

# Inaugural Talk: A Projection Into the Future

Alaska's new Republican governor, Walter J. Hickel, made his inaugural speech last Saturday over a statewide radio network and to a capacity audience at the Juneau-Douglas High School gymnasium of the state capitol of Juneau.

The speech was a projection into the future economic development of the state based on the vast natural resources potential of Alaska.

"...We must have a vision of tomorrow, for all things of reality must first be an idea, a vision, a dream." Governor declared. "We will build a strong course of economic development and progress for all Alaskans, and in the pursuit of that vision, many of the good things of life will come to us."

Saying that he will present

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# Inaugural Speech

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specific plans and recommendations to the people of the state in his 'State of the State' message, the Governor launched to examine the economic potential of Alaska.

"We can be proud of our giant fishing operations, our pulp and timber mills, and our young, but rapidly growing oil business. What we need is more economic development. We need basic economic development, to tap Alaska's great wealth," Hickel said.

He said that Alaska was a unique land what "we like to call 'The Last Frontier.'"

"We are the last frontier which gives us an opportunity to do many things right that other states have done wrong," he said. "Our Borough Act has already started to guard against sloppy urban sprawl as we develop. We will keep our air clean and our water pure. We will see to it with a planned park system, that Alaskans will always have the pleasures of the untouched out-of-doors."

He said that what had happened in other states must also happen in Alaska; that things like railroads were built with the help of the federal government.

"Why should it be any difference today, in America's last frontier?" he asked.

## RAILROAD TO NOME

"Let us build a railroad—the Alaska Railroad—through the high country in the North stretching from Fairbanks to Nome," Hickel continued. "That railroad will open up this highly mineralized area, and within a few years huge ore-carrying trains 100 cars long and more will carry our minerals out of the ground and to the marketplace."

"Then, wherever vast mineral deposits are uncovered, let us build new cities. We can not develop our Arctic lands by compulsion as the Russians did. We will develop them by attraction. Jobs created in these new cities will attract people from the river country. And while we have been unable to solve individual village problems of sanitation, electrification, and so on, we will have them already solved in these cities."

Hickel said that Alaska was important to other states because of its huge supply of natural resources; that some of this had been tapped already in the way of oil and gas and that its further development "may be as large as those in Venezuela, or larger yet." He said that searching for this resource was going on in the Arctic Slope, Bristol Bay and the Gulf of Alaska for other deposits of the "black gold."

The Governor said he was sure other business enterprises in variety of fields intend to follow the lead of the oil companies.

## METALS

"We are aware of the diminishing supply of various metals in the lower 48," he said. "We are aware that revolution or less violent political changes could drastically change the availability of things that we as a nation import. We are aware of an impending crisis in the world's food supply brought

on by a rising population."

The Governor continued, "We also know that when there is a need, Alaska must be able to harvest food from the two mighty oceans and the three great seas that touch our coastline. No other nation, and certainly no other state, is so blessed with the riches that the sea offers Alaska."

## PARTNERSHIP

"We need the federal government as a partner in progress to pave the way for private enterprise, for if private enterprise by itself had to start to develop the continental United States today, with today's tax structure (and without Alaska's unique climate and geography) I seriously doubt that the development attempt would get off the ground."

"But as allies—private enterprise, the State, and the federal government—we will succeed in extending Alaska's economic development."

Governor Hickel said that fisheries and the reindeer industry needed to be researched and developed further.

"To develop our fisheries further, Alaska needs a Fisheries Research Center so that we will know the kind and extent of all of our fishing resources."

"When I was visiting Savoonga, on the Bering Sea, Siberia was very close; and on this exceptionally clear, beautiful day, although Russian boats were working, we were doing nothing. A native mentioned to me that 'they are fishing all the time and we don't even know what's there.'"

"We need to know what's there, and everywhere along our 34,000 miles of coastline. We need to know so that we can satisfy a hungry world's need for protein so that we might better harvest the seas."

"We will also develop a better reindeer industry from herding to meatpacking on the Seward Peninsula. We will work for further development of our mining industry, which will be bolstered when we open up the Arctic to transportation."

"The list goes on. It is a long visionary list, and in order to make those visions a reality, the State must work with the federal government and provide an encouraging climate for private industry."

Walter Hickel declared that the development of Alaska would provide better jobs for all Alaskans such as year-round jobs instead of seasonal jobs they now have.

He said that Alaskans were an "independent bunch" and that economic development would make them more independent economically.

"...And with this economic independence many of our social and welfare problems will disappear for men will have the dignity and self-satisfaction of self-help."

"In addition, we will fully use all of the existing ways we have within the State government to solve our social problems, many of which are unique, such as the shocks that come to a person used to the way of life in a native village when he comes to live in one of our cities. This, we

will do.

"...Our country is unique, in the ruggedness and determination of their pioneer spirit which the land helps mold. Our location and our natural wealth, combined with imagination and a determined effort to make our dreams a reality, are the only things we need to achieve our vision of the future."

"I pledge my cooperation and strongest efforts to overcome whatever problems we encounter as we go forward," the Governor declared.