

## *Iowa People and Events . . .*

---

### Emergencies and Extra Sessions

Many Iowa governors have contemplated the advisability of calling extra sessions of a General Assembly of Iowa, but comparatively few have actually done so. The incidents which were sometimes deemed as furnishing need of such a session more often were overestimated in importance, and all thought of such action by the governor abandoned.

One such instance developed in the Cummins administration. Early in his political life Mr. Cummins had come into activity as an independent Republican candidate for a legislative seat from Polk county when the regular nominated party candidates were committed to support of prohibition, which he opposed, favoring local option in sale of spirituous liquors. He was elected and acted on all other questions in harmony with the party declarations.

Later in life, when serving as governor of the state, the open sale of whiskey and other forms of liquors with high alcohol content were reported being sold in saloons in Scott county and other river communities in the eastern section of the state, and demand was made upon him by the dry elements to cause its cessation. This was long before the enactment of the Cosson laws and state officers felt that enforcement of liquor laws was a local matter. Notwithstanding his own views and attitude, Mr. Cummins was much concerned with the situation.

A conference upon the subject was held in the governor's office at the capital. Both official and political friends had been called in to advise with the governor. He outlined to those present the exact situation, denouncing the law violations, and added that he felt the situation called for a special session of the General As-

sembly to deal with the emergency by enactment of more restrictive statutes on the subject. Senator James A. Smith, of Osage, a prominent church man and close personal as well as political friend of the executive, agreed with Cummins, as also did Senator Warren Garst of Carroll county, later lieutenant governor. Others readily expressed themselves more moderately, some for and some against such action.

Then "Fritz" D. W. Norris, of the *Marshalltown Times-Republican*, was called upon to give his views. He was a quiet man with exceptionally good judgment. He pointed out that while the governor could call the assembly in special session, he could not by any means control action taken. He regarded such expedient as calling a session might prove a political boomerang without affording any possibility of securing effective action calculated to remedy the situation. Quickly this view was supported by several others.

The arguments waxed warm. Gradually Governor Cummins became convinced that a legislative emergency did not really exist in greater degree, perhaps, than when the assembly was last in session. It was a condition that had long existed in river counties of Iowa. Norris hoped the governor would get behind the local officials of those counties and urge strict enforcement of law in those communities and not make necessary any resort to extraordinary executive action which might not be effective. The Norris suggestion was adopted and no special session called.

In subsequent years through enactment of bills introduced by Senator Cosson of Audubon county powers were conferred upon the attorney general with respect to law enforcement by local officials.

At a later period Governor Cummins did call a special session of the Thirty-second General Assembly. But it was occasioned by necessity for amendment of the state primary election law to fill vacancies upon primary tickets when vacancies thereon occurred prior to general elections. The immediate emergency was the

death of Senator William B. Allison, who had been nominated for United States senator at the previous primary election, leaving a vacancy upon the Republican state ticket in 1908, without any legal method available for the substitution of a new party candidate.

---

### Expensive Road Building

Like other construction projects road building costs have soared and bulk heavily in state and national expenditures. Not much man-power is required in dirt moving, if mechanized equipment is used on these jobs. Hardly a dent would be made in the unemployment situation that confronts the country this year through building more roads, although many are planned ostensibly for that purpose. It is the closing down of large industrial plants that has thrown out of employment vast armies of employees. These could in no wise be absorbed in road building.

Among the more ambitious projects contemplated in Iowa is a freeway through the very center of Des Moines, estimated to cost in total fifty million dollars, of which sum the U. S. government will pay ninety percent and the city ten percent. The state of Iowa is not obligated to pay anything, it is said, but the sum paid by the government is to come from the total Federal allocation of funds to this state in 1958. This has caused Governor Loveless to raise the question as to advisability of the plans so far determined upon for building this roadway, some Des Moines residents also questioning its necessity. The governor rather feels that the funds will be needed for road construction in other sections of the state more than in Des Moines, and has asked the state highway commission to outline plans with reference to same.

---

### Legislative Reapportionment

Through the reapportionment of legislative districts in Iowa resulting from the constitutional amendment adopted in 1904, the establishment of the county as a unit

of representation in the house of representatives was first adopted, and no change has since been made.

In prior years some of the counties having the least population were grouped into a district. Those dissolved at that time were the Clay-Palo Alto district, the Lyon-O'Brien district, the Humboldt-Pocahontas district, the Hancock-Wright district, the Osceola, Emmet-Dickinson district, the Worth-Winnebago district and the Ida-Monona district, all in Northern Iowa.

The purpose of the present effort to again redistrict or reapportion representation is to give the cities of the state greater power in the legislature by a reshuffling of the membership by assigning to the counties where this added population has settled in later years more representatives than the constitution now provides. This would be done either by returning to the re-grouping of counties with less population or by increasing the total number of members of the house by adding to the representation of the more populous counties.

The assignment of the fifty senators has always in later times been through the grouping of counties in senatorial districts or in many instances a senator to a single county. Redistricting of the senate membership has taken place several times, but the counties with larger population insist that they still are discriminated against.

---

### "The Railroad Question" by William Larrabee

After serving two terms as governor of Iowa (1886-1890), William Larrabee wrote a book that ranks high in any list of significant works on Iowa history. "The Railroad Question," published in 1893, stimulated considerable thought about the abuses of corporate power throughout the country. Now relatively scarce, it is still highly regarded by historians and researchers of the period for its discerning and authentic treatment of an important subject in Iowa history.

## Iowa's Notable Dead . . .

---

GERALD E. DuBois, brigadier-general commanding the Iowa National Guard 34th Division Artillery, died at Camp Dodge near Des Moines, March 18, 1958; born in Boone, May 16, 1903, graduated from the high school there and attended Iowa State College for three years; enlisted in the Iowa National Guard in 1934, was a captain and battery commander in the 185th Field Artillery when the National Guard was called for federal duty in February, 1941, appointed to the staff of the Division Artillery as a lieutenant-colonel in 1943, and in July was named battalion commander of the 151st Field Artillery Battalion in Europe; awarded the Purple Heart for being wounded in action in Italy and decorated with the Bronze Star for heroism in the vicinity of Civitavecchia, Italy, June 8, 1944; when the National Guard was reorganized in 1947, became executive officer of the Division Artillery and commanding general in January, 1954, upon the retirement of Major-general Walter L. Anderson; attended several army schools including the Command and General Staff school at Fort Leavenworth; as administrative assistant to the Adjutant General of Iowa, Fred C. Tandy, was largely responsible for the modernizing and constructing of many new National Guard armories throughout Iowa; was superintendent of Camp Dodge and commandant of the Iowa Military Academy in addition to his other regular duties; survived by his wife, Leone; two sons, Duane of the U. S. Army stationed in California, and Jerry; a brother, Gordon W. DuBois of Des Moines; and a sister, Mrs. G. G. Gundmundon of Elizabeth, New Jersey.

ROSCOE E. ZERWEKH, former newspaperman, civic leader, and superintendent of the Iowa Soldiers' Orphans Home at Davenport; died at Perry, March 9, 1958; born at Stuart, Iowa, August 20, 1878, moved to Valley Junction with his family in 1894, apprenticed as a printer to the Valley Junction Express where he worked four years; worked for several months on the newspaper at Corydon and in 1898 came to Perry where he acquired and published the *Advertiser* until 1916; married Edna Van Werden of Corydon in April, 1900; was secretary of the Perry Bureau of Commerce for three years, named manager of a locally organized meat packing plant, and later engaged in the farm loan and insurance business; acted as Dallas county secretary of World War I Liberty Loan drives, was a past exalted ruler of the Elks, served as worthy grand patron in the Order of the Eastern Star, and was the first

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.