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Anthony J. Stovira



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Mayor's Address

To the Honorable Board of Aldermen:

We have gathered here again to enter upon another milestone in the history of our city government. While it is a new step for all of us, for some it will not be a new experience. For others it will be their first venture in the affairs of our civic life. But, old or new, a public trust has been placed upon all of us and we cannot afford to regard this lightly. We are duty bound to set aside all personal aims that may obstruct the machinery of good government and our citizens look to us to shape a course that will dispose of each problem as it arises to the best interest of our city.

As city governments run their course there is usually left to each new administration some unfinished business to be disposed of. The most important matter of this nature is our school situation. Without dwelling on the experiences of the past two years, let me say that it shall be our intention to provide the resources needed to prevent any unfortunate interruption in school schedules. For after all the school committee is an elective body and it is just as responsible to the citizens as are the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen.

From time to time an opportunity is given to a city to acquire a public building at a very low cost. Such an opportunity has been offered Chicago by the Federal government under the PWA to share in the cost of a new city infirmary. There can be no doubt in any person's mind that we now have an infirmary that has been repeatedly condemned by both city and state officials as being unsanitary and unsafe. We therefore should accept the offer of the

Federal government and I would recommend the building of a new infirmary on the present site.

Another opportunity to get a public improvement at a low cost presents itself under the provisions of Chapter 90 of the law of this Commonwealth. This law provides for the collection by the state of a gasoline tax from every automobile owner which is put into a fund for the purpose of building highways. Any city that applies for a share of that fund receives it and it is with regret that I note that during the past two years our city made no such application. We should get our full share of that fund and I recommend that we make application for enough to complete Montgomery St. entirely and to finish Granby Rd.

There is another matter that should be taken up with our State government. It relates to one of the reasons that our city has so long been a collection of communities rather than a unit. We are all aware of the influence that has been exerted on many of our citizens by the neighboring cities in attracting their attention and interests in many ways. For instance, a number of our young men are attracted to Holyoke and Springfield through their enlistments in the National Guard companies located in those cities. One of the ways to endow these future civic leaders with the proper interest in welfare of their own city is to supply them with a National Guard Armory that can be erected at the expense of the state and without any cost to the city except to provide a site. I recommend that a petition be sent to the Governor and the Legislature requesting them to provide this city with a state armory.

Among the major problems that we will face at once is the matter of flood control as it affects the Willimansett and Ferry Lane sections bordering the Connecticut River. I have already taken steps to interest the Federal Government in a reconsideration of the flood control plan previously prepared by me. This plan calls for the construction of dikes along the river banks to protect the low lying areas. We will be unable to provide a proper sewage system in

this district or to check the annual loss of property by the citizens affected until dikes are in place. I expect the support of every agency in the city to induce the Federal Government to undertake the construction of dikes without cost to the city as early as possible.

Now we come to what seems to me is the most vital problem of all. At no time, since the Federal unemployment relief program was begun in this city, has there been such a complete failure to take advantage of the opportunities offered by that program to give employment to our unemployed as exists now. Less than one-third of the number of persons that could be put to work under the WPA quota for Cheshire are now employed. There appears to be a complete breakdown in the several departments in the matter of finding suitable projects for approval.

I believe the solution lies in the selection of a capable person to direct the forces of our various departments in order that projects may be developed in an orderly progress so that as fast as one is completed a new one will be always available. We must not lose sight of the fact that the possibility of reducing our welfare burden rests upon our ability to give Federal employment to as many as we can to those receiving city aid so long as the industrial plants are unable to absorb the idle workers.

It goes without saying that the restoration of any part of the wage schedules of the city employees depends upon the savings we can make in our relief costs. Such tax rate reductions as we can make depend also in a great measure on this and other savings. It is my intention to sponsor only worthy projects and I will look to every department head for cooperation in developing this relief measure to its fullest extent.

There now comes one other matter I feel compelled to comment on. In this connection let me say that a city government fails of its purpose if its functions, through any of its departments, in measure which does not take the welfare of all of its citizens into consideration. A contract entered in-

to by a city for the sale or delivery to it of any commodities is one that affects every one of us and I take this occasion to say that a contract, recently entered into by our city with a certain power company for delivery of electric power, will bear my closest scrutiny and will meet such action as it merits. In pursuing this course, I shall bear in mind that I am a representative of all of the people serving their best interests.

May I say in conclusion fellow citizens as I have said to you once before, that I call your attention to the fact that we can carry out the foregoing program only with the most sincere co-operation on the part of all the citizens, the heads of the several departments, and the whole-hearted support of the Board of Aldermen, whose members I now call upon to assemble in session in their chambers to organize for the task that lies before them for the coming year.