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GOVERNOR ROBERT W. STRAUB ADMINISTRATION

January 13, 1975 to January 8, 1979

Farewell Message, 1979

Source: Farewell Statement Governor Robert Straub, Oregon, 1979

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentleman of the 60th Legislative Assembly, distinguished members of the press, and honored guests:

As I stand here this morning, I feel awed by a sense of history and pride that the people of Oregon have honored me in a page or two of that history.

I said that I felt awed by a sense of history --- this office does that to you. This office has a way of humbling those who serve it. Generations of men and women pass, but the functions of the State continue . . .

. . . and that's the beauty of this democracy. It is the offices, the traditions, the rituals of state that give continuity and strength to this great system of ours . . . and we men and women who fill these offices are elevated by them.

Today I leave this office, but I know I leave it in the hands of one who shares with me a respect and concern for the welfare of the people of this State, for we have both worked on their behalf in our different capacities for the past 20 years.

Today I leave this office, but I leave it filled with a sense of pride and accomplishment. We have plowed much new ground. Four years ago when I stood here before you, I said there was an economic chill across this land. In 1978, Oregon enjoys one of its strongest economic years.

And, beyond the economy, we developed the Domestic and Rural Power Authority, a great state public utility which holds the promise of equity for our ratepayers with those of our neighbors in Washington.

WE created social programs to help guarantee all our citizens a decent life of human dignity without dire want.

For our young, we adopted the most far-reaching school finance reform package since World War II.

For our elderly we expanded Project Independence and other programs designed to let them live their lives to the fullest, with independence and meaning.

We began a new partnership with state and local governments . . . sharing revenues and responsibilities.

But that is all now a part of our past, the history of our endeavors . . . and as far as we have come, we still have a far way to go.

WE will not have done enough so long as one person has far more than he or she needs and another lives in want.

We will not have done enough so long as one of our citizens lives in need of food or shelter or medical care.

WE will not have done enough until we have solved such problems, because I believe the true measure of any society is the way it cares for those who are unable to care for themselves.

It is a time of challenge, a time opportunity, a time for conviction . . . a time for moderation. The growth that has often seemed to threaten the beauty and livability of this state must be managed or it will surely manage us.

In the areas of energy and industry growth, it's hard to deal with people who refuse to moderate, no matter what the cost to others, no matter what the reality of the situation.

Our times can little afford such rigidity.

The brilliant English essayist, E. P. Snow wrote:

"The sooner intellectuals . . . realize that industrialization is the one hope of the poor, the sooner we shall get hold of a social purpose again."

We must have industry, and we must have the energy to power it --- so much depends on that. The very quality of life depends on that.

We have tried in Oregon to develop industrially without violating our sacred trust to preserve this land for those who follow after us. We must continue our efforts to preserve the land for it is the land, finally, which will shape our future . . . and give scope and meaning to our dreams.

It is how we live today in relation to our land and its rivers and forests . . . that will determine our future . . . and the futures of our children and their children after them.

As the needs for growth and economic development conflict with our natural resources, we will find issues increasingly harder to understand . . . decisions more difficult to make . . . and a broad consensus perhaps impossible to come by.

Because of that, it is more imperative now than ever before that we find ways to remain flexible in our thinking . . . honest in our appraisal of needs . . . and resilient in the ways we meet the problems confronting us.

We must learn to seek a middle ground between those with a no-growth attitude . . . and those with a live-now-pay-later attitude. We must find what the ancient Greeks called "the Golden Mean," the position of moderation between two extremes. That is the sacred trust our citizens place in us.

These works of the great English parliamentarian, Edmund Burke, have always had special meaning to me. He wrote:

"Your representative owes you not his industry only, but his judgment; And he betrays you instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion."

I believe that, and I hope I have been faithful to that call.

Now the time has come to pass the mantle. I will miss these halls. But more, I will miss the people. My dedicated staff and the State employees, who deserve special commendation for their unstinting effort on behalf of the people of this state.

Vic --- Governor Atiyeh --- I wish you well.

I am at your service as you deem necessary.

I wish for you a term filled with action and purpose.

I wish for you the rewards of those moments when the dreams become reality

I wish for you all success because your success becomes that of the people of Oregon.