE OF OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE REMAINING DAYS OF THIS SESSION.

WE MUST ALSO SPEND OUR TIME IN THE REMAINING WEEKS ON THE OTHER CRITICAL ISSUES BEFORE US.

AS I LOOK AT MORE THAN 250 BILLS NOW ON THE SENATE AND HOUSE FLOORS, I SEE ONLY A HANDFUL THAT ARE WORTH ANY MORE OF OUR TIME UNTIL THERE IS REAL PROGRESS ON IMPORTANT PROGRAMS.

I STRONGLY URGE THE MEMBERS OF THIS LEGISLATURE TO SPEND ALL OF THEIR TIME ON THESE MAJOR PROGRAMS UNTIL ACTION ON THEM IS COMPLETED. THAT IS HOW I INTEND TO SPEND MY TIME.

I AM THE ONLY PARTICIPANT IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS WHO IS ELECTED BY ALL OF THE PEOPLE OF MINNESOTA.

I DO NOT INTEND TO SIT QUIETLY BY DURING THESE LAST THREE WEEKS. I DO NOT INTEND TO LET SPECIAL INTEREST LEGISLATION CROSS MY DESK WHILE THE MAJOR PROGRAMS TO SERVE OUR PEOPLE LANGUISH AND WITHER IN COMMITTEE.

THE CONSTITUTION HAS GIVEN THE GOVERNOR CERTAIN POWERS IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS. I WILL NOT HESITATE TO USE ANY OR ALL OF THOSE POWERS, IF THAT IS WHAT IT TAKES TO GET SOME POSITIVE RESULTS.

I DO NOT MEAN THAT I WANT THIS LEGISLATURE TO CONSIDER ONLY THE GOVERNOR'S PROGRAMS IN THE WEEKS THAT ARE LEFT.

BUT I AM SAYING THAT IF THE GOVERNOR'S PROGRAMS ARE NOT STRONG ENOUGH, NOT GOOD ENOUGH, NOT TOUGH ENOUGH, THEN COME UP WITH ALTERNATIVES.

I AM SAYING, EITHER PASS OUR BILLS OR SOMETHING BETTER. EITHER HELP US PROVIDE THE REAL ESTATE TAX RELIEF WE'RE FIGHTING FOR, OR COME UP WITH A PROGRAM THAT GIVES MORE RELIEF--NOT LESS.

I DO NOT WANT THIS LEGISLATURE TO ADJOURN UNTIL THE PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES HAVE BEEN MET.

THERE IS LITTLE TIME.

THESE SIXTEEN DAYS WILL HAVE TO BE HARD DAYS,
AND LONG DAYS, FOR ALL OF US--EVEN HARDER AND LONGER THAN
THE DAYS WE HAVE PUT IN SO FAR.

THOSE DAYS WILL REQUIRE FRANK, PUBLIC DISCUSSION
OF OUR DIFFERENCES. WE ALL KNOW THAT THAT IS HOW WE REACH
FINAL AGREEMENT ON IMPORTANT MATTERS.

THIS IS THE SEVENTH SESSION OF MY WORK WITH THE
MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE.

I KNOW THAT YOU WORK HARD. I KNOW THAT YOUR DAYS
BEGIN EARLY IN THE MORNING AND DO NOT END UNTIL LATE AT NIGHT.

I KNOW THAT YOU ARE HONEST. YOU WANT THIS TO BE
A PRODUCTIVE SESSION.

I KNOW THAT YOU ARE ABLE. YOU CAN STILL TURN THIS
INTO A PRODUCTIVE SESSION.

IF I DID NOT THINK SO, I WOULD NOT HAVE BOTHERED
TO ASK TO SPEAK TO YOU TODAY.

TOGETHER, WE CAN MEET OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MINNESOTA.

REPRESENTATIVES OF MY OFFICE WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR
YOUR HEARINGS. I AM SURE THEY WILL BE WELCOME, AS THEY HAVE
BEEN THROUGHOUT THIS SESSION.

MY OFFICE WILL CONTINUE TO BE OPEN TO YOU ALL, AND
I HOPE YOU WILL USE IT. YOU WILL FIND US WILLING AND READY
TO LISTEN AND AGREE TO REASON.

I LOOK FORWARD TO THE THREE WEEKS AHEAD, BECAUSE
I BELIEVE WE CAN COMPLETE THE VAST UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF THE
PEOPLE OF MINNESOTA.

THERE IS STILL TIME.