

Governors Message

Fellow Citizens of the Legislative Assembly of Colorado Territory

Accept my congratulations, gentlemen, that the auspicious hour has arrived, for the meeting of the Legislative Assembly of the people of Colorado. Accept also the expressions of satisfaction with which I welcome you to inaugurate government on the foundation of the will and power of the people.

The stern and delicate duty which is confided to you is to create and to condense into system and order the elements of stable government for this Commonwealth of the primeval mountains, become, in the march of our great country, one of the family of the American Union.

It is enjoined upon me by the Organic Act to submit to your deliberations the condition of our young republic and recommend to you specially the essential subjects of legislation.

I recommend to you the subdivision of our territorial area into counties, suited to the wants and convenience of the people, with provision for the more minute subdivisions of townships, districts and precincts for municipal government and police. These subdivisions ought to be as small as the density of population may render possible. It is in these complete little republics where the sovereign power of the people is always in exercise, where self government has perpetual vitality and independant freedom is practised and enjoyed. To harmonise these by judicious general laws informing every where energy and uniformity of action, is to found a state upon a basis of solid power and enduring strength, compatible with the generous enjoyment of freedom.

It will also be your care to establish a system of social police laws for the prevention and punishment of crime and immorality, a code of civil laws and procedure for the pacific adjustment of matters of contract and dispute between citizens, and for the management and protection of estates of deceased persons and the care of heirs and orphans. To these you will add tribunals for the executive management of the revenues of taxation, roads, education, charity and ministerial officers for the effective administration of public affairs in its minute details.

Pre-eminent among the principles which give vigour and stability to civilized society is education. The universal dissemination of schools in which the people of all ages shall receive generous instruction, uniform and thorough in its character, inspires and maintains intelligence of a high standard. With a perfect system of schools and colleges for the people, alone, can we rely

for the virtuous exercise of the elective franchise, for the steady discipline of civil society and for the permanent power of order and religion over anarchy.

I specially command this subject to our deliberation, satisfied that every page of history demonstrates the universal cultivation of the intellect of the social map, to be the eminent origin from which flow order, religion, wealth and prosperity.

Next in order, the military organization of our people demands your prompt action. The citizen must be also a soldier and armed. The system of civil society is never safe from revolution and the shocks of sudden conspiracies, unless associated with and fortified by an equally vigorous discipline of its physical power.

The pressing necessity of military efficiency in discipline and arms, is rendered absolute by the presence of 25,000 resident Indians, intermingled with our people and upon the routes of communication over which all supplies reach our territory.

I recommend the creation of a territorial organization of the militia so efficient as fully to meet the necessities of our present and prospective condition: to maintain an energetic state of preparation always ready and effective to enforce order and overbear every enemy.

There is distinctly discernible in the industrial occupations of the people of Colorado a classification of pursuits, flowing naturally from the influences of climate and the close juxtaposition of vast mountains and plains. Mining exclusively occupies a portion of our people: pastoral agriculture, another portion: arable agriculture, a third portion. With these are every where intermingled those who pursue commerce and manufactures. In the early infancy of society, the first instincts of the people have developed themselves to obtain the benefits of government, by the effort to create a general provisional government: subsequently by voluntary associations, locally established and temporarily acquiesced in.

To harmonize this variety of tastes and industrial pursuits under a genial system of law so judiciously gauged as to promote the healthy vitality of each and blend them into a state of mutual dependence and mutual support, is to attain the triumph of good government.

Moderation, instructed and led by wisdom, will extinguish from among the elements of society the evil principles of hostility and envy and plant in its place the good principles of generous rivalry and concord of energies.

Added to the other fundamental departments of society is the government of cities, towns and villages and the erection of public and private corporations. The immense experience of our

country demonstrates the necessity of a discriminating caution in this vital department of legislation, where the central source of power, delegates its own functions in detail. The wise rule of action is to restrict the powers of corporations within the same constitutional barrier, which prescribes and limits the powers of the legislature itself and restrains all delegated powers and privileges in obedience to the primary sovereignty of the embodied people.

Having enumerated the departments of prominent importance in erecting the frame of government and distributing the administration of power through the body of society, I recur (sic) with emphasis to the departments of the Judiciary and the Militia.

To a pioneer people entering upon the great work of establishing an harmonious commonwealth for themselves and their posterity, the vigorous action of these two departments constitutes the bulwarks of their liberties, their safety from disorder and their plain progress to succeed. Your care will be to draw from accumulated experience enactments so luminous, comprehensive and vigorous as to awaken the response of the people and command their energetic cooperation.

I transmit to you a copy of the Census of the Territory officially taken and the gestures of the general election held under the Organic Act, which invests you with full powers and authority for constituent legislation, within the restrictions of the Federal Constitution.

The Census reveals many valuable and very novel facts. The comparative proportions of our people devoted to mining within the mountains; to agriculture upon the great rivers; and those residing in the commercial towns are clearly demonstrated. The aggregate population is 30,000. The predominance, in numbers, of male citizens over females and children, is a fact so remarkable, as to have no recorded precedent in any new society voluntarily planted and perpetuated in the wilderness.

The result of the vote of the whole people, impartially taken and honestly recorded, is a conclusive declaration of their acceptance of the Organic Act, conceded by the Federal Congress in response to their own petitions. It is a sublime expression of loyalty, satisfaction and devotion to the existing Continental Union. It is a fervent prayer to the Supreme Throne of Grace, for the sanctity, the safety and the perpetuity of the Constitution and the best of governments. It is an unqualified pledge to perpetuate the ancient forms inspired by the patriarchal fathers; to secure the independent liberties of the people; and to maintain the employment of civil and religious liberty in practice among men.

I have had the agreeable opportunity to visit the citizens of our territory at their homes and to accept of their generous hospitalities. Three years have elapsed since the first pioneer settlement. The grand energies and activity of the people, everywhere manifest, have already created a powerful and well balanced commonwealth. This experience and labor established many facts. The existence of the precious and base metals in absolutely inexhaustible abundance and variety; the universal fertility of the soil, as well upon the flanks of the Great Mountains, as upon the Plains and within the Parks: the uniform splendour and celebrity (sic) of the climate: the facility of transit and penetration by roads over all varieties of surface: these facts, conclusively established, demonstrate that our country is supremely favored by nature with all the elements which promise unrivalled rapidity of progress, prosperity and power.

A grand work, to penetrate the middle region of our continent and to perfect the fraternal bonds of our whole people sometime isolated on the shores of different oceans, has long dominated in the hearts of every American. An exploration and critical survey, nearly completed, of a line connecting Denver and Salt Lake Cities, by Vasquez Fork and the Middle Park, demonstrates the existence of a route through the Snowy Cordillera, filling all the requirements of economical construction, easy transit, centrality and directness, heretofore desired or demanded by any portion of the American people. It is through the centre of Colorado Territory then, that the Continental Railway is about to be constructed, which a few years will complete. Our territory will be bisected, east and west, by the grandest work of all time, constructed to fraternize the domestic relation of our own people, and to draw to and fro through the heart of the American Union, the travel and commerce of all the nations and all the continents of the world. Such is the civic triumph which awaits the intrepid bravery and conquering energies of the pioneers who have developed and possess the great mountains.

As the extraction of gold, with which our great mountains are permeated, forms the primary occupation of our industrial population and supplies the medium of commerce, I recommend that the condition and wants of our mining region be specially reported to the Federal Congress. To aid in perfecting the processes of economical mining and indefinitely increase the production of the precious metals and coin, the liberal assistance of the Government and of Science ought to be involved and it will be given.

I pledge to you my cordial and intelligent cooperation in all that your wisdom and patriotism shall attempt.

Our great country demands a period of stern virtue, of holy zeal, of regenerating patriotism, of devoted citizens. It is to you, representatives, and to the people of the young territory of Colorado, that I speak. To exalt your intrepid enthusiasm is my aim. With us are the continental eagles and the continental cause, immortalized by the purity of Washington, illuminated by the wisdom of Jefferson, vindicated and restored by the illustrious Jackson. Let us condense around these eagles and advance, devoted to maintain their purity and to exalt their glory.

I commend your hearts to a steadfast faith in the supreme power of God, fortified by the contemplation of the stupendous forms of nature, with which He surrounds us and from which no element of sublimity is left out. We must seek in the colossal dimensions and sublime forms of nature with which we are encircled and upward to the Supreme Throne of Grace, inspirations of wisdom, moderation and energy to set the foundations of a Commonwealth, which shall beat back the shocks of time and stand as firm and enduring as the loftiest mountain.

Respectfully,

William Gilpin