

Office of the Governor

August 28, 1967

Monday, 11:30 a.m.

Transcription of Press Conference

Gov I have two announcements this morning relating to the carrying out of some of the recommendations relating to Seattle's Central Area. Ultimately, I hope they will be recommendations extended to other parts of the state.

We will open on September 11, on Monday September 11, an office of state government. The location will be 2319 Jackson Street where we have a letter of intent signed that the space is going to be available. Initially the departments of state government and other agencies who will be involved are Employment Security for the obvious assistance on the jobs they can give, Public Assistance, the Board Against Discrimination, the Department of Personnel, who will work with state employment, the University of Washington, who will be involved as far as employment as employment at the University of Washington is concerned as well as an attempt to provide more information on scholarship and university entrance and to provide an outlet for more work on surveys and research as it relates to that area. The City of Seattle will have a representative - the Office of Economic Opportunity tentatively will have a representative and the Governor's Office itself will have a man to coordinate the activities of this office. A little later on, we hope to have the Department of Labor and Industries and the Health Department for their particular functions added to this service center.

I think that this concept is one that can not only provide for the unique and particular needs of this area in Seattle, but might well be the forerunner of similar offices in a wide variety of cities throughout this state. Citizens, I think, understand pretty well that if they have a problem with the city, they go to city hall; if they have a problem with the county, they go to the county-city building or the county courthouse. There is no local equivalent of state government and I think there should be, so that people understand where they can go on a one stop basis to receive the services of state government.

Another program that will go into effect on September 1st on a statewide basis: The Department of Public Assistance is announcing that they are changing their policy of the earnings of children of public assistance families, particularly those on Aid to Dependent Children, where in previous times, the money earned by those youngsters - the equivalent is deducted from the grant to that particular family. We will now exempt up to \$50 a child and \$150 per family per month for the earnings of a child to encourage job opportunities for that youngster not only providing for the job, but providing a little better for the family. In the past this has been discouraged because the net effect of his earnings is not felt at all by the family. This dollar figure that we have chosen is the maximum that is allowed under federal regulation at the present time.

Schultz Governor, what other cities are you considering for locations for possible one-shot state offices like Seattle?

Gov Well, I think, this will require some surveying of need before we would be able to say specifically but I would think that the next two most obvious places would be Tacoma and Spokane, where you have large and spread-out facilities at the present time. In some of the smaller cities, there is a tendency for state offices to be housed either in one place or close together.

Compton The State Board of Discrimination recommended that 300 jobs be made available, if that were possible. Can you foresee at this time, how many jobs the state will be able to provide?

Gov I can't say specifically although I can say that the various agencies of government insofar as state employment is concerned are doing, I think, an excellent job of providing the opportunity of bringing together and categorizing the jobs that do exist and in providing new opportunity with fewer regulations, fewer requirements than before so that people can get aboard and get training after they are once hired.

Compton Do you have any rough count as to how many jobs the state might provide?

Gov No, I do not at the present time. At the time of the opening of this office, we hope to have that kind of information.

Malbin What is your reaction to Senator Durkan's statement that he thinks that he thinks that \$3 million could be taken from the contingency fund to help solve urban problems.

Gov The last session of the legislature, at my request, of course provided considerably more than \$3 million for the handling of urban problems. The \$25 million that went to local governments, plus a wide variety of other more specialized programs represented new money going to urban areas has already been done. Of course, at my request, we also set up a contingency fund that provides the availability of additional help for whenever or wherever it is needed. We do foresee, however, some difficulties that might arise as a result of new federal programs or even with the continuation of present programs especially in the field of Public Assistance, we may very well need the contingency fund for those other purposes, and I am sure that we will be able to use it, use it for the purposes we think most necessary.

Schultz Do you see any merit in his suggestion that it be ^{just} donated to the cities the \$3 million with the approval of the Legislative Budget and the Legislative Council. Are you considering his proposal?

Gov I don't like that to be considered as one of a variety of proposals, but I think the contingency fund - we have other needs that we are looking at, other needs that more directly reflect state government and if we do not maintain at least for the moment, a contingency fund, we could very well be faced with an emergency session of the legislature at a later time to resolve particular problems of state agencies themselves.

Cum Governor, is there any estimate on what this cost will be on this new policy adopted by Public Assistance?

Gov I don't have it right now. It is not terribly excessive. We can get it later on today.

Malbin What is the extent of the state's response to the urban problem? Is it just this multi-service center or is there more to come?

Gov These two things that I have announced this morning represent just two of the initial steps to be taken but there are others both recommended as a result of a series of meetings that I have had in the last few weeks, and other ideas that have been initiated since. So we will be announcing more as time goes on.

Q How much importance do you think the grassroots committee will put on the Central Area office?

Gov How much importance they will put on? Well, I hope they will not only utilize the office but that they will help to insure that the people in the community come in and do use it. I think that this is one of our problems sometimes in that no matter how many offices we set up or how many facilities, there has got to be the communication between the people who have a need and the people who can provide for that need. This is one of the great services I would hope that the organizations and the people can provide, bringing the two together - those who can provide for the need, and those who have the need.

Cum Governor, I take it that these offices that you are establishing down there are branches of the branch offices in Seattle. Is that correct? Like Employment Security has a big facility up there that you can't reach if you are on the wrong side of Aurora without going twenty blocks out of your way. That is still going to be the main branch office, I take it? Branches of branches?

Gov Well, I suppose you could. These really represent essentially service centers. Most of the people who will staff this office, are people who do not represent additional personnel but represent a shifting of personnel who can best do a job in this community and who need to be in the community because people can not get very easily to the existing state offices that are in the Seattle area.

Malbin When are you going to announce the director of this center?

Gov As soon as we have settled on a director. We are searching now and we have several excellent possibilities. I hope that we can announce the director at the same time we open the office.

Cum That would be the man from your office?

Gov Yes. It will be from the Governor's Office. He will essentially play a coordinating function to insure that there is good relationship between the various departments of state government. This office may very well do another thing. We hope it will, and that is provide a closer working relationship between the various departments of state government so that they understand each other's problems. I think in past years, there has been a tendency for each department to have its own office and not understand fully their relationship with another department and people generally don't have problems that fall so readily in one department's supervision. They may come in with a multiplicity of problems. They may seek a job but they may have health problems that prevent their acquiring a job and they may need temporary public assistance while they are getting started. We think through this service center, we can handle all of those problems at least most of them in one stop.

Q Governor, in the Department of Public Assistance allowing members of a family to earn some money without it being deducted - does this run afoul of any of the federal guide-lines? Or is this a calculated risk the state is taking?

Gov No, this new policy we are talking about goes to the maximum that is allowed by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. We checked it out. We can't go any further than this without running afoul of federal law but we can do this much.

Cum Governor, what is your reaction, we haven't seen you since Mayor Braman asked the Highway Department to take another look at the ^{plan for the} Interchange right in the middle of the Central Area?

Gov I had quite a long meeting with Mayor Braman and some of his staff before I left on vacation. We did talk about that specific problem. I thoroughly agree with the Mayor that some new look be taken at not only the interchange between Interstate 90 and the Thomson Expressway but also at the Expressway itself. The Mayor has a concept that this perhaps should be more in a parkway nature, that it may be a corridor for rapid transit ultimately and that would diminish the need for a broad highway up that area. So I have already asked the Highway Department to take another look and they are investigating at the present time. Out of it, we may very well be able to change - to cut down the size of that intersection and resulting dislocation of people.

Compton In talking to the Grassroots Committee, they say that they are very pleased with what the state government has promised to do so far but in a sense they are skeptical about state government following through. Can you say anything about what you think might be the next steps after the urban center?

Gov No, I think we better wait until - the one thing that I want to be sure of is that when we do announce something, we can follow through and I think that this is a very real question in people's minds that so often in the past they heard of programs or of ideas being expressed and that have not been followed through. I would rather wait and announce things when we

Gov are sure they are an accomplished fact or that we are going to be able to carry through with them, - we know at least they can be and/^{ain} confident others will be in a short period of time.

Malbin In view of the extreme fire hazard in the state now, is there any possibility that state parks and lands may be closed because of the fire hazard?

Gov I have not yet had a chance to^{talk to} the Commissioner of Public Lands but I do intend to probably this afternoon - to receive an up-to-date survey of the situation to see if anything of this nature is indicated. I doubt if there would be a wholesale closing of parks and state lands. There might be selective places where we think that the danger is too high to allow continued use.

Cum On this concept here on Jackson Street, you said that maybe something could be developed for a wide variety of cities which would go beyond Spokane, and Tacoma. This of course is for a minority group in one area. Do you contemplate then in having all services in one place? I mean here now they obviously do not have a need for the Tax Commission office - say as a branch office there, located in that area, but I mean is your plan to eventually wrap them all into one area?

Gov I think there could be some real value in doing this especially when you get to medium sized and smaller cities. If transportation within a city of medium size is not so much of a problem, then the concept of having a central location for state government - and people then have some identity some feeling that there is a place where they can go to receive information or service, regardless of what it is about in state government, is something that we have been doing some survey on in the past six months. I have asked the Department of General Administration and the Central Budget Agency to work on this - to do some surveying as to where we might most practically begin this idea. We hope to have that survey completed shortly and get some direction out of it. We are hampered as you might guess to some extent by relatively long-term leases in certain areas and we can only work into this on a stage basis as the existing leases run out.

Malbin How much will it cost to operate the multi-service center in the Central Area

Gov We don't have a fully laid-out budget at the present time, but it should not be very much over the existing budgets of the various agencies. Almost all of the personnel involved are people - or positions at least, ^{that} are already contemplated in the existing agencies, so that the large cost of personnel will be not an extra cost. It will be essentially the cost of rent and facilities of that nature.

Cum I take it that there is a liquor store in that area that adequately serves the Central Area now.

Gov I don't think we need a special service.

Q Governor, on a philosophical basis, are you satisfied with \$50 per child and \$150 per family or is this only a token step in your estimation. Would you like to see these limits higher?

Gov I think that the limits are not so important as the direction. The direction that we are trying to seek is to encourage youngsters particularly those in teenage to go out and get employment because by employment they can get on-the-job training. They are more capable of ultimately getting off the public assistance rolls and that is the goal we are after - to create some success. Now if takes more than this kind of exemption and these limits to encourage young people to go and acquire jobs, then, yes, I think the exemption ought to be increased because in doing so, ultimately we, I think, ought to save some money - save money by getting people off public assistance rather than keeping them on.

Cum This philosophy has been discussed for years in the legislature. How come it hasn't been done before?

Gov I am not sure that it has been clearly brought home to state government I don't think that there has been the concern about this in the legislature I don't think that the legislature itself has had a deep concern, and this goes over a long period of time, about public assistance as perhaps they do now.

Nelson Governor, there has been a report about Tony Chase- that he is to be appointed as state federal coordinator in the Central Budget Agency. Is that correct?

Gov We have been looking for some time for a person to take on this responsibility as state coordinator and it is very likely now that he will be the new person. We have to get the position established first legally through the Personnel Board. He is a man of exceptional competence and background, in federal relations, having served with the Federal Reserve Board in Washington, D. C.

Schultz With reference to Senator Durkan's suggestion, I take it that you are rejecting this proposal? It is not clear in my mind as to what you are going to do with this memorandum he sent you.

Gov Well, I haven't even seen the memorandum yet so I will take care of the memorandum after I have had a chance to read it. I have not even seen it yet.

Schultz The proposal was outlined generally for ^a\$3 million contingency fund. This is outside of the realm of possibility then?

Gov It is inside the realm of politics.

Compton Have you had any conversation yet with school people yet about the teaching of Afro-American history?

Gov Yes, we have and I prefer that the School Board announce what they intend to do but I am very satisfied and very pleased with the program that they have selected and what they propose to do. I think that they ought to announce what they are going to do.

Nelson Senator Durkan's memorandum suggests that the state take some initiative in developing recreational areas in the Central Area. Is that one of the things that is being considered?

Gov We have had these suggestions. Yes, we have been considering this for some time, this possibility. This is an area where joint action, it seems to me is called for - joint action of the school board, of city government through their parks agency. I know they have done a considerable amount of work in past years in building recreational facilities in conjunction with schools so that they can be used by the schools by the pupils and after school and weekend hours by the Parks Department. I think private enterprise here through some of the voluntary organizations ought to be involved - Such organizations as the YMCA and others could if enough assistance could voluntarily provide some of these recreational facilities. We have been working with and will continue to work with all of these agencies but I think a recreational program is a joint responsibility.

Mertena In the state's new plan for training trainees in state agencies, with an eye toward minorities, under the Civil Service, there has been no explanation so far as to how these are going to be paid for. Are these going to be extra positions - are they going to come out of each agencies' budget or will extra money be made available from elsewhere to help pay for those positions?

Gov I think, at least at the present time in most agencies where these positions will be of value, are the agencies with a fairly large number of personnel and the programs can be handled within the budget, the existing budgets, at least that is our intention.

- Mertena Some people say that in all of these areas that the registers are already full. What would happen in a case like that?
- Gov Registers are for particular positions. We are talking about the possibility of the trainee or apprenticeship positions we don't have any registers for at the present time at all. I don't think that people who have applied for some of the registers where you have high qualifications or a high degree of qualifications would either fit or want these particular positions.
- Schultz Would trainees then be hired in place of somebody who is on a register for an existing job classification that you are going to substitute a trainee for?
- Gov I doubt that. I think that this is a question of enough importance that we ought to give a little extra consideration to bringing people aboard and giving them opportunity and ultimately working them into positions that they can fully qualify for. I don't believe that all registers are or will remain full. That has been one of the problems in the past year and a half or two years. We don't have full registers and we don't have people who will apply or who will take jobs in the state government.
- Q Governor, you speak tomorrow before this Labor Convention. Do you have any special message for labor on this subject?
- Gov Yes, I will have a special message for labor. I am giving it tomorrow morning.
- Mertena Senator Durkan has suggested that one of the areas that this contingency fund might be used ^{is} to set up a trainee system outside the Civil Service and obviate some of these objections that have been made. Do you have any reaction to that?
- Gov It is interesting to have all of these suggestions for use of the contingency fund coming from someone who didn't like the idea of a contingency fund to begin with. I am glad that he now agrees that this was a wise idea. We probably should have been bigger. We originally budgeted for some \$7½ million more but that was cut down through the efforts of the Senate - the Senate Ways and Means Committee.
- Malbin Are you concerned with the fact that some type of Civil Service test will be required to these lower trainee positions, that this may discourage some of the people that you want to get into state government?
- Gov I think that this is a problem that we have got to get over, - you really close off to many people opportunities of going to work when they are faced with a barrage of paper work and forms to fill out and tests to take that they in all of their background and in all of their experience just don't understand this kind of thing. What we have to do, is simplify as much as we can, the opportunity for people to come aboard and start work and give them an opportunity and then build into the necessary tests ultimately in the Civil Service system as time goes on. I think that it is an important thing for us to do and if we are not willing to do that and I am talking now about all citizens including those who are on the state payroll, then I think that we going to continue to have grave problems in not only our Central Area but throughout the state.
- Flynn Governor, would it be accurate then to refer to this as a kind of suspension of Civil Service for these positions because of the dire necessity, because it seems that it is some kind of a suspension of Civil Service.
- Gov I don't think that it is a suspension of Civil Service. I think that it is the establishment of trainee positions that will ultimately work right in with the Civil Service System. You have the capacity within Civil Service to set up any kind of positions you have need for and

Gov I feel the need right now for these trainee-apprenticeship positions that will work with Civil Service either that will be throwing anyone that is on Civil Service out or setting them aside. I am confident that no one presently in state service is in fear at all of this usurping any of the present Civil Service responsibility.

Gagnier Governor, your new office in Seattle service center - do you view that as being a permanent facility or do you feel that the need for it will eventually pass and it can be closed?

Gov I am not sure that we can see that far ahead at the present time. I rather imagine that the concept of a service center or the bringing together a variety of departments into one area to serve people, is a concept that will grow rather than diminish. It will perhaps be utilized in more and more areas in the state as time goes on rather than fewer, which would make than a permanent thing.

Gagnier Do you feel that the concept that they have in Tacoma where almost all state agencies are in one building is the proper method. They wouldn't need a service center because they have them all in this one building?

Gov It depends of course on the location of the facility whether it is serving the people who really need help. In a city as large as Tacoma and Seattle and Spokane, I don't think that you can say that all state agencies can go in one building and in one location. You may need more than one service center but rather than split them down by departments in different locations, you maybe could split them down into service centers to serve the needs of people and have a variety of departments in each location.

Q Has there been any general public reaction to the attention that has been given the Central Area or to other minority districts? By telephone calls or personal talks with your constituents?

Gov We have had quite a considerable amount of mail and that mail has been for the most part highly favorable, in fact exceptionally favorable. You find the scattered few who I think represent some of our biggest problem in our entire citizenry to those who have no understanding or any concern about people who are perhaps less fortunate than themselves but the reaction generally has been highly favorable.

Schultz Thank you, Governor.