

JAN 24 1967

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Remarks by Governor J. Millard Tawes  
Opening Session - SOUTHERN GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE  
Thirty-Second Annual Meeting  
Kentucky Dam Village State Park  
Monday, September 19, 1966 - 9:00 A.M.

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Governor Breathitt, Kentucky's reputation for friendliness and cordiality was known to all of us before we came here, but the warmth of the reception we have received here at Kentucky Dam Village has exceeded our highest expectations. We are truly grateful to you and to the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky for your generous hospitality.

I am deeply impressed, as I know the others of our Conference are, by the majestic beauty of this spot which we chose for our 1966 meeting. It was a happy choice, and we are most grateful to you for having recommended it to us.

In such attractive surroundings, this beautiful resort park and the charming cottages to which we have been assigned, all overlooking vast and scenic Kentucky Lake, our brief stay here is sure to be delightful and rewarding.

May I say, for myself, that it is a great pleasure and a high honor to serve as Chairman of the Southern Governors' Conference in its thirty-second year. As you may know, I am the oldest Governor, not only of this group but of all the states of our Union. And I consider this to be the capstone, both to my eight years of enjoyable and rewarding association with the Governors of our Southland, and also to my long career in politics and public service -- a career which, incidentally, stretches back over nearly four decades.

With some of the others of you here, I shall be leaving the office of Governor within a few months, having concluded my second and final four-year term as the Chief Executive of the State of Maryland.

I view this prospect with mixed emotions, as I suspect those of you in a comparable position do. It will be a relief, I must confess, to be able to shed some of the burdens of office. At the same time, I know I shall miss, among other things, the bustle and the pace of the job.

As much as anything else, I shall miss the close association I have enjoyed with the Governors of these seventeen southern states. I have a feeling that we have accomplished much in our joint undertakings. It certainly has been one of the most pleasurable experiences of my life.

I am told that when Vice President Humphrey was here a few weeks ago, he referred to this area of western Kentucky as "Barkley country," expressing his delight at being back here. I think we are all conscious of being in "Barkley country" and are moved by the thought that this beautiful land produced one of Kentucky's greatest sons and one of the most eminent of the American statesmen of this century.

I know I speak for this entire assemblage of Governors in complimenting Governor Breathitt in the selection of this spectacular setting for our meetings.

For me and my family, it is always a rich experience to return to Kentucky. With each visit, I observe the giant strides that are being taken in the development of the great Commonwealth, especially in the growth of tourism and the building of new industry.

Kentucky's state park system has gained the spotlight of national attention, and its resort parks have been described by renowned travel writers and editors as the best in the nation.

If Kentucky Dam Village State Park is representative of others in the park system, then truly it must be said that Kentucky has earned the plaudits it has received.

As you know, we are scheduled to see while we are here another of Kentucky's "showcase parks" -- Kenland State Park -- and to tour the vast and famed "Land Between The Lakes" national recreation area -- between Kentucky Lake and its twin Lake Barkley.

Kentucky, I am advised, has doubled its tourist business in a single decade, and last year had twenty-four million visitors. This, Governor Breathitt, is a tribute to the natural beauty and the wealth of the improvements that one finds here. And, yes, it is a tribute, too, to the aggressive efforts made by your Administration, and the administrations of your predecessors, in attracting tourists to your area.

It is not entirely a coincidence, then, my friends and colleagues, that Governor Breathitt and I, working together to choose a main theme for this 1966 Conference, selected natural resources, tourism and recreation.

If there is one characteristic that distinguishes our civilization from all the others, it is its mobility. Motion, of course, is a human attribute, but never before has the movement of mankind ranged over such vast areas and at such a rapid rate.

Another of our characteristics is the impulse to adventure -- the inner compulsion, as we say in the vernacular, to "go places and do things."

These traits, coupled with a relatively new development -- the freedom we of this era enjoy from the necessity of spending all of our waking hours wresting a livelihood from a harsh nature -- have produced a new social phenomenon and a new industry -- tourism.

Tourism has become a main industry of some of the nations of the world, is ranked by our Department of Commerce as third in this country -- after manufacturing and agriculture -- and is a principal economic resource of many of our states, some of those represented at this conference.

For reasons already alluded to -- with more leisure and greater opportunities to travel -- there is every indication that tourism will become increasingly important in our economic and social scheme.

Our region, so richly endowed by nature and favored by both history and geography, has enormous competitive advantages over other areas for the development of the tourist business.

It is a land steeped in history, tradition and culture, with an equable climate and a terrain unexcelled in beauty and variety. If we utilize to the fullest these advantages, this new source of wealth will accelerate the economic progress that we see all about us today in our area of the country.

In this connection, we have brought together here an imposing array of talent and experience to discuss the varied aspects of tourism, parks, recreation, natural resources and attendant subjects.

This area of governmental endeavor is certain to increase in importance with every passing year, and I think we showed great wisdom when we established our newest committee, The Committee on Tourism Development, and gave the subject a featured spot in our program of this year.

At this my final conference with the Governors of the southern states, I should like, just briefly, to present some thoughts I have on current conditions and how they may affect the role of the governments of our states in the future.

In this era of violent social and economic upheaval, an analysis of all the conditions and the effects they are likely to produce would be a gigantic task -- certainly not possible in any brief discussion.

But I think it is possible to examine, and perhaps to interpret, some of the more pronounced of the new conditions under which we live.

Some of the most serious of the problems which confront us today arise from a single cause -- the growth and redistribution of the population.

In my state, seven of every ten persons now are urban dwellers -- that is to say, they live either in the cities or the suburbs. I know that proportion of urban to rural dwellers does not exist throughout the South, but the trend toward rapid urbanization is everywhere and the problems it produces will be with us all for many years of the future.

The contamination of the water we drink, or otherwise use, and of the air we breathe is a problem of the first magnitude where people live close together in large urban areas.

The slums of our cities, and the evils they spawn such as poverty, ignorance, disease and crime, have been called by many persons of knowledge and authority the nation's number one domestic problem.

The problem of moving people and the goods they consume -- the problem of mass transportation and the construction of streets and highways -- is intensified by the growth and greater concentration of the population.

We share, I know, a common disappointment and feeling of frustration in our failure to solve the problem of highway safety -- a product of the way we live.

One could go on with an almost endless string of new problems, or old ones aggravated by the changed conditions under which we are living. Their solution will require the combined efforts of government at all levels -- Federal, state and local.

It is gratifying, from my point of view, that the Federal Government is accepting a heavier responsibility in some of these areas -- notably, in the problems of the cities, in the elimination of poverty and disease, in water and air pollution, in mass transportation, in highway safety.

But this does not mean a diminution of state responsibility. On the contrary, our efforts toward the alleviation of these ills must be intensified and accelerated, and state governments should lose no time in preparing themselves for the assumption of heavier obligations.

What can we do to accomplish this?

Well, for one thing I think the entire structure of state government should be modernized, streamlined, brought up to date. In Maryland, we have undertaken to do this by: (1) taking the initial steps to revise a clumsy and outmoded state constitution -- a century-old body of laws that has been amended in piece-meal fashion more than a hundred times; and, (2) laying the foundation for a complete reorganization and modernization of the executive branch of government, plans for which we hope to be able to lay before the next Governor when he takes the oath of office next January.

Also, I think our effectiveness as individual states will be enhanced by a greater measure of interstate cooperation. The most spectacular example of the force states can exert by working in concert is to be found in the vast Federal program for the rehabilitation and rejuvenation of the Appalachian region, a program that was initiated and, in large measure developed, by a conference of governors, many of whom are represented here.

This means, as I see it, that this Southern Governors' Conference will play an increasingly important role in the governmental affairs of its representative states and will become in the future an increasingly effective instrument for the enhancement of the lives and fortunes of the men and women of the South.

It has been a deeply satisfying experience to have worked closely with the chief executives of the states represented here in a regional effort to find a solution to many of our common problems -- problems involving education, highway safety, industrial development, nuclear energy and space and others.

I have enjoyed immensely the relationship with the governors of the South -- with those who have left office, with those who will be leaving with me soon and with those who will continue in office and take up the burdens which we are leaving for them.

Finally, may I again express my gratitude to you for the high honor you have paid me and for affording me this opportunity to serve as Chairman of this Conference of Governors.

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