

*Sixth Annual Message*  
**ALFRED E. DRISCOLL**  
**GOVERNOR OF NEW JERSEY**

*To the Legislature*  
*January 13, 1953*



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# SIXTH ANNUAL MESSAGE

OF

## ALFRED E. DRISCOLL

GOVERNOR OF NEW JERSEY

TO THE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SEVENTH  
LEGISLATURE OF NEW JERSEY

JANUARY 13, 1953





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## SIXTH ANNUAL MESSAGE

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*Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Senate and General Assembly:*

As we open this legislative year, our first and foremost thought must be for those who are fighting the terrible, undeclared war in Korea against a tough and ruthless adversary. Our military forces must be given every advantage that the finest materiel and most able diplomacy can afford. We all share the hope that a new national administration will bring the Korean war to a successful and honorable conclusion. This war, however, is but one aspect of the contest for freedom in which our Nation is engaged on a global scale. During this period of national emergency, we must stand ready to apply the principles of equality of sacrifices without fear or favor.

Despite the best efforts of the new administration, we shall undoubtedly be faced with a substantial continuation of the heavy Federal tax burdens. All governments will be required to sacrifice some of the extras that we would all like to have, but which must be deferred until the day when peace has been achieved and, at the very least, a balance of power secured which will permit us to substantially reduce expenditures for the military service. During this period, our State and municipal governments may be required to postpone the inauguration of policies, however desirable, which would place too heavy an economic burden upon a people already struggling under a war economy and its tax burdens. In the operation of our government, as well as in our daily conduct, we must be realistic as well as optimistic.

During the past six years, New Jersey has achieved a legislative record unsurpassed in this country. During a

period that has been marked by worldwide frustration and national disappointments, New Jersey has gone steadily about the business of strengthening the foundations of free government and preparing itself for an ever-increasingly important position in our Union of States. We have steadfastly insisted that the best road to domestic security is to be found in a prosperous, dynamic, free enterprise economy.

Accordingly, a first objective of my administration has been to create and maintain the kind of governmental environment in which our industrial life could grow and expand. The number of new industries moving to New Jersey or building new plants—all providing precious, new and better job opportunities—demonstrates that New Jersey does have a favorable environment for private enterprise.

During the period that I have mentioned, there were many significant achievements and, as was to be expected, some serious disappointments. The programs that you have initiated are now being copied by many of our sister states.

During 1952, we made good progress in the expansion and modernization of our institutional facilities. This program is bound to result in substantial benefits to society generally.

We have taken the first long steps to reduce the incidence of chronic illness and provide for more effective care for those who become chronically ill. A comprehensive program for insurance to protect our Civil Defense volunteers has been placed in operation.

For the first time in the modern history of our State, we adopted a comprehensive building program for our teacher colleges. Our teachers' pension program, a strong inducement to teach in this State, was liberalized and strengthened.

Unsound local police and firemen's pension funds were finally converted into a sound pension program. Provision was made for equal pay for equal work for women in busi-



ness and industry. Our social insurance programs, including workmen's compensation, temporary disability insurance and unemployment compensation, were strengthened, liberalized and improved in administrative procedures.

We have moved from one effective program to another with such rapidity that yesterday's accomplishments appear to be soon forgotten or at least accepted as a matter of course. For example, the final and, perhaps, most important section of the main stem of the New Jersey Turnpike, was completed in January of last year. In the first 12 months of its operation, this modern highway was used by more than 18,000,000 vehicles. It is easy to imagine the condition of our parallel State highways if this volume of traffic had been forced to use them.

During last year, despite steel shortages and other handicaps imposed by the current world crisis, we continued the most important State highway construction program in the history of New Jersey. Among the significant achievements of the past year was the approval of plans for the speedy completion of the 165-mile Garden State Parkway. I am pleased to report that work on this project is proceeding "ahead of schedule." In co-operation with Pennsylvania and New York, provision has been made for additional interstate crossings of the Delaware and the Hudson.

Provision was made for the protection of New Jersey residents against financial loss due to injury by uninsured motorists operating vehicles in this State. The legislation adopted in 1952 gives New Jersey one of the most comprehensive plans ever adopted in this country. Our State Police forces have been expanded, new training programs for local police forces provided.

Further steps were taken to strengthen our law enforcement activities in a campaign against the forces of crime and corruption that have grown surprisingly strong throughout our Nation. For decades this growth has fed on public complacency, a lack of a comprehensive State and interstate plan to combat these forces, and failure of all levels



of government to accept their rightful responsibilities. At long last, we now have a co-ordinated program. Our forces have been mobilized and effective steps are being taken to overcome the menace. Among the important steps taken last year was the creation of a Law Enforcement Council, which, as I indicated in my Message of a year ago, was designed "(1) To develop plans and programs insofar as possible to eliminate the basic causes of crime; (2) To review and evaluate our criminal laws for the purpose of making them more effective deterrents to crime; (3) To examine and appraise, on a continuous basis, the administration of all law enforcement facilities and, *wherever necessary in its judgment, make such investigations as may be required to permit it to advise the Governor, the Attorney General, the Legislature and our citizens on law enforcement within the State.*"

These and other accomplishments are part of a program that began with constitutional revision and was continued when we achieved the best judicial system in the country, reorganized the Executive Branch of our State Government, adopted a modern social security program, built new super-highways and modernized institutions, established a truly significant civil rights program, with one first-class citizenship for all, and provided comprehensive provisions for our veterans upon their return to civilian life.

We have lived within our income, balanced our budgets, and are now operating our State Government with fewer State employees in proportion to our population than any other State in the Nation. We shall continue these prudent policies.

Our task now is to complete the progress that we have begun, to consolidate our gains and to prepare for new and imaginative improvements and services that must soon be undertaken. Government is a dynamic business. Old problems refuse to stay solved and the legislative defeats of yesteryear are the foundation upon which we build the next year's achievements. Deterioration in government begins when those entrusted with its administration are

satisfied that it has reached its peak of efficiency. In our business there is always room for improvement. While perfection is our goal, a government of laws administered by men and women is hardly likely to achieve that objective. Hence, the challenge to try to achieve this illusory goal is one of the principal attractions for men and women of good will to accept "a painful and thankless office." Changing circumstances require us to reappraise old programs and seek new solutions for new as well as old problems. In this message, I shall not attempt to outline all of the subjects that will require legislative action. A number of the more acute issues confronting our State, of very great significance, must be considered against the background of available revenues. These will be discussed in the Budget Message.

### **Reapportionment**

Equitable representation of the people of our State is a key requirement of our republican form of government. While there may be some difference of opinion as to the mathematics of the question, there can be no compromise with the immediate need to reapportion the General Assembly in accordance with the 1950 Federal census of population, as required by our Constitution. I renew my recommendation that you make this a first order of business, since the failure to act promptly may make it impossible in a number of counties to nominate and elect members of the General Assembly in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution.

### **Absentee Voting**

The best guarantee for the preservation and strengthening of our way of life lies in the widest possible participation by voters in elections. The right to vote is one of the great privileges of American citizenship; and yet that right has been denied to a substantial number of our citizens otherwise qualified to vote, because New Jersey does not have a civilian absentee voting law. A New Jersey citizen in the



military service is eligible to vote under our military service voting law; but his wife, who may be with him away from the State, is denied the privilege.

This State once had a civilian absentee voting law. It was repealed in 1926 due to abuses in its operation. The sponsor of the repeal bill cited as reasons for repealing the law the opportunity afforded for fraud, the fact that few qualified absentees availed themselves of the voting privilege, and the expense entailed in printing a relatively large number of ballots that were not used.

Apparently there was some fraud during the time the law was in effect, for on March 13, 1926, an editorial in the *Trenton Evening Times* stated:

“There is no question but that the law providing for the casting of ballots on election day by voters absent from the State has been abused.”

Conditions have changed materially in the past quarter century. The new mobility of our citizens, due to world conditions, decentralization of industry, and improved transportation have combined to make a new absentee voting law essential. Fortunately, we now have permanent registration, which they did not have in 1926. It is my conviction that a properly designed law could be well administered and that it is possible to protect the integrity of our ballot while permitting civilian absentee voting. Accordingly, I recommend: (1) Absentee voting be authorized for any registered voter who is absent or expects to be absent from this State on election day; (2) absentee voting be authorized for any registered voter who is unable to appear at the polls due to illness or physical disability; (3) voters be permitted to cast their “absentee” ballot in person at the office of the County Board of Elections during the week-end preceding election day—a form of this privilege is provided in 18 states and in our military service voting law.

I also recommend that the time within which the military service ballot must be mailed be extended to 45 days prior to any election.



It is important to go further, however, and consider the removal of any other needless impediments to the exercise of the voting privilege. It would be worthwhile to reconsider all of the qualifications for voting, including the requirement of residence for five months within the county.

### **Court Integration**

Under our new Constitution, and with great judicial leadership, we have achieved a judicial system generally recognized as the best in the country. In his Annual Message to the New York Legislature last week, Governor Thomas E. Dewey, in urging judicial reform in that State, said: "In the neighboring State of New Jersey we have seen an enviable improvement in the administration of justice." Despite the excellence of our judicial system, this bulwark of our republican form of government may further be strengthened and improved.

A month ago, the Constitutional Convention Association, composed of the living delegates to the Convention of 1947 and a limited number of representative citizens of New Jersey, overwhelmingly approved integration of the present County Courts with the Superior Court. This decision by the members of the association, following intensive study by its judicial committee, confirms previous recommendations made by me on this subject. It is interesting to note that substantially all of the delegates who were in the forefront of the opposition to inclusion of the County Courts in the completely unified plan submitted by the Judiciary Committee at the Constitutional Convention have, in the light of subsequent experience, altered their views.

There are a number of substantial reasons for integrating the present County Courts with the Superior Court. The basic flexibility of the present system does not overcome the inherent disadvantages which flow from the necessity of maintaining separate County Courts with jurisdiction over judicial business for which the Superior Court is entirely appropriate. A separate County Court

means separate judges who have neither the status nor the security of Superior Court judges. The judicial assignments of county judges can only be on a temporary basis, and the present arrangement necessitates the undesirable practice of having some part-time county judges assigned to try matters pending in a higher court.

Existing constitutional distinctions between the Superior Court and the County Courts require special treatment, procedures, schedules of fees, records and trained personnel. Integration will eliminate the possibility of error, delay, unnecessary expense, and possible injustice. It will insure for the people of our State the fullest measure of prompt and efficient judicial administration.

It is difficult to obtain the best available talent for appointment to the County Courts. Practicing lawyers, who have achieved outstanding reputations for their legal abilities, will not lightly abandon the far greater financial returns available to them in private practice to accept any lesser place on the Bench than the Superior Court would afford.

There would appear to be two methods by which we may achieve the integration that is now earnestly recommended: The first method is by constitutional amendment. The second method is to proceed within the framework of the Judicial Article of the Constitution. The delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1947 wisely included the following provision (Article VI, Section IV, paragraph 4): "The jurisdiction, powers and functions of the County Courts and of the Judges of the County Courts may be altered by law as the public good may require." Under the authority of this provision of the Constitution, the Legislature may alter the existing County Courts by repealing their existing jurisdiction and transferring to them all of the jurisdiction, powers and functions of the county district courts. If the Legislature will adopt this course of action, it may increase the number of Superior Court judges to permit the transfer by appointment of the present



County Court judges to the Superior Court and the transfer of existing county district court judges to the new County Courts. The compensation of the judges of the new County Courts would, of course, be the same as that now paid to the same judges in their capacities as judges of the county district courts. The counties should be relieved of the burden of paying the salaries of these judges. The county district courts, as such, would be abolished after the transfer of their jurisdiction and judges to the new County Courts. There are advantages to this procedure which go beyond the immediate purpose of integration of the existing County Courts with the Superior Court, including a new opportunity to strengthen the operation of our traffic law enforcement.

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With respect to the operation of the judicial system, I repeat my previous recommendation that the authority to appoint jury commissioners be transferred to the Supreme Court where it naturally belongs. The jury system is an integral and very important part of our judicial system, and it should be administered as part of the general administration of justice. Such a step could, moreover, develop into a useful contribution to improved law enforcement.

### **Crime**

The strengthening of our local governments coupled with a greater and more productive participation of our citizens in political activities has been and continues to be a major goal of this Administration. We have worked long and hard to bring home to our citizens the full realization that they have it in their power to achieve the kind of government they want. Time and time again, we have stressed the vital importance to good government of sound local law enforcement programs. Our local police forces are and must continue to be the first line of defense against those who would



violate our laws. Aided by an ever-vigilant press, substantial strides have been made in arousing public interest in the need to attain this objective.

In 1949, following a complete reorganization of our State law enforcement agencies, we opened a broad attack on the problem of organized crime—something that all signs now indicate was neglected by all levels of government in many parts of the country for more than a generation. The task carried us into questions of local police departments, the operation of the courts and county prosecutors' offices, prison and parole administration, and a whole range of interstate and even international implications of organized crime. We knew the job would be long and difficult. Syndicated crime does not respect state lines. Our geographic location, in the most densely populated region in the United States, has its disadvantages as well as its advantages. We warned in 1949 that there would be repercussions and that the dirt that had theretofore been hidden would be exposed, whatever the consequences.

Frankly, I have been impatient with our progress even though much has been accomplished. We have revitalized our criminal courts and procedures, alerted all county prosecutors and superseded those who have moved too slowly or failed in their assignments. We have strengthened the State Police to augment the work of local police departments. The Department of Law and Public Safety has succeeded in breaking at least three major crime syndicates—lottery, bookmaking by telegraph, and gambling combines of nation-wide scope—and caught some underworld chieftains in our nets.

Our State has been singled out for commendation by the head of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics as "doing more than any other state to suppress the abuse of narcotic drugs"; and the establishment of our State narcotic squad as an arm of the Division of State Police has been termed by him "the finest act taken by any state in recent years." Our State law enforcement officers gathered and provided

valuable evidence to the Federal Senate Committee to Investigate Crime and to the New York State Crime Commission; and they have reciprocated. Much has been done and much more will and must be done. But it is apparent that all levels of government have underestimated the nature, strength and ingenuity of the enemy.

I have not been satisfied with the results to date—I will not be satisfied until every violator has been indicted, tried and convicted; and until corrective measures to prevent the recurrence of the evils are adopted and put into effective operation. We have set our sights upon these objectives. I am convinced that our forces of law enforcement are now geared up to the true size of the gigantic problem of organized crime.

The bi-state waterfront investigation which New Jersey initiated in 1951 with our neighboring State of New York is still in its early stages. Racketeering and restrictive practices which have apparently plagued the waterfront for half a century must be routed out if we are to keep the Port of New York a pre-eminent center of shipping and commerce. It should be remembered, however, that sensational headlines alone do not produce lasting remedies. When the first phase of the current investigation of the waterfront is completed, I plan to submit to you specific proposals for the further strengthening of our law enforcement activities along the waterfront. The corrective legislation will undoubtedly be required to be uniform in character and in the finest tradition of interstate co-operation that has prevailed between the States of New Jersey and New York.

Accordingly, I urge that you immediately strengthen the hands of our Law Enforcement Council. This can be done by adopting the recommendation which I submitted to you in my Annual Message a year ago, that our Law Enforcement Council be made a permanent continuing agency with adequate financial support.

During the past year, I discussed with the members of our Law Enforcement Council the work of our prosecutors



and the structure and functioning of their offices. I am requesting the council to consider a proposal that seems to me to have much merit; namely, that in all counties where there is provision for more than one county judge, the prosecutors and the members of their staffs be required to devote full-time to their duties. I recognize that the adoption of this proposal would require the persons who accept the difficult and frequently very burdensome task of prosecutor to make substantial sacrifices. In the past, it has not always been easy to secure the acceptance of the best qualified men for appointment to the position of prosecutor. If the proposal made to the council were accepted and prosecutors and members of their staffs in the counties designated are not permitted to engage in the private practice of law, as in my judgment should be the case, I would recommend that the prosecutors be given the same salary as a Superior Court judge.

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During recent years, we have witnessed the unedifying spectacle of officials who refuse to testify when called before public investigatory bodies. The practice has been common in Washington; it is not unknown elsewhere in the Nation. The constitutional privilege against self-incrimination has been used to keep from the public information of the most vital concern and which it has every right to have. This privilege has been invoked by those who have held public office while unfaithful to their trust, irresponsible in action, corrupt or disloyal. There is no logic in permitting a public official or employee who so refuses to testify to continue to exercise the powers and advantages of his office. I strongly recommend legislative action which will forfeit the office or position, tenure and pension rights of any such person.



### Correctional Institutions

The fact that New Jersey has been sending criminals to jail—among these some who, despite their activities, appear to have been immune from punishment in other states—was brought unpleasantly to our attention last year when a comparatively few inmates of our correctional institutions participated in disturbances that had their counterparts elsewhere in the Nation. The only concessions made by the authorities were that there would be an investigation of the parole system, the prisoners having expressed an opinion that our parole system was unduly harsh, and that corporal punishment, prohibited under the rules of the Department of Institutions and Agencies, would not be meted out to the rioters.

Until the new Constitution was adopted in 1947, the office of Principal Keeper of the State Prison had a constitutional status. Since 1951, when the constitutional status of the carry-over Principal Keeper terminated, and on my insistence, the appointing authority has resided in the Board of Managers of the Prison, subject to the approval of the State Board of Control of Institutions and Agencies. As a result, we achieved a career administration for the first time in the modern history of that institution. The one condition I imposed upon the appointing authority and our Board of Control was that appointments be based upon merit and that the Principal Keeper and his staff be qualified by experience, character and judgment to perform their difficult duties. This change opens up new opportunities for our penal and correctional institutions. The transition from the old *laissez-faire* days, when the prisoners were reasonably content because in effect they exercised an authority they never should have been permitted to exercise, was not expected to be an easy one. Unhappily, my fears were confirmed.

It is my hope that you will read the constructive report of the committee I appointed to examine and investigate the prison and parole systems of New Jersey. Mr. Justice

Harry Heher and his associates, Dr. Austin H. MacCormick and Mr. Stanley P. Ashe, are entitled to our grateful acknowledgment and thanks for the time and effort they devoted to the investigation as well as for the constructive character of their excellent report. Many of the recommendations contained in the report either have been or are in process of being adopted. The report confirms an opinion I have previously expressed to the effect that "the State Prison at Trenton has long since outlived its usefulness \* \* \*."

The purpose of our correctional institutions is at least threefold: the protection of society, the custody of prisoners, and the rehabilitation of the offenders. We must constantly bear in mind that in most instances prisoners committed to our correctional institutions will be returned to society. Accordingly, our physical facilities, the staff and the program must be designed to rehabilitate the prisoner, returning him to society as a useful citizen determined to avoid any further conflict with the law.

We should promptly begin the construction of a new prison to replace the present State Prison in Trenton. In the meantime, improvements presently in process at Rahway should be completed. Our correctional institutions are an important and integral part of our institutional program.

A substantial portion of the money that has been authorized by our citizens for the improvement of our institutions should be made available for the beginning of construction of the new prison.

During the past year, our Departments of Institutions and Agencies and Civil Service, under the leadership of Commissioner Sanford Bates and Dr. Lester Clee, respectively, have completely reviewed, revised and strengthened the civil service in our correctional institutions. Our salary schedule is now one of the best in the country. This should permit us to recruit competent men. In addition, new training programs for personnel have been initiated which should prove very helpful.



With increasing rapidity we are overcoming the neglect of a great many years in the physical facilities of our institutions. As a result of the action taken by you last year, our citizens confirmed our judgment that the capital improvement program for the modernization and expansion of our institutional facilities should be continued. It is my hope that the legislation allocating the funds for this important program will be promptly approved.

### **Youthful Offenders**

In my Annual Message last year, I pointed to the Highfields Experimental Treatment Project as one of the significant New Jersey contributions to the difficult task of treating the young offender. I stated that it was entirely possible that with this project New Jersey may have discovered a type of treatment for the pre-delinquent and adolescent offender which is more economical, more humanitarian, and more effective than the traditional type of discipline heretofore imposed.

The Highfields Project has been conducted by the State Department of Institutions and Agencies since July 1, 1950. For a completely objective evaluation of the effectiveness of the work of that project, an independent agency was established to undertake a detailed, five-year study of the work being performed and its effects in the treatment of boys sent to the Treatment Center. The Director of Research for the agency, the Scientific Advisory Committee, has recently filed an interim report based on a 17-month operational period. The citizens of New Jersey may well be encouraged by the results already disclosed. For example, the report states that the Highfields Project "accomplishes as much, if not more, in its four months of residential treatment as the reformatory at Annandale does in its more than twelve months." In the cases included in the study, 85 per cent of the boys released from Highfields were shown to be successful on probation or parole, as compared with only 61 per cent for Annandale. "High-



fields," the report concludes, "may even do better, but such results can only be known after more cases are analyzed in the years ahead."

I cite this merely as another illustration of a bold New Jersey experimental program of attacking the basic causes of crime while at the same time conserving our human resources. This program as well as the tremendously encouraging program of the Child Treatment Center at Allaire, that of the Diagnostic Center, and others that are presently being administered by the Department of Institutions and Agencies should be supported and expanded.

### **Traffic Safety**

The daily accidents on our highways constitute a "crime" of another character. On several occasions county prosecutors have recommended that the words "willful" and "wanton" should be deleted from the statute having to do with death by automobiles. The alarming number of deaths and accidents on our highways overshadows the fact that New Jersey has one of the best highway safety records in the country. It must be improved. We can ill afford to adopt a complacent attitude toward this problem.

In the Fall of 1951, we created the Bureau of Traffic Safety, in the Department of Law and Public Safety. This Bureau is presently providing constructive leadership in a comprehensive, state-wide traffic safety program.

The "point system," adopted by the Department of Law and Public Safety last year, is proving a useful preventive measure, designed to deter users of our highways from reckless and careless conduct. It is significant of the public concern that this measure has won widespread public support.

Likewise, the driver clinic that we established last year as a part of our program to reduce the number of motor vehicle violations, has already demonstrated its worth and should be continued.

Now I recommend the adoption of legislation, proposed by the State Co-ordinating Council on Traffic and Safety, for special examinations and licenses for the drivers of tractor-trailers.

Likewise, provision should be made in our laws for limited driver licenses to be issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles based on scientific tests where individual disabilities demonstrate that such limited licenses are in the public interest.

### **Highways**

I am pleased to be able to report that the plans for extensions of the New Jersey Turnpike have been substantially completed and that work on several of these extensions will be begun in the near future. In the case of the Newark Bay Bridge and the Hudson County extension, this has thus far been a co-operative venture of the New Jersey Highway Department and the Turnpike Authority.

As was to be expected, the New Jersey Highway Authority, responsible for the construction of the Garden State Parkway, and the Highway Department, have collaborated to speed the completion of this tremendously important project.

The Highway Department itself is proceeding with its construction program as rapidly as steel and available funds will permit. If we are to protect our new highways from commercial encroachment and the hazards of traffic friction that inevitably accompany marginal business, the Department should be given a greater opportunity to build limited-access highways and freeways. The legislation adopted last year should be expanded this year. This action by you will permit the Highway Department to build State highways that will support the free and safe flow of traffic on our new highways and protect them against unsightly encroachments.



### **Interstate Co-operation**

In 1952 we substantially expanded our interstate co-operative programs. The new interstate crossings that are being constructed under or over the Hudson and Delaware rivers are a challenge to this State to build the finest approach highways to these new crossings that have ever been planned or built in this country.

In addition to the new crossings that are actually being built (one of these was completed in December of 1952), it is apparent that we will need additional crossings. I am requesting the Delaware River Port Authority to plan now for another crossing of the Delaware between Gloucester county and the southern part of Philadelphia.

We have completed our studies and preliminary engineering plans for a ferry service between Cape May and Lewes, Delaware. Looking further ahead, it is apparent that within the foreseeable future a bridge will span the Delaware Bay and we shall have, for the first time in the history of our country, a complete "ocean highway" from Florida to Maine. The construction of such a bridge would be of inestimable benefit to the southern part of our State.

The need for high-speed rail transportation in the North Jersey-New York metropolitan area, as well as in the South Jersey-Philadelphia metropolitan area, is becoming more urgent every day. We are fortunate in now having State and interstate agencies committed to determine the development of a blueprint for action. I refer to the Delaware River Port Authority, created by the Legislatures of the States of Pennsylvania and New Jersey in 1951; the Port of New York Authority, which has rendered such important service to the citizens of New York and New Jersey; and the Metropolitan Rapid Transit Commissions, created respectively by the Legislatures of New York and New Jersey last year.

I continue to be of the opinion that one of our primary needs is for additional rail facilities between the metropoli-

tan areas of New York and North Jersey, Philadelphia and South Jersey.

The rehabilitation of Port Newark by the Port of New York Authority, pursuant to legislation adopted concurrently by New Jersey and New York in 1948, will soon be followed by the modernization of important Hoboken piers which will materially strengthen the economy of Hudson county and the entire State. The Port Authority has spent or committed about \$20,000,000 in its rehabilitation and development program for Port Newark. It is estimated that the cost of rehabilitating the Hoboken harbor area will amount to approximately \$22,000,000. Since commerce is a part of the lifeblood of our economy, these activities and others that have been completed—including the \$8,000,000 Union Motor Truck Terminal in Newark designed to take huge over-the-road trucks off city streets, the new runway at the Newark Airport, and the bus terminal in New York that serves over 60,000 New Jersey commuters daily—constitute important achievements of interstate co-operation.

### **Natural Resources**

Last year you made provision for the acquisition of additional water reserves and recreational areas.

We are nearing the end of our negotiations for the purchase of Island Beach.

We have reached a tentative agreement with representatives of the Federal Government with respect to the Wharton Tract, with its important recreational opportunities and water reserves.

It is my hope that during 1953 we will complete our negotiations for the acquisition of Sandy Hook.

### **Education**

In 1952, near the end of the legislative session, you received the concluding section of an important report from our State School Aid Commission recommending an in-



crease of from \$55,000,000 to \$60,000,000 in State aid for public education.

I wish to express my personal appreciation to the Commission for the time and energy it devoted to its work and to thank it for the contribution it has made to public thinking on one of our most important problems. The Commission, in its report, recognized that consideration of its proposals raised many perplexing issues that obviously could not be settled over-night. It is obvious that any substantial increase in State aid will require additional revenue which must be provided by the Legislature. Therefore the Commission concluded: "Until a proper program of taxation sufficient to provide the additional support recommended by the Commission can be determined and made operative, the Commission urges the Legislature to make available as much additional State School Aid from other sources as can be appropriated." This has been done.

I am sure that the appropriate committees of this Legislature will wish to consider very carefully the recommendations made by the State School Aid Commission.

Certain facts stand out in the Commission's report. The first of these is that New Jersey has one of the best public school systems in the United States, judged by the amount of expenditure per pupil in average daily attendance. The purpose of the proposed additional State aid, and this is another fact of the report, is directed as much to diverting the burden of supporting this excellent school system from local real estate to some other tax base to be specified by the Legislature, as it is to the provision of additional State aid in and of itself. The question of more State aid thus becomes as much a question of tax policy as of educational policy. In brief: Is it better to continue to pay for our schools principally from the local real estate tax, or would it be better to adopt some new and additional tax to be collected by the State and distributed to school districts, thereby shifting some of the burden to a non-property tax base? It is pertinent to note that so-called replacement taxes seldom achieve their objectives.

The question of State aid for schools is easy to confuse with the quality of public schools. We all want the best possible public schools, adequately financed. During the past five years, we have taken some rather effective steps to increase teachers' salaries, substantially increase State aid for education and, as previously noted, to liberalize and strengthen teachers' pension programs. Now we are engaged in the task of enlarging our teachers' colleges so as to increase the number of graduates who will be prepared to teach in our public schools.

Any consideration of our tax and school problems requires us to consider present methods of distribution of State aid for education. The formulas are inequitable and need to be completely revised. Even the measure of need for State aid must depend upon reform of the real estate tax which presently provides the major financial support for education.

There will shortly be submitted to you a report of the Commission on State Tax Policy. The Commission, at my request, has been engaged in an intensive study of assessment and equalization of real estate taxes.

In my Inaugural Address in 1947, and on more than one occasion thereafter, I have stated that our entire system of taxation—which is really no system at all—needs overhauling and that we should begin with our local assessment procedures and practices.

All of these subjects—so intimately interwoven—will be discussed by me in the Budget Message.

### **Social Welfare**

A task of every modern government worthy of public confidence is to help its citizens to maintain at least minimum standards of human decency. The privilege of the more progressive and able governments is to raise those minimum standards in recognition of the general rise in the standard of living. Since our economy is not static,



and since the battle against human misery is never completely won, we are well advised to review each year the progress we have made and the current needs of all social welfare programs.

Over the past six years, constructive co-operation between the Legislative and Executive Branches of our State Government has produced many major improvements. Beginning with the guarantee of labor's right to organize and bargain collectively, incorporated in the new Constitution, our State has made good progress in assuring equality of opportunity and a single first-class citizenship. A pioneer and leader in the field of workmen's compensation, New Jersey now enjoys the benefits of full coverage of all occupational diseases under our workmen's compensation law. We are one of only four states (California, New York, and Rhode Island are the other three) to adopt a temporary disability benefits program which is now safeguarding more than 1,800,000 workers against loss of wages due to off-the-job accidents or illness.

In recognition of the increase in the cost of living and of the rise in general wage structure, the benefits of all social insurance programs (workmen's compensation, unemployment compensation, and temporary disability benefits) have been substantially increased. Last year, at the same time that you enacted the most recent of the benefit increases, you provided for a complete overhauling of the legislative standards and administrative procedures that apply to the unemployment and disability benefit systems. This is the first month that the new legislation has been in full operation and I am informed that its administration is proceeding smoothly.

We need some time to consolidate our gains. There is no reason to assume that we have gone as far as we ought to go in this type of legislation. The primary need this year, however, is to strengthen and improve the programs we already have. To this end, I recommend legislation to:

(1) Extend the coverage of the unemployment compensation and the temporary disability benefits laws to include those working for firms with 1-or-more employees rather than the present 4-or-more coverage. Under the Federal social security law and our own State workmen's compensation law, these smaller firms are covered, and there is no reason to discriminate against them in other social insurance programs.

(2) Revise our State minimum wage law so as to establish a uniform hourly minimum in conformity with Federal regulation of interstate commerce, and continuing the present provision for wage orders, setting higher minimum wages applicable to specific industries, upon appropriate economic findings.

(3) Increase the maximum workmen's compensation rate payable to widows and other dependents in death cases from \$25.00 per week to \$30.00 per week, for the number of allowable weeks. As a result of recent amendments, the workmen's compensation law now provides for a maximum weekly compensation rate of \$30.00 for temporary disability, and for partial permanent disability and total permanent disability. We should make the maximum weekly amount payable in death cases conform to the previously established amount in other cases.

I shall submit additional recommendations to you during the course of this legislative session. It has been well said that in the long run the best economic security for the wage earner must depend upon steady employment at a good rate of earnings. This principle is recognized in the recommendations I am making to you and has been the guide to our proposals of the past. We have sought to discharge the proper responsibilities of State government to the working people in a leading industrial State, and at the same time to maintain New Jersey's position as a favorable environment in which to locate new employment-giving industries. That we have apparently succeeded in this policy is evident in the great increase in industrial develop-



ment throughout New Jersey. At the same time, we have been perfecting a superior social welfare program during the past six years.

### **Public Assistance**

Specialists in public assistance are agreed that more should be accomplished in the integration of public assistance services administered by professionally qualified persons. They are not, as yet, agreed on the form and degree of such further integration.

The Commission to Study the Administration of Welfare in New Jersey, under the able leadership of Walter L. Kidde, has applied itself diligently to this knotty problem. I am informed that the commission will submit legislative recommendations. I urge that you carefully study them so that there can be agreement on legislation which will advance the objectives of fair and humane treatment to those in need, sound and professional administration, and economy of operation.

### **Chronic Sick**

The inadequately controlled incidence of chronic illness is adding significantly to the mounting costs of all levels of government. We now know there are long-term chronic illnesses which are preventable. We have in the last year made a new and promising beginning on a control program. While we know that we cannot prevent all chronic illness, with the knowledge that we now have we can prevent some types of chronic illness and defer the onset of other types. Prevention is far cheaper than prolonged institutionalization and cure. We must, in my judgment, give very serious consideration to the possibility of strengthening the preventive program with the assurance that any investment that can be made will pay big dividends in the savings of institutional and other social costs.

## Legislative Procedure

In the course of much of the constructive work we have accomplished together in the past, it has become apparent that improved legislative procedures could contribute to a better functioning of the Executive as well as the Legislative Branch of our State Government. I am fully conscious that the responsibility for legislative procedures is the particular province of the two Houses of the Legislature. Under the constitutional requirement that all bills passed by the Legislature be transmitted to the Governor for his consideration, however, certain aspects of legislative procedure may also affect the executive function. Over the past years, for example, it has been my duty, a distasteful duty I might add, to exercise the veto power, both qualified and absolute, over a substantial number of bills. From time to time, I have become aware of the fact that part of the difficulty has arisen because of inadequate legislative procedures.

At a time when democracy is fighting against a ruthless adversary in many parts of the world, it is more important than ever to preserve at home the highest possible standards of representative government. To this end, you may wish to consider the advisability of these steps:

- (1) Provide an opportunity for a public hearing on every bill by the committee to which it has been referred. This will require the assignment of hearing rooms and dates for the various committees, and the establishment of a hearings calendar. I can assure you of the full co-operation of the Executive Branch to this end. Such a step should assure the removal of one major cause of dissatisfaction with the existing legislative processes.

- (2) Require each legislative committee to submit a formal written report with the bills it reports out, and require it to report out any bill upon petition of seven Senators in the Senate or twenty members in the General Assembly.



(3) Strengthen and increase facilities of the Legislature for bill drafting and committee staffing, as the need appears.

### **Modernization of Statutes**

The 1951 Special Session of the Legislature adopted a complete revision of Titles 2 and 3 of the Revised Statutes. Your prompt action in approving of the work of the Committee on Revision of Statutes added immeasurably to effective judicial administration in our State and has received merited national attention. I urge that you adopt the recently completed work of this important committee in order to insure a uniform body of practice and procedure and the effective operation of the Judicial Branch of our State Government.

The task of modernizing Title 48 of the Revised Statutes relating to public utilities is going forward. It is my hope that this work will be completed with all possible dispatch. The provisions of that title are clearly outdated; effective administration requires that they be replaced. In addition to this task, other titles affected by the Administrative Reorganization Program of 1948 are receiving the attention of the Legislative Commission on Statute Revision. The Legislature has taken a truly progressive step in reconsidering the entire body of our statute law in the light of modern conditions.

This work of statutory revision will be of lasting public benefit. It will eliminate antiquated provisions, clarify and simplify governmental regulation, and assure every citizen the far-reaching benefits of a well ordered and clearly stated set of laws under which he is to be governed.

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There are other important subjects which will require your attention. Among them will be rent control, a continuing attention to our veterans' benefits programs, and further reference to recommendations which I have made in

previous messages. I will, of course, direct your attention to the salary needs of State employees, as well as to other financial matters, in the forthcoming Budget Message.

### Conclusion

1953 may be reported as a year of transition. Within a few days there will be an historic change in the administration of the Federal Government. This is a proper and perhaps an auspicious time to reappraise the relationship between the various levels of government in the firm hope that such a re-examination of the business of government in this country, followed by appropriate action by Congress and State Legislatures, may make it possible for us (1) to strengthen and preserve American principles of government, including the restoration of a working federalism in this country; (2) conserve tax dollars, thereby securing less government and better government for less money; (3) conserve the time and energy of our executives and legislators, both State and Federal, by the elimination of a major portion of the divided responsibility that presently exists in many fields of governmental endeavor, including duplication of services and administration and competition for the same tax dollar; and (4) provide for the effective performance of essential governmental services by the agencies best equipped to perform those services.

A Committee of State Governors is presently engaged in a determined effort to reduce the cost of government and to achieve substantial progress on the program that I have outlined.

Therefore, as we consider the requests that are constantly being made to government for new services, involving as they do additional taxes, we must be mindful not only of the cost of our war effort but also the total impact of all taxes levied by all government on our citizens. We must consider every opportunity for economy and avoid the danger of piecemeal tax legislation. The obvious need is for a thorough co-ordinated overhauling of the Federal



and State tax laws for which the word "system" is hardly descriptive.

Over the years, we have worked together on the basis of mutual respect and confidence. We have recognized that in our representative form of government, an occasional disagreement, however disappointing it may be at the time, may be as much an evidence of strength as weakness. It is the weakness of the communists that compels them to stifle debate and requires slavish adherence to the party line.

In New Jersey, a dramatic evidence of our strength is to be found in the tremendous number of public-spirited men and women who daily serve as volunteers in various official capacities. Advisory boards and councils in the principal departments, as well as the members of our National Guard, the Air National Guard, the Naval Militia, and those who staff our Selective Service and Civil Defense agencies, are rendering outstanding service for which our State is grateful. The officers and men of our military forces have been acclaimed by representatives of the National Department of Defense for their efficiency as well as for their valor.

Among the many volunteer citizens to whom we owe a debt of gratitude are the 232,000 members of our civil defense forces. This number is a substantial increase over last year. Despite the fact that we spend less money for the administration of civil defense than almost any other state, the officers and members of our civil defense forces have won nation-wide recognition for their fine program and constructive service.

All of these volunteers are cast in the image of the men who first won our freedoms. They represent one of our best hopes, enlightened citizen interest and active participation in the government of our land. In them, we see democracy at work. Mindful of their service and the service of the men and women in our military forces, particularly those who are fighting a mean war, we can have faith and confidence that our Republic will survive all the vicissitudes of

a trying era. In their spirit of dedication, and with Divine Guidance, we may turn with renewed hope and understanding to take up our mutual responsibilities of the year ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

ALFRED E. DRISCOLL,  
*Governor.*

[SEAL]

Attest:

LEON S. MILMED,  
*Counsel and Acting Secretary to the Governor.*









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