

The Legislative Calendar

BY CHARLES ALDRICH*

Almost every innovation upon past manners and customs, or habits, is brought about through a contest, often a bitter struggle, no matter how obvious its justice may, or ought, to be to the average common sense. I have had several experiences of this kind, one of which I will here relate. I was a member of the Iowa House of Representatives in the session of 1882, of course not in very good standing with the majority because I had introduced a bill for an act to prevent public officers from receiving or accepting bribes in the shape of free transportation on the railroads. It one day occurred to me that we were wasting a great deal of our time, however valuable it might be, by reason of not having a daily calendar. I therefore introduced the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk be and is hereby directed to cause to be printed daily, on and after the 16th instant, a calendar of all bills on second and third reading, giving their order on the files of the House; said list to include the number of each bill, the title and the member introducing same. One copy of said calendar to be laid on the desk of each member of the House.

This was no sooner read by the Clerk than it was fiercely pounced upon by several gentlemen as a piece of extravagance, a "job" in the interest of the state printer, a needless waste of money, and much more to the same effect. I very soon saw, unless I could hedge in some direction, that my little resolution would be lost. I therefore appealed to the House to let it go to the committee on Rules, and finally succeeded in getting it so referred. I then began to talk it over with the members privately, explaining that instead of an extravagance it would really prove a great economy, a saving of time, a convenience to every member. These

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arguments were not likely to avail, and to secure its passage I at last agreed that if the House would print a calendar one week, I would agree to pay the cost unless the practice was continued. Taking a roll-call I checked the names of the members who were willing to try the experiment on the terms I proposed until I had secured a clear majority. I then got the resolution reported back without recommendation, but when it came up for final action, it was easily passed.

A day or two later the first legislative calendar ever seen in Iowa was laid upon our desks. It pleased every member of the House at once. I was asked a dozen times, "Aldrich, why didn't we have this before?" The question of rescinding my resolution was never raised.

Two or three days later the Senate took the same step, and the legislative calendar has ever since remained as much a feature of the daily sessions as the morning invocation of the Divine Blessing. Few would suppose for an instant that its inception could have been attended with any opposition whatever.

Halloween

The boys had what they called fun last Saturday evening, visiting their neighbors' premises and making things as inconvenient for them as possible. They made several of the good people think, even if they did not say, bad words, after hunting an hour or two for things they could not find. Of course this was Halloween, which comes but once a year and only a short time at that.—*The Sac Sun*, November 4, 1897.

The Rock Rapids juveniles were very decent in their mischief on Halloween. They overturned outbuildings, hauled off machinery and vehicles, but did no damage. In a few instances the girls indulged in some harmless sport early in the evening.—*The Rock Rapids Review*, Thursday, November 3, 1898.

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