

ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY OCTOBER 21



William Gustavus Conley, who served as governor of West Virginia from 1929 to 1933, died on October 21, 1940.

CSO: SS.8.8, SS.8.9, ELA.8.1

Investigate the Document: (State Papers and Public Addresses of William C. Conley, Governor of West Virginia, Go 18. 1: 1929-1933)

1. What are the three fossil-fuels mentioned in Governor Conley's inaugural address about West Virginia's great natural resource?
2. The people of West Virginia voted thirty-five million dollars additional dollars for what purpose?
3. How would you describe Governor Conley's attentiveness to education in West Virginia? What does he state that every student in West Virginia has the right to?

Think Critically: Can you draw parallels from Governor Conley's inaugural address to present-day issues facing West Virginia? If so, explain. Which of the three topics that Governor Conley addressed in 1929 is the greatest issue facing West Virginia today?

competition is unfair, tends to socialism, and means more and higher taxes.

Some of the institutions of the state are continually reaching out and engaging in business. This aggrandizement should be avoided, for it is the duty of government to see that every citizen has equal opportunity to engage in any lawful enterprise without the handicap of governmental competition. We should have the right to the rivalry of life on a footing of equality of opportunity, for of such has been the upbuilding and glory of America. The door of opportunity must stand ajar, so that all who wish may enter, rich or poor, native or foreign born. There will be no office-holding oligarchy in West Virginia. President Hoover in a recent public address well said:

“Every expansion of government in business means that government * * * is driven irresistibly without pause to greater and greater control of the Nation's press and platform. Free speech does not live many hours after free industry and free commerce die. * * * Every step in bureaucratizing the business of our country poisons the very roots of liberalism—that is, political equality, free speech, free assembly, free press, and equality of opportunity.”

Conservation

We should use our utmost efforts in behalf of conservation of the state's natural resources and for the dedication of such resources to the benefit of all the people of the state. Reforestation is a necessity. Protection against fire and other destructive forces should be an imperative policy of state government.

Great Natural Resources

We have here great natural resources of oil, gas, coal, fire clay, waterpower, and fertile soil, each awaiting further development. These resources have always been here but are only partly developed. To make them of greater benefit to mankind, they must have new capital, the advantage of sound governmental policies and fine leadership with the vision and energy and courage to turn them more to the use to which God intended. We invite such capital and such leadership, which are sure to give good

employment to honest labor and produce greater happiness in our homes. We promise sound governmental policies and the opportunity to succeed.

The women especially are interested in the further development of our natural resources and the building of new industries, for such insures a larger family income, better homes, more comforts, and greater opportunities for rearing and educating a family in keeping with present-day standards of living.

Inviting Investments

If we are to have social and economic progress, we must make West Virginia an inviting field in which to live and invest. This result can be accomplished by broadening the usefulness of our educational system; by stricter adherence to, and enforcement of, our laws; by loftier ideals in home life, which will increase the moral and spiritual qualities of our people—an inviting field for the women of our state; by having a higher “regard for those human values that give dignity and nobility to life”; by practicing economy in government and by reducing taxes which are always the foundations of economic progress; by government’s staying out of competitive business and leaving an open field for individual initiative and enterprise; by guaranteeing to all the people, native and foreign born, the preservation of equality of opportunity so that every girl and every boy, whatever his station in life, may have an equal chance under the law to succeed. Let the world know that these ideals obtain in West Virginia; that these opportunities are offered, and will be safeguarded, and our future progress, prosperity and happiness are assured.

Reduction of Taxes

During the primary and general election campaigns, I stressed the necessity for strict economy in state government. I did so in good faith, believing the expenditures of money received by taxation could be substantially reduced without lessening the efficiency of any governmental function. I still have faith that it can be done, but to bring it about there must be cooperation of all state departments, both elective and appointive.

I urge that everyone engaged in the public service join me in

an effort to lessen the growing burdens of taxation. Each department should cooperate with every other to the end that our labors may harmonize and better serve the state.

Our efforts should be bent toward increased efficiency rather than increased expenditures of public money. Instead of studying new methods of spending more money, let us study new methods of spending less.

State Roads

Last November the people voted thirty-five million dollars additional to be expended in building roads. Although much progress has been made, our public highway system in West Virginia is far from complete. I stand for intensive work in the construction program so that the roads may be ready for use at the earliest possible date consistent with good construction and economy. Overhead costs should be reduced to the minimum and every dollar available spent in building roads.

Foundation of Government

The foundation of free government consists in holding that public office is a public trust for the good of the state and not for the benefit of the individual holding the office.

In the business of the government we must have economy but not at the expense of efficiency. Employes should not be required to work for less than fair compensation, and they should render honest service for the compensation paid. The state should obtain from all public service a dollar's value for every dollar spent.

Efficiency in Government

Extravagance in expenditures of money received by the state will not be permitted so far as I can prevent. The state government in all of its departments should be conducted in the same economical and efficient manner as obtains in the best conducted private enterprises. I summon to this task every person in the public service and all other good citizens of the state.

In advocating economy, I do not do so to the extent of hindering advancement and progress. We must continue to advance. We must have revenue to carry on the building programs of our public institutions. We are a growing state and we will

West Virginia should assert its paramount right to control and regulate waterpower development, and to recapture waterpower projects, if any, licensed under the Federal Power Act. In my opinion, Congress has not the power in times of peace to go within a state and develop its resources in water power or in any other natural resource without the consent of the state.

Education

I have faith in the public school system of West Virginia, and urge the further development of our schools and the liberal, yet economical, financing of them. Every child of school age should have the right of an equal opportunity for an education. West Virginia cannot afford to do less than her best for the youth of the state. Education is the only way to continue our freedom and achievements. So long as the money is well and economically spent, we can make no just complaint.

What has been said of the free schools can be said with equal force of our institutions of higher learning. In this connection, I suggest that a research department be established at West Virginia University and liberally provided for. A great field of usefulness lies before it. It should be one of our greatest factors for the training of our young men and women, for the development of our state, for the expansion of business opportunities and for the establishment of new industries.

Constitutional Amendments

I favor an amendment to the state constitution making the Governor the budget officer in lieu of the present constitutional provision making all seven elective state officers the Budget Commission. Experience has proved that the present plan is not satisfactory. It does not accomplish the results anticipated—economy in the expenditure of public money. If, in the wisdom of the legislature, it is thought desirable, the suggested constitutional amendment need not take effect until the incoming of your next Chief Executive.

I favor also the proposed constitutional amendments changing the date of inauguration of the elective state officers, creating the office of lieutenant governor at an annual salary not to exceed