

**FIRST BIENNIAL MESSAGE OF  
GOVERNOR HIRAM W. JOHNSON  
BEFORE THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY  
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, IN JOINT  
ASSEMBLY, AT SACRAMENTO,  
MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 1913**

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**VARIOUS**

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First Biennial Message

OF

Governor Hiram W. Johnson

BEFORE THE

Senate and Assembly of the State of California, in Joint  
Assembly, at Sacramento, Monday,  
January 6, 1913



FRIEND WM. RICHARDSON, SUPERINTENDENT OF STATE PRINTING  
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FIRST BIENNIAL MESSAGE

OF

GOVERNOR HIRAM W. JOHNSON.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA, JANUARY 6, 1913.

To the Senate and Assembly:

In accordance with custom and the requirement of the Constitution, it becomes my duty to communicate with you by message.

INTRODUCTORY—POLICY.

You have assembled, at an exceptionally important time in the history of the State, to carry further forward the works of political and economic betterment so well begun by your immediate predecessors. The past two years have marked a new era in the governmental history of California. Obeying the mandate of the people, under which they were chosen, the present administration and the Legislature of 1911 came into office committed to the definite policy that effective political power should be lodged with the people themselves, that the allegiance of public servants to the people should be undivided, and that legislative and administrative policies should be directed to the benefit of the people. The record of the past two years is the record of the fulfillment of that promise in the political reconstruction of the State, and of the greatest possible measure of progress in legislative and economic reforms. Your task is to see to it that nothing is lost of what has been achieved, to carry forward as well as possible what remains incomplete, and to do what in your wisdom you deem yet essential.

After only two years it is difficult to realize that we are so short a time removed from a system which had grown up by many years of acquiescence. The system of the domination of the public service by special interests was so all-pervasive and so familiar that it was accepted even by many excellent men as part of an unchangeable order of things. Yet it was a system which was of course fatal to true popular government and to administrative efficiency, and which offered constant temptation and opportunity to worse than inefficiency. An incident in the government of the water front of the city of San Francisco vividly illustrates how far this system of private dominance of public service extended. The Harbor Commission of San Francisco are required by law to fix the rentals to be paid by those who occupy space belonging to the State. The schedule of rentals just prior to the

California State Gov. J. 1-24-13

present administration was really fixed by the very corporation which was the principal tenant of the State at the harbor, and was adopted only after consent of that company. This is perhaps a minor example of a condition which was then regarded as a matter of course, but which has now become, let us hope forever, impossible.

In the effort to eliminate that sort of influence, and to require of every public servant and governmental agency an undivided allegiance to the people, of course there was resistance to be overcome in almost every direction. The service of the State was filled with men many of whom had been accustomed to look, as the source of their power, to a particular outside agency, rather than to the government and the people of the State. But after two years of continuous effort, and with the tremendous aid rendered by the last Legislature, without which it could not have been accomplished, it may be to-day asserted that the public service of California is maintained solely for the public benefit, and that the allegiance of every official is now wholly to the State of California. It is not asserted that all the needed administrative reforms are yet complete; it is not claimed that every public institution in this State is as well managed as ultimately it may be; but it is confidently insisted that the management of almost every public institution in this State to-day has improved in method and efficiency, and that in none to-day is permitted fealty or allegiance to any other power than the power of the people of the State.

The platform to which a majority of you subscribed at the recent legislative convention, and I quote it as a concise statement and not in partisan spirit, contained the following summary of the accomplishments of the past two years, the majority of which, it may be added, were due to the enactments of your immediate predecessors in the Legislature, and to the favorable vote of the people on propositions submitted to them:

“A new spirit has entered the public life of the State. In two years, California has made greater progress in legislation and government than was ever before made in a like period by an American state, and has set a new standard for other States and the Nation. Political power has been taken from the political bureau of a private corporation and restored to the people; boss rule has been made permanently impossible by direct nominations, direct legislation and the recall. The suffrage has been extended to women. The ballot has been made shorter and less partisan, and judicial nominations have been made nonpartisan. Public servants have been appointed and retained for efficiency and faithfulness; the business administration of the State Department has been reformed through the activities of the State Board of Control, corruption and favoritism have been eliminated, and economy and efficiency enforced. The Railroad Com-



mission is for the first time exercising the powers over railroads intended to be conferred upon it when it was established in 1879, and has extended a like control to other public service corporations. The laws of criminal procedure have been simplified, a reformatory for first offenders is assured by the purchase of a site therefor, the prisons have been made self-supporting and prisoners are being taught useful trades without injurious competition with free labor. Much beneficial legislation for social and industrial justice has been passed, including a workmen's compensation act and an eight-hour day for women, a full crew and sixteen-hour trainmen's bill, bills against the pay-check evil, and repealing the sailors' enticement law, prohibiting night work for minors under eighteen years, and protecting electrical workers. Laws for the better conservation of the natural resources of the State were passed and an inventory of these resources is being made by the Conservation Commission as a basis for the intelligent enactment of needed additional legislation. Counties have been given a larger measure of local self-government and a local option law has been passed. A state system of good roads has been inaugurated. Race track gambling has been effectively suppressed. These and many other beneficial measures are the achievements of the administration and the Legislature of California in the past two years."

This is the record, made by your predecessors and approved by yourselves, which it is now yours to emulate, and to supplement and complete.

The general policy that has characterized the present state government is one that has not been partisan in character, and to which men of all political predilections, and particularly those of different parties in the Legislature, have contributed. The policy of the State Government in the future will be the same as for the past two years; and in upholding that policy the present administration asks the aid of all the representatives of the people; and if the policy shall meet with success and approval it may well be considered the policy of all those who believe in popular rule and in constancy and fidelity in the execution of a trust regardless wholly of partisan lines.

Of course the establishment of a new system and the destruction of the old have engendered some bitter animosities from which you and your predecessors and this administration have not been exempt. These animosities manifest themselves sometimes in one form and sometimes in another. When they consist of mere personal vituperation they may be simply disregarded. Occasionally they take the form of an exaggerated and distorted attack upon some public institution which may not have yet reached the state of efficiency that is all that could be desired. Sometimes, inspired by those who contend they are actuated only by desire for the public's good, they are insidiously inserted, by

apparently legitimate argument, in the utterances of some public body or medium of publicity. Sometimes they are the concerted activity of the paid representatives and subsidized organs of publicity of the former beneficiaries of the old system, as is evidenced by the sudden concert of attack just now being made upon the greatest constructive agency for good in the State of California—the Railroad Commission. It is not to be expected that these attacks will cease or grow less, but those charged with the public service of California will not be diverted by them from the fixed policy which has so far been followed and which will be maintained unswervingly to the end.

California is a State to inspire the enthusiasm and the devotion of all who are privileged to live in it or called to serve it. Its resources are without limit. The imagination of our generation cannot even picture the possibilities of its development. In the past decade its growth in population and industrial progress has been marvelous. The next decade will far exceed the last. Materially our destiny and our rank among the states of the world are assured. In the more subtle influence of environment, our State stands alone. Nowhere else is there so much charm of climate and natural beauty, so much of the realization of possibilities not yet unfolded. Standing at the very foreground, not merely of a nation, but of a race, the last station of the westward march of occidental civilization, and the final frontier between the two halves of the world, we occupy a unique place which lays upon us a unique responsibility. The impending opening of the Panama Canal now doubles that responsibility. Henceforward we shall face the Atlantic as well as the Pacific, Europe as well as Asia. New problems press upon us, in which, with the eyes of the world looking on, we must not fail.

To the material responsibilities we shall rise. It is your task to see to it that we rise to the governmental responsibilities also—to afford this people the agencies of self government with which to fulfill its destiny, and, as the representatives of the people, to do in their interest their sovereign will. The experience of your immediate predecessors demonstrates that this is no impossible aspiration, and I look with confidence to see you carry even further forward the work they so well began.

## EXECUTION OF RECENT LEGISLATION AND CONSUMMATION OF NEW POLICIES.

The Legislature of 1911, and the people of our State in the constitutional amendment election of that year, entered upon certain new governmental policies. In passing it may be mentioned that the election of October, 1911, called by the regular session of the Legislature of that year, was probably the first election held where only amendments to the constitution were voted upon. In itself this election was a test of popular rule. The interest in the constitutional amendments and the discrimination displayed by the people fully demonstrated the efficacy of direct legislation and the ability of the people to govern themselves. Some of the amendments submitted were complex in character and dealt wholly with abstract problems. The people then determined that they, as well as the administration, wished the lodgment of power with themselves, and it has since been lodged with our people. Immediately after the election the various constitutional amendments were put into effect, and, of course, in good faith carried out. In detail it is impossible to refer to the execution of all of the legislation passed in 1911, or that determined upon by our people, but a few of the important policies that have been entered upon in the last two years are mentioned.

### I.

#### THE RAILROAD COMMISSION.

In January, 1911, the Railroad Commission consisted of three elective members. In that year the well known Stetson-Eshleman railroad bill was passed by the Legislature, giving to the Railroad Commission powers as extensive as the Constitution would permit. At the election of October, 1911, the people passed two constitutional amendments relating to the Railroad Commission, by which the Commission was enlarged to five and made appointive instead of elective, and the most plenary powers were conferred upon it. At the extra session of the Legislature of 1911, the Public Utilities bill was passed. Since that time the Commission has done a wonderful work. In the thirty-two years previous to June, 1911, there was less work done by the Railroad Commission of the State of California than has been done by the present Railroad Commission in any one month of its existence. Probably during the thirty-two years of the existence of the Railroad Commission prior to 1911, approximately one hundred complaints were presented to that Commission, and in less than two years, to the new Commission, approximately two thousand complaints have been presented. The Commission has acted with such justice, fairness and