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ANNUAL MESSAGE  
OF  
JOSEPH EMILE HARLEY  
GOVERNOR  
TO THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
of SOUTH CAROLINA



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Columbia, January 13, 1942

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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## MESSAGE OF GOVERNOR J. EMILE HARLEY

*Mr. President, Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the General Assembly:*

Since you were last convened circumstances have resulted in my succession to the Governorship. Today, therefore, I greet you for the first time from that high office, feeling proudly the honor and solemnly the responsibilities.

Here at the outset I wish to pledge my utmost support to the General Assembly in working to keep the State government on a firm basis, operating economically and effectively, without additional or expanded services, except where essential in the war effort.

I also desire to express my deep appreciation to the members of the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee for having met and prepared the appropriations report in advance. This is in line with our mutual efforts for a short and harmonious session.

The foremost concern of the State and Nation at this time is victory in the war in which we are engaged. This is of supreme importance. To accomplish this objective we must have absolute unity of purpose among ourselves as a State and Nation. In South Carolina a prolonged session with consequent controversy would disrupt our unity. As should the people of all the States we must and shall contribute all of our useful energies and resources toward utter defeat of our enemies.

Thus, every move we make in State government must be considered with its relative importance to the war and defense. There doubtless are a number of State issues, including some which have been voted upon by the people, which under normal circumstances should be faced squarely and fought out by the Legislature. These, however, are not normal times. The path ahead of our Nation is uncertain and dangerous. Nothing could be more detrimental now than internal disturbances.

I urge, therefore, with all the emphasis at my command that a moratorium be declared on controversial issues.

There will be plenty of time after peace comes for us to solve domestic problems in South Carolina.

I do not mean that all of the usual functions of our State government should suffer, but I do assert that we should subordinate them where necessary to the national cause of victory which is but a part of the world-wide cause of preventing a break-down of civilization.

You gentlemen of the Assembly are the best judges of which issues might lead us into bitter controversy and a long session. Any steps you may take to insure against such difficulties would, I contend, be not only the wisest course but the most patriotic.

As a general policy, I urge that every practicable economy be effected in the operation of our State government. While revenue is being collected in the heaviest volume ever experienced, it must be remembered that much of this is due to the abnormal spending in the Defense Program. The war, it has been estimated, will cost the Federal government the staggering sum of one hundred and fifty billions of dollars or approximately twice the total annual income of all our people. Only by such immense expenditures can we expect to win the war. This money will have to come from the same people who pay State and local taxes. South Carolinians, of course, will have to contribute their proportionate share. I believe that our people realize now that we are going to be required to make real sacrifices. Many of our comforts, luxuries and even necessities of life must be denied us as we plunge deeper and deeper into the war and feel the pinch of the demands upon us.

Our State government for several years, has spent more than it received from existing taxes. That was unwise and unnecessary. It must not happen again. From now on as a matter of good sense and sound economy, we must prepare to face the hard times which inevitably will follow the war.

We must, of course, maintain our State Departments and Institutions. I am confident that you gentlemen will see to that through a reasonable and economical apportionment of finances, with due consideration to the ability of the taxpayers to pay.

Let me say here and now that I do not think States should lose their identities in government. I would not favor standing aside to burdensome Federal taxes were they to be for purposes other than the war.

If we were enjoying peace I would appeal to the Legislature to buckle down to various State issues which are now pending. I would urge a program of government reorganization to bring about greater economy and efficiency, because this must come sooner or later. I would say that controversial issues should not be avoided.

But this is not a time of peace. What we need most in State government is to utilize our existing institutions and departments to the best possible advantage at the least possible cost. Also, where necessary and feasible we should call upon institutions and departments to adjust their facilities toward the war effort even in cases where ordinary functions would have to be deferred.

In summary I want to plead for a short session, with calm and deliberate consideration of the plight of our State and Nation.

You gentlemen have been elected by the people of your respective counties to represent them. You have the wisdom and experience.

Under the Constitution it is prescribed that the Legislature shall make the laws. The Governor is given certain executive responsibilities and the right to recommend.

I have made my recommendations, and I wish you Godspeed in your labors.