

There will be a meeting held by the Department of Health and Welfare in the old Territorial Office Building on Thursday, February 24, 1966, at 1:00 p.m. on Medicare.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ditman moved and asked unanimous consent that the House adjourn until 10:00 a.m. February 24, 1966. There being no objection, the House adjourned at 12:36 p.m.

Nadine Williams
Chief Clerk

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FEBRUARY 23, 1966

ADDRESS BY SENATOR E. L. BARTLETT TO
THE JOINT ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH STATE LEGISLATURE
SECOND SESSION, FEBRUARY 23, 1966

It is a privilege. It is an honor. It is such for all who are singled out to address a joint session of the Alaska State Legislature. I am grateful for the opportunity. My especial thanks go to President McNealy and to Speaker Gravel, who extended personally the invitation in Sitka last Saturday.

For me these are strange--and impressive--surroundings. This is the very first time I have seen these newly created legislative halls. I must say that this represents not only change but improvement. We who can look back to the legislative days of long ago may cherish if we choose the memories of those bygone legislative halls; but these are not only new but better. Since it is true that efficiency depends to a sensible degree on working conditions, it follows that the legislature is much better prepared now in a physical way to serve the people of Alaska.

The surroundings may be strange but I am happy to report the situation is otherwise insofar as people are concerned. Most of you I have known for a long time. Most of us have worked together at one time or another. We have had a common goal. We have sought to achieve for the state which is our homeland.

The Yukon has poured much water into the sea since the first Alaska legislative assembly met. It is remarkable, and splendid too, that men still live who served in that first territorial legislature in 1913. Some of us had the privilege of visiting in Sitka Saturday with E. B. Collins, one of those of the class of '13. And on the Saturday before, Henry Roden was present when Neva Egan christened the new Navy ship JUNEAU.

Fifty-three years from now some other may stand where I now stand and tell the legislature that some of those who fashioned the new state are still in the land of the living, that Nick Begich, Chuck Sassara and Joe Josephson and Mike Gravel, for example, are now happily living in retirement in Eldorado, that new Alaska city over yonder, that city which has just passed the million mark in population.

Our history is magnificent and stirring. Each of us here has a part in the making of that history. That is one of the elements that makes an association with Alaska so exciting and thrilling. Here that individual has a standing, a stature, that would be almost impossible to come by in a densely settled state. It may be likewise here too when Eldorado reaches its projected size.

As part of the history yet to be written will be the accounting of how the change from territorialism to statehood was accomplished.

Let us remember that no new state ever faced such monumental problems as ours. Chiefly responsible for this was the fact that we had for so long been denied in our territorial status the full grants of home rule given to all earlier territories. There is probably no need for me to dwell upon this at length; it has been recounted elsewhere, repeatedly and in voluminous detail. However, it is well to emphasize that this made our task all the more difficult.

How have we fared?

Have we done well?

Or have we failed to do what we could have done and should have done?

Any objective witness of the evolving scene would be compelled to say that considering all things the job has been creditably done.

The obstacles have been great. In large part they have been overcome. I am speaking, as you know, of the process of transition. As history runs, the time has been short. Only seven years ago the first state legislature met. Now our problems relate in a minor way to transition; those that confront derive from other situations, other needs.

Our fellow citizens in the other states gave us, as we so gratefully recall, great big helping hands through the mechanism of the federal government, first in the transitional stages, and then after the earthquake.

So it is, I believe, that history will judge kindly the cooperative efforts of the state administration and the state legislatures, on the one hand, and the associated and concomitant aid and understanding which came from Washington.

Before concluding with this subject, however, I want to revert to what I so shortly ago referred to as the minor remaining problems of transition.

The one I want to mention here relates to that provision of the Statehood Act granting land to the new state. Because of its importance the appropriate language is quoted:

"Sec. 6. (a) For the purposes of furthering the development of an expansion of communities, the State of Alaska is hereby granted and shall be entitled to select, within twenty-five years after the date of the admission of the State of Alaska to the Union, from lands within national forests in Alaska which are vacant and unappropriated at the time of their selection not to exceed four hundred thousand acres of land, and from the other public lands of the United States in Alaska which are vacant, unappropriated and unreserved at the time of their selection not

to exceed another four hundred thousand acres of land, all of which shall be adjacent to established communities or suitable for prospective community centers and recreational areas. Such lands shall be selected by the State of Alaska with the approval of the Secretary of Agriculture as to national forest lands and with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior as to other public lands;"

This is the applicable language.

What has happened in respect of this section? What has happened, I am glad to report, is that as to lands within the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, approval of selections made by the State has proceeded in an orderly manner. What has happened in respect of national forest lands, I am sorry to report, is that the National Forest Service or the Department of Agriculture, or both, have placed upon this section an interpretation never intended by the Congress. I know. No one -- no one -- had more to do with the design of the Statehood Act than I. Congress did not intend that the assent of the Secretary of Agriculture should be more than a pro forma matter. My understanding is that only one small selection made by the State of Alaska has finally cleared. Suggestions have been offered that the Statehood Act should be amended to obviate these vexing delays. I should hope this would prove to be unnecessary. There is no doubt what Congress intended; the administrative agency should respond accordingly. If it fails to do so -- and soon -- then legislative action will be necessary.

So much for this.

Now I turn to other subjects.

Very seldom have I projected my own ideas into state legislative matters. I do so now. After all, resolutions come to the Congress in some number from the State legislature. On this particular occasion, I have considered and approved a resolution all my own. I took this action unilaterally after learning that a resolution is now under consideration by the legislature the sense of which as I understand -- without having had a chance to examine the text -- is that budget request for \$6 million plus for Mt. Edgecumbe expansion be reconsidered.

My resolution is that the pending resolution not be approved.

It will be no surprise to you to learn that state legislative resolutions come to the Congress by the gross and their consideration is not among the major duties devolving upon Congress. But I tell you one thing. And I tell it to you with emphasis. If this resolution is sent down to Washington, it will almost surely and immediately have the full weight, scope and authority of national law. The Mt. Edgecumbe appropriation will not be made. Further, that amount of money will NOT be appropriated now for another project or other projects in Alaska. It means, simply, that the first stage of the expansion planned this year to bring Edgecumbe up to a capacity of about 1050 students will not start next fiscal year.

Perhaps it never will if this resolution receives the endorsement of the Alaska legislature. Perhaps, however, that is what is desired.

Let us review this dispassionately. I am not here as an advocate of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. I am not here as a critic of the BIA. I am here as you are -- searching out for that which is best for the education of our children, whether they are white or Indian or Eskimo or Aleut or of mixed blood.

Abolition of the BIA school system in Alaska began a dozen or more years ago. There was a separate BIA school in Juneau not too many years ago. It is gone now. I suspect many parents of school children do not know it ever existed. Other schools have been transferred.

If the State were to petition it is possible -- even probable -- that the federal government would turn over the educational responsibility it long ago assumed here -- and in other states -- for the education of Native children. Are you ready to appropriate the money obligation the state would be then forced to assume? Make no mistake about it -- if we want to take over the BIA school system here and now the federal government will not hand over to us every year with no strings attached the several millions a year required to operate the system. Let me be more precise. The figure is \$8,800,000. That's the bill. Are you ready to pay it? Or would it be better to approach this reasonably and gradually in a cooperative manner?

There has been cooperation. The BIA has built a dormitory at Nome. It will be State operated. Funding will come from the federal government. A similar arrangement is planned for Kodiak. And I, for one, look forward to an arrangement where all the very considerable educational system at Fairbanks, including the University of Alaska, will be the reason there too for a building program which will enable Native children to come in for schooling from many villages. But we shouldn't kid ourselves. When these children live in a dormitory they will not be completely integrated with the remainder of the community. Integration is desirable; it is necessary. Obviously, however, if it were possible to close Edgumbe and like institutions right now because of the availability of dormitories, this would not bring about true integration. Dormitory life would remain segregated life to a degree.

I wonder if everyone knows that the BIA has been ready -- long since ready -- to turn over to the state many of the smaller schools. The state has refused, and properly so, on the grounds that physical rehabilitation must first take place.

The problems that face us -- and they are very real -- are brought about principally by two factors. The first is the rapid growth in Native population. The second is that many more Native boys and girls want higher education. Facilities in Alaska are altogether inadequate to meet the need. At this time about 750 Alaska youngsters are going to school in Oregon. This should not be. BIA officials are the first to say it would be far more desirable to have these youngsters educated in Alaska. But just as sometimes there is

a bit of difficulty in discovering sources of revenue which you can use for the appropriation of money for projects your constituents want and need, so it is with the federal government.

I shall conclude discussing this subject with one final but important comment, even if it is by way of repetition. If you adopt this resolution, if Congress acts accordingly, the Edgumbe money will not be diverted this year -- and perhaps never -- to undertakings you as individual legislators may deem to be of overriding importance. That is a fact. I have tried to make this point before. Apparently, I have failed. Please take my word for it.

If Edgumbe is expanded it will not be big enough. If Edgumbe is expanded and this dormitory-type arrangement is approved for every community mentioned and others not yet mentioned, we still may be short of room.

Let the state take over the BIA educational system. But let it be done in an orderly manner. Let us proceed step by step so as we go along we may have the maximum in federal financial help.

Federal help in education is meaningful to us. More -- it is downright essential. You have heard the administration proposes to cut back sharply this coming fiscal year on two programs which have been operative nationally since 1950. These relate to the so-called federally-impacted areas.

Under the construction law, Alaska since 1951 has received \$37 million.

Under the companion measure for operation and maintenance of these schools, Alaska has been granted about \$40 million for the same period. I have cosponsored a bill to extend these laws for another two years, and I am among the Senators who will oppose any appropriation reductions. We may not win. The State may have to assume part of that burden. If we must do that, and if at the same time an unfortunate train of events is established which will have the burden of educating Native children thrust upon us, let us be candid with the people and let us inform them here and now that some sizable tax boosts are in the making. It will be inevitable.

Following the Native housing conference in Anchorage last November, a committee was named to maintain momentum, to make recommendations. It will hold its first meeting since the Anchorage conferences here in Juneau early next month. The committee is made up almost entirely of people of Native blood. The meeting here was made possible because I was able to persuade a group in the States to supply traveling money. But that source can't be tapped again. I desire to make a recommendation. I am a bit hesitant in doing so because I haven't discussed this with Governor Egan, and he may have already acted. But at any rate -- my recommendation is that this legislature make a modest appropriation so the housing committee may meet from time to time. Such meetings are highly desirable.

We must -- we absolutely must -- do something to improve

Native housing, which in too many places and too many instances is shocking, disgraceful, disease-breeding and intolerable. Education is not the complete answer for our Native people. They must be better housed. They must have health standards raised. Their economic lot must be improved. Better housing will not, of course, do all these things. But competent medical authorities have told us that decent housing will do much for the Natives' health. And decent housing is the right of every American.

We were told it would be guns and butter, too. But the size of the butter package is being trimmed.

We in Alaska know this.

With the other states, we face the prospect of fewer dollars under the federal airport program.

With the other states, we face the prospect of less money for certain agricultural cooperative programs.

With the other states, we face cuts in appropriations for the school lunch program.

With other states, we find that money for public works is going to Southeast Asia instead. Snettisham is the leading example of this in Alaska.

Uniquely, Alaska faces the prospect of having its federal agriculture research program brought to an end.

We live in stern days.

Let us make no mistake about that.

Our nation is locked in a great struggle in Vietnam.

We fight an elusive foe.

The commitment has been made. We shall go forward. No one can foresee the cost, no one can foresee when the day will come when all this will end.

There is vigorous dissent within our own country as to the wisdom of what we do, what we seek to do. There are many who assert we should speak with one voice, that there should not be a babel to confuse the world, encourage our enemy. I do not agree. There is a high obligation to debate, fully, openly, and vigorously, an issue which involves the very fate of our nation. No one man can speak for America, not even the chief executive who has the responsibility for foreign policy. We must hammer out, freely and without restraint, the national judgment. This is a democracy. This is one of the principal virtues of our society -- that all shall have the right to be heard.

We may think some are wrong. We may think some are too noisy. We may think some criticize when criticism is unjustified. But this is the American way. These are the values -- the right of free speech, of disagreement -- which make our country so different from many others.

It is my own conclusion that having committed ourselves, we cannot even give a thought to quitting. If we did, then our national influence would sink to an appalling low, our international influence would have all but vanished. As one who has never taken much stock in the domino theory, I say for us to quit now would give that theory a validity it never before possessed.

American boys are dying in that remote land. More will die. They serve nobly. They are carrying the great shield which has been handed to the United States. Some must die in holding that shield which came to us without our seeking it. Our nation stands as the protector of the western world; it stands as the protector of the principle that people everywhere should be permitted to make their own choices, that Communist dictatorship must not be permitted to take over land after land against the wishes of the people of those lands.

History tells us that other nations in other times and for different reasons carried the responsibility which is now ours. For generations this was Britain's role. Of her the poet wrote:

"O Cromwell's England, must you yield

For every inch of ground a son?"

No man could have pursued the search for peace more diligently than has President Johnson in these last weeks. The other side has not responded. As Secretary Rusk said, it is hard to negotiate when the other side is not willing to sit down at the negotiating table.

So we shall persevere. I have not heard reasonable alternatives to the course we are pursuing. Some fail to understand why we are so deeply involved. Perhaps I am one of them. But involved we are. And there we shall remain until the objectives we seek are gained.

I have mentioned all of this because every American should think about Vietnam not occasionally, but always. Alaska boys have already died there. What you do in this legislative session will be guided to some extent by Vietnam. As I have indicated, there won't be as much butter as we expected. Your actions may have to be predicated upon this possibility or even this probability.

Even as statehood has altered our Alaska life, so our world-wide commitments have altered the American way of life. We have become powerful; we have become rich. We live in the affluent society. But with all of this there have come to us in seemingly endless succession vexations, problems and responsibilities. Let us face up to them, nationally and here in Alaska, so that history will record that we recognized our duty, and performed it.