

THE IOWA GENERAL ASSEMBLY: COMPOSITION AND POWERS

By Russell M. Ross*

COMPOSITION

In Iowa the legislature — known officially as the General Assembly — is the policy making branch of the governmental machine.¹ It is the agency that determines what the government shall do; it makes provision for the executing of those activities; and it is also the representative body that echoes the demands of the people. Any decision as to expansion or contraction of a state governmental function must come ultimately from the General Assembly.

The Territory of Iowa was established in 1838. The first Legislative Assembly of the Territory convened at Burlington on November 12, 1838. During the territorial period the legislature met annually in eight regular sessions and in two extra or special sessions, held in 1840 and 1844. The regular sessions were limited to seventy-five days by the Organic Act of the Territory. The first six regular sessions lasted the full seventy-five days, including Sundays and any recess.

The pioneer Iowa legislators followed in a general way the procedure in the English House of Commons and apparently used Jefferson's Manual as the basis of the rules for conducting business. Between 1838 and 1846 the Legislative Assembly enacted nearly a thousand laws, most of which were concerned with the establishment, administration, and maintenance of the territorial government. It was the duty of the Secretary of the Territory to "record and preserve all of the laws and proceedings of the Legislative Assembly." Included among his many duties was the task of printing and distributing the statutes. He was obliged to transmit one copy of the laws to the President of the United States and two copies to the Speaker of the

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¹ For the powers of the Governor of Iowa, see Russell M. Ross, "The Powers of the Governor of Iowa," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY*, 52:129-40 (April, 1954).

United States House of Representatives. From 1838 to 1841 the legislators convened in Burlington; from 1842 until 1846 in Iowa City.²

When Iowa entered the Union in 1846 the state constitution vested the authority to enact statute law in a General Assembly, which, like its forerunner, the Legislative Assembly of the territorial period, was composed of two houses. The smaller or upper house was known as the Senate; the larger body as the House of Representatives. The General Assembly, during the years 1846 to 1857, met in Iowa City. With the adoption of a new Constitution in 1857 the capital was transferred to Des Moines, where the legislature met for the first time in 1858.³

The average age of the members of the Iowa General Assembly has been constantly increasing. The minimum age requirements (twenty-one in the House and twenty-five in the Senate) have not been of great importance because seldom have over one or two men in their twenties been elected to the legislature. The trend would seem to be toward the selection of older rather than younger legislators. In the 53rd General Assembly (1949) the oldest member was seventy-eight, while the youngest was twenty-eight. In the 54th General Assembly the oldest member was a Senator who was eighty-one and the youngest was a twenty-nine-year-old Representative. In the 55th General Assembly the oldest member was seventy-six, while the youngest was fifty-one years his junior.

Farmers are the dominant occupational group in the Iowa legislatures. In a typical legislative session 43 of the 108 members of the House claimed farming as their occupation, while 19 of the 50 Senators also stated it as their means of livelihood. The second occupational group in both the Senate and the House usually is the law profession. In the same session cited above, the House included 16 attorneys and the Senate 13. One of the recent General Assemblies included 53 farmers in the House and 14 in the Senate. Lawyers as usual were the second occupational group, with 16 members in the House and 13 in the Senate. Throughout the years there has been no important shift in professional affiliations. Almost identical numbers of farmers and lawyers served in 1951 and 1953 as in 1900.

² John E. Briggs, "History and Organization of the Legislature in Iowa," *Iowa Applied History Series* (6 vols., Iowa City, 1912-1930), 3:5-51.

³ Benjamin F. Shambaugh, *Old Stone Capitol Remembers* (Iowa City, 1939); John E. Briggs, "The Removal of the Capital from Iowa City to Des Moines," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 14:56-95 (January, 1916); Jacob Swisher, "The Capitols at Des Moines, Iowa," *ibid.*, 39:52-88 (January, 1941).

The educational training of members of the General Assembly has become more pronounced. In each of the last four Assemblies there have been at least 100 of the 158 members with some college training. This is in direct contrast to legislatures meeting at the beginning of the twentieth century, when less than 50 members had college backgrounds. The increase of members with higher education has been chiefly noticeable in the House, where in 1910 as many as 39 Representatives had no more than a common school education.⁴

The Constitution of 1857 originally allowed only "free, white males" to qualify for the General Assembly, but an amendment of 1880 allowed Negroes to qualify; in 1926 an amendment permitted membership to women. Women have never been numerous in the General Assembly; usually only two or three serve in each legislative body. All candidates for public office in Iowa must be citizens of the United States, and members must have resided in Iowa one year immediately preceding the election and have had an actual residence of sixty days in the county or district they are chosen to represent.

Each house is the judge of the qualifications, election, and return of its own members. At the beginning of each session of the legislature, the newly elected members present their certificates of election to the secretary of the Senate or to the chief clerk of the House. A special committee in each house examines the papers and recommends that those whose election papers are satisfactory be seated.

Contested elections are settled by the house concerned. The procedure is not uniform, but usually the election contest is referred to either the Election or the Judiciary Committee, or to a special committee which conducts hearings and investigates the facts of the case and reports to the legislative body its recommendations. The group then votes for the candidate they believe should receive the seat.⁵

The Code of Iowa provides that vacancies in the General Assembly, which occur while the body is in session, or when the legislature will convene prior to the next general election, shall be filled by a special election to be called by the Governor at the earliest practicable time, with ten days'

⁴ Jacob A. Swisher and Russell M. Ross, *The Legislation of the 53rd General Assembly of Iowa* (Iowa City, 1951); *Iowa Official Registers* for 1953-1954, 1951-1952, 1949-1950, 1947-1948.

⁵ Briggs, "History and Organization of the Legislature in Iowa," 52-66.

notice given of such election. In the past, occasions have arisen where the Governor has convened the legislature in extraordinary session and vacancies have existed. On some occasions the Governor has attempted to appoint members to the legislature to fill these vacancies, but there has been a divergence of opinion between the House and the Senate. The House has refused to seat the members so appointed on the ground that the appointing power is not in the Governor, but the Senate has at least on one occasion in recent years conceded the appointments and seated the appointed members.

The compensation paid to members of the General Assembly from 1857 to 1872 was on a per diem basis. The first pay was \$3.00 per day, but this was increased to \$5.00 per diem in 1868. In 1872 the basis of compensation was changed so that each member received \$550 for a regular session; for the extra sessions the same rate per day prevailed as in the preceding regular session. The 34th General Assembly increased the pay per session to \$1,000, to apply to the 35th General Assembly meeting in 1913. The maximum pay per day in the special sessions was established at \$10 per day at the same time. The 53rd General Assembly doubled the pay to be received by the members, setting the biennial salary at \$2,000 per regular session. This increase went into effect with the 54th General Assembly meeting in 1951, since the Iowa Constitution stipulates that no General Assembly may increase the compensation of its own members. A member whose term of office includes more than 50 days of the regular session receives the full \$2,000. The maximum pay for special sessions is \$20 per day, while the per diem allowance is based on that received during the regular session.

In addition to the biennial salary, members of the Iowa legislature receive traveling expenses. Five cents per mile was the figure on the statute books from 1880 to 1949. The 53rd General Assembly raised this figure to seven cents per mile. Members of the House and Senate are furnished with stationery and postage. The limits or amounts of supplies appear to be established partially by custom and in part by each General Assembly.

Iowa, like almost all of the forty-eight states, has given little attention to the need for suitable working quarters for the legislature. Only the presiding officers of each house can be said to have offices that are adequate for their needs. All of the other members of the Iowa House and Senate must work either in their hotel rooms or at the small desk provided each

member on the floor of his respective chamber. The desk is shared by the legislator's secretary. Occasionally the lawmaker finds temporary quarters at a desk in the State Law Library, but only a small minority of the 158 members of the Assembly will be fortunate enough to obtain a desk in the library. Likewise, the various committees find that as many as three and four committees must share the same cramped caucus room. The so-called working press and radio are also inadequately housed in both the House and Senate chambers. Oftentimes members of the press and radio find that they must infringe upon the public's seats in the gallery. As in most states, the situation could be improved by moving more of the executive departments out of the capitol, but some observers feel that since members of the legislature are in session usually only four months in every twenty-four it would be too great a cost. This is a rather shortsighted view, as the absence of suitable working quarters is a severe handicap to effective legislation.

Senators and Representatives, in all except cases of treason, felony, and breach of the peace, are privileged from arrest in going to and returning from sessions of the General Assembly. Members are also exempt from any civil or special action in court while the Assembly is in session. Outside of the legislative halls, no member may be questioned for any speech or debate that he makes in the sessions of the General Assembly. Any punishment of members for disorderly behavior is rendered by the House involved. A member of either group may be expelled by a two-thirds vote of the body, but not a second time for the same offence.

Each new legislature has a large number of inexperienced members. Many have had very limited public service experience. In the Senate the turnover is somewhat slower than in the House, since Senators are elected to serve four years, while Representatives are elected every two years. For illustration, the 53rd General Assembly had 56 new members in the House, while only 52 members had served other terms. The new faces in the Senate were also numerous, with 17 of the 50 serving their first term in that body. In the 55th General Assembly, 42 of the 158 legislators were new members, with a record of 116 veteran lawmakers. A review of the General Assembly membership reveals that, prior to the 1949 and 1953 sessions, the greatest number of experienced lawmakers in the Iowa legislature occurred in 1906, when 104 of the 108 had served in previous sessions. This unusually high number of experienced legislators is partially explained by the fact that many of the members held over for a session owing to a

change in the time of election. Between 1898 and 1915 the range of legislators with previous experience was between 70 and 90. It would appear that the tendency is developing in Iowa to return experienced members to the Assembly with a greater degree of regularity. It is now not unusual to find Representatives serving as many as ten or more terms in the House, and Senators being re-elected more than five times. This trend toward a more experienced core of lawmakers should mark a step toward improvement in the caliber of the statute lawmaking process.

Representation in the House has been upon the basis of population only to a slight degree; in the Senate, however, greater regard has been given to representation according to population. In the House of the First General Assembly (1846) there were 39 Representatives, each elected from a separate district.⁶ The number of Representatives was increased twice under the Constitution of 1846, to a total of 72.

The Constitution of 1857 contained a new set of rules on representative districting, but still included a clause forbidding counties composing any district to be separated from each other by any county belonging to another district. Also, the Constitution stipulated that no representative district be composed of more than four counties. Even with these restrictions, representative districts under the new organic law could be districted and revised at every regular session. The number of Representatives in the Seventh General Assembly, the first under the new Constitution, was 86, from a total of 61 districts. The number of Representatives was changed in 1862, 1864, 1866, 1868, and 1870. From 1870 to 1904 there were 100 Representatives in the House. In 1904 the Constitution was amended so as to fix the number of Representatives at 108, the present number, but territory or land area still played a more important role in the representative districts than did population. Each county (there are 99), regardless of its total population, elects one Representative, with only a slight concession to the population factor in granting the nine most populous counties an additional Representative. This allows one county in Iowa with slightly over 10,000 population to have one Representative, while Polk County, with over 200,000 population, elects only two Representatives. Thus a single vote in the county with 10,000 people and one Representative has ten times the

⁶ Dorothy Schaffter, "The Bicameral System in Practice," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 17:22-128, 171-226 (April, 1929); Briggs, "History and Organization of the Legislature in Iowa," 5-135.

weight of the Polk County voter in determining the election of the Representative. According to the most recent census, there were 21 counties in Iowa with a total population of approximately 273,000, with 21 votes in the Iowa House. In direct contrast, Polk and Woodbury counties have a total population of over 327,000, but they have only 4 Representatives.

The 108 Representatives, if on a population apportionment, should each represent 24,190 people. According to the 1950 census, 23 counties in the state have more than 24,190 people per Representative, but 73 counties have less than 24,190 people represented by one legislator. The nine counties with two Representatives each are: Polk, Woodbury, Scott, Linn, Black Hawk, Dubuque, Pottawattamie, Wapello, and Clinton.

The Iowa Senate consisted of 19 members under the Constitution of 1846. This total was increased twice before the Constitution of 1857 provided that the senatorial districts were to be reapportioned after every state and federal census, with the maximum number fixed permanently at 50. This maximum figure was attained in 1872.

The Amendment to the Constitution ratified in 1904 established the Senate at 50 members, to be apportioned among the counties according to population distribution as shown by the last preceding census. However, the statute prohibits any senatorial district from being smaller in area than a county and allows only one Senator for each district. As a result, Senators from some of the less populous districts represent as few as 25,000 persons, while the Senator elected from Polk County represents over 200,000. With the 1950 population, the districts should each, if on a strict population apportionment, include 52,251 people. Of the 50 districts, 16 contain more than 52,251 people, while 34 contain less than 52,251.

While Iowa does not have a great rural-urban conflict in the General Assembly, nevertheless there is some strife present. There is no doubt that both the Senate and the House are controlled by the rural areas. The cities in Iowa are not represented in the legislature to the extent that their population should justify.

Over 1,000,000 people in Iowa reside in the 16 counties containing cities of over 15,000 population. Thus more than 40 per cent of the total population is concentrated in 16 counties, and these 16 counties elect only 25 of the 108 members of the House. Thus, 40 per cent of the state's population is represented by only 25 per cent of the members of the lower house in the General Assembly.

More than 44 per cent of the total population in Iowa live in the 16 senatorial districts that have cities of over 15,000. The 16 Senators from these districts comprise less than one-third of the Senate. Thus the rural areas on the basis of population are definitely over-represented in both the House and the Senate.

There is little hope of changing this picture, because a constitutional amendment would be necessary. It is not likely that a rural-controlled legislature will ever vote in favor of an amendment that would take representation away from rural areas and give it to the districts with larger cities. Iowa has no provision for initiating constitutional amendments by any method other than passage by two successive General Assemblies; thus, the city areas will probably continue to be under-represented. A constitutional convention is one way that true reapportionment could be accomplished. It must be said, however, in fairness to the rural areas, that the conflict between urban and rural districts has never been as bitter and hostile as it has been in many other state legislatures.

At almost every legislative session some move is made by the Representatives and Senators from the more heavily populated areas to get new rules passed regarding the apportionment of both the Senate and House. Invariably, however, the proposed measures end up without enactment in one committee or another. In 1953 the question of reapportionment was discussed on the floor of the lower house, the first time this has occurred in forty years. The cities do not appear to be overly indignant about this rural domination, and chances of change in the near future are relatively slight.

However, Iowa's representative and senatorial districts appear to be almost perfect when compared with the districting found in many states. In Illinois the cities possess better than 70 per cent of the population yet receive only approximately 30 per cent of the representation in the lower house. Thus on the basis of relativity, Iowa's problem of redistricting senatorial and representative districts appears slight, but the fact that a problem does exist should not be disregarded.

The time of convening the General Assembly in regular session has always been fixed by the state Constitution. The election of members of the General Assembly under the 1846 Constitution occurred in the even-numbered years, and the Assembly met in the odd-numbered years. However, the 1857 Constitution provided for elections in the odd-numbered years

and the convening of the legislature in the even years until 1906, when by constitutional amendment elections were changed back to the even years and the sessions to the odd-numbered years. The sessions are usually about 100 days in length. The shortest ever held was 43 days, the second meeting of the General Assembly in 1848-1849. The longest regular session occurred in 1939, a session of 108 days, a record equalled by the 55th General Assembly in 1953. There is no constitutional limitation on length of sessions in Iowa. In many states the sessions are limited to a certain number of days.⁷

The legislators in the Iowa General Assembly seem to be well satisfied with a biennial session with no restriction on length. In the 1953 session a bill was introduced which would have called for annual sessions, but it received no support and died in committee. While there is a definite tendency on the part of the legislature to attempt to finish the session by the second or third week of April, sessions are not stopped merely because the lawmakers have worked one hundred days. It is highly unlikely that Iowa will adopt an annual session rule for many years to come.

Special or extra sessions are called by executive proclamation. Since 1846 there have been fourteen extra sessions and one "adjourned" session of the General Assembly. The special session to adopt the Code of 1897 lasted longer than any regular session, as it was prolonged for 115 days, but the longest special session was one of the 45th General Assembly, which lasted 128 days. The special or extra sessions ordinarily are completed in from 10 to 15 days. It is obvious from the variation of from 10 to 115 days that there is no limitation upon the length of special sessions, once they have been convened. Likewise, there is no limitation upon the subject matter that may be taken under consideration by the lawmakers after the Governor has called the extraordinary session. However, the General Assembly is powerless to convene itself, once it has adjourned the regular biennial session, so must rely upon the Governor's judgment as to when a special session is necessary. During the depression years Iowa, like many other states, tended to have rather frequent special sessions. However, four of the twelve special sessions in the last 108 years have been held since 1929. The last extraordinary session was called by the Governor in 1947.

⁷ For a list of the times of convening and adjourning and the number of members of each Iowa legislature, 1838-1953, see below, pp. 57-8.

When the General Assembly is ready to adjourn, in either a regular or special session, the custom is for each house to inform the Governor and the other house of its readiness to adjourn. If no agreement seems in the offing, a joint committee is appointed, which proceeds to fix the time of adjournment. Should this process fail, the Governor may step into the breach and set the date for adjournment.

The committee system is one of the most important factors in the organization of the Iowa General Assembly. Ever since the First General Assembly, the committee system has been used extensively.⁸ In the First General Assembly the House had 15 standing committees, while the Senate, a smaller body, had 16. An almost continuous growth in the number of standing committees can be traced. By 1915 the 35th General Assembly had a total of 105 standing committees. The House had 61 and the Senate 44. The Speaker of the House made a total of 861 committee appointments, with each Representative usually on eight committees, as each committee averaged ten members, with the Ways and Means Committee, the Ways and Means and Appropriations, were composed of more than 40 Representatives each. In the Senate the situation was comparable, with the President of the Senate making 471 committee appointments. The committees averaged ten members, with the Ways and Means Committee, the largest, having 31. Each Senator was on at least nine different committees, and just about each Senator was the chairman of some committee.

The trend toward ever increasing numbers of committees reached a high point in the Iowa Senate in 1931, when 51 different standing committees were appointed by the President of the Senate. The largest number of standing committees in the House was in the session of 1911, when 62 were named by the Speaker.

In the 53rd General Assembly, convening in 1949, the House had only 39 standing committees, one of the smallest numbers in recent years. Likewise, the standing committees in the Senate were fewer than the average, with only 35 different committees listed.

The House committee assignments totaled 1,001, with each member averaging nine committee posts. The standing committee with the largest membership, and presumably thereby the most important, was the Appropriations Committee composed of 52 members. The Highways and Roads

⁸ Frank E. Horack, "The Committee System," *Iowa Applied History Series*, 3:535-609.

STANDING COMMITTEES—55TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (1953)

<i>House (38)</i>		<i>Senate (36)</i>	
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Members</i>	<i>Committee</i>	<i>Members</i>
Aeronautics	12	Aeronautics	5
Agriculture I	25	Agriculture	18
Agriculture II	25	Appropriations	24
Appropriations	48	Banks, Building & Loan.....	12
Banks, Building & Loan.....	18	Board of Control.....	11
Board of Control.....	21	Chaplains	1
Cities and Towns	30	Cities and Towns.....	14
Claims	15	Claims	6
Compensation of Public Employees...	20	Compensation of Public Employees...	7
Conservation, Drainage & Flood Control	26	Conservation	14
Consolidation of State Government...	20	Governmental Affairs	7
Constitutional Amendments	13	Election Reform	5
County & Township Affairs.....	18	Enrolled Bills	2
Dairy and Food.....	19	Highways	17
Departmental Affairs	12	Insurance	12
Elections, Political & Judicial Districts	14	Interstate Cooperation	5
Enrolled Bills	7	Iowa Development	5
Fish and Game.....	20	Judiciary I	12
Insurance	20	Judiciary II	9
Judiciary I	16	Labor	15
Judiciary II	18	Manufacturing, Commercial Trade....	7
Labor	25	Military Affairs	7
Military & Veterans Affairs.....	19	Mines & Mining.....	6
Mines & Mining.....	10	Motor Vehicles	12
Motor Vehicles, Commerce & Trade...	22	Printing	5
Police Regulation, Suppression of Crime, and Intemperance.....	25	Private Corporations	5
Printing	6	Public Health	10
Private Corporations	15	Public Lands and Buildings.....	3
Public Health & Pharmacy.....	24	Public Utilities	3
Public Lands & Buildings.....	15	Public Libraries	3
Public Utilities, Telephone, Telegraph & Express	18	Railroads	5
Railroads	17	Rules	5
Roads & Highways	41	Schools & Educational Institutions....	17
Rules	8	Social Security	13
Schools, Libraries & State Educ. Inst..	30	Tax Revision	7
Social Security	23	Ways and Means.....	15
Tax Revision	22		
Ways and Means.....	25		

Committee was nearly as large, with 49 members. Forty members were on the Schools Committee. The Ways and Means Committee was composed of 36 Representatives, as was the Liquor Control and Conservation Committee.⁹

The average size of the standing committees in the Senate during the 53rd General Assembly was 12 members, with 410 appointments on the 35 committees. Each Senator found himself on seven or eight committees. The largest in the Senate was the Ways and Means, with over half the Senators numbered on its membership of 26. Exactly half of the Senators were appointed to the Appropriations Committee, while 24 were on Agriculture, 23 on Schools, 19 on Conservation, 17 on Social Security, and 17 on Cities and Towns.

No appreciable change can be seen since 1900 as to the average size of committees in either the House or Senate. Apparently the members of the General Assembly have always sought as many committee assignments as possible, and each member has been given eight or nine appointments. The conclusions that Professor Hallie Farmer reached concerning the standing committees in the Alabama legislature apply to the Iowa committee system:¹⁰

1. There are too many committees.
2. Many committees are too large.
3. Work is not properly distributed among the committees.
4. The rules of both House and Senate should be revised to provide more effectively for the work of the committees.
5. The committees must have more effective means of acquiring knowledge of the bills upon which they act.

The following table shows the changing numbers of committees in both houses, at ten-year intervals, since 1900:¹¹

	1900	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951
House	54	62	61	48	54	39
Senate	39	40	44	51	50	38

In both the Iowa Senate and House there is a great inequality in the dis-

⁹ Ivan Richardson, "Committee Structure of the Iowa General Assembly" (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1950).

¹⁰ Hallie Farmer, *The Legislative Process in Alabama* (Univ. of Ala., 1949), 309.

¹¹ For a complete list of all the committees and the number of members on each in the 53rd General Assembly, see list on page 41.

tribution of work among the standing committees. Usually ten of the major committees in the House and eight in the Senate handle more than three-fourths of the bills that are considered by the legislature. Major committees meet three or more times every week, while many of the less important committees hold meetings only once or twice during the entire session.

While the great bulk of the work of the General Assembly is done by the standing committees, certain matters each session demand consideration by committees that dissolve as soon as a single task is completed. Some of the common select committees are those on credentials, to notify the Governor and the other house of a particular action, to prepare memorials, to examine committee clerks, to attend funerals, to investigate particular problems, and to visit the various state institutions. Selection is by appointment of the presiding officers, with the number of members on any one committee indeterminate.

Joint committees are usually select committees composed of members of both houses. A joint committee may be either standing or select. In the early history of the Iowa legislature joint committees were used for more important business than in more recent years, and were frequently standing committees.

A conference committee is in fact two committees — one from each house — appointed for the purpose of discussing points of difference between the two houses when they have come to a disagreement on some proposed legislation. Each house contributes the same number of members. A conference committee may adopt and recommend the action of one house or the other, either as it stands or with amendments; it may recommend a substitute; or, if a deadlock develops, it may on occasion fail to come to any agreement. Such a committee ceases to exist upon the accomplishment or failure of the purpose for which it was created. In the Iowa General Assembly, the joint standing rules govern the action of the conference committees.

During most legislative sessions¹² the House and Senate have utilized "steering committees" whose purpose is to clear the way for the consideration of such bills as are thought to be of major importance. These steering committees, also called "sifting committees," are in reality standing com-

¹² Histories of the legislation of the following General Assemblies have been described in articles published by the State Historical Society of Iowa: 34th through 47th, and the 53rd, 54th, and 55th. All are published in the *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, *The Palimpsest*, or as separate monographs.

mittees. They are created after the legislature has been in session for 60 or 70 days. All bills that have not been acted upon by the legislative body are sent to the sifting committee, and only bills that this committee wants considered by the entire body are reported to the floor of the house. Iowa is one of the few states in which the sifting committee has been regularly employed to take charge of the mass of bills that remain undisposed of when the time for adjournment draws near. Its creation might be considered an indictment of the entire legislative procedure.

POWERS

The fundamental principles of constitutional law as related to the status of state governments are fairly well defined and recognized. The state government of Iowa is a constitutional government, republican in form, and has its general principles codified in a written document. The state government emanates from the people and has only the authority that is granted to it by the people of the state. It is a government of general powers,¹³ with its powers curbed by both the Federal Constitution and the Iowa Constitution of 1857.

It is well established that the powers, with the exception of those delegated to the United States Congress or denied the states, are reserved to the people. The people of the state of Iowa, through the adoption of the state Constitution, have created by Article III the state's legislative body, which is granted the legislative authority of the state. The General Assembly is vested with all lawmaking power for the enactment of laws for the regulation of the state, its subdivisions, and its people. It is understood that this legislative authority extends only to the territorial limits of Iowa. It is implied in this legislative grant to the General Assembly that no legislative assembly may bind future legislative bodies by passing irrepealable statutes. Likewise, the General Assembly is forbidden to delegate its legislative powers to any other body or authority. It is assumed that all laws passed are for the public welfare, and all monies appropriated are for public purposes.

Other limitations on the authority of the state legislative powers are those contained in the set provisions that delegate power to the government of

¹³ Benjamin F. Shambaugh, "Law-Making Powers of the Legislature in Iowa," *Iowa Applied History Series*, 3:139-58; Carl H. Erbe, "The Legislative Department as Provided by the Constitution of Iowa," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 23: 217-303 (April, 1925).

the United States. Thus any delegation of power of a legislative character given to the United States government is by implication a limitation on the lawmaking authority of the state's General Assembly.

The state legislature cannot exercise powers which are in their nature essentially judicial or executive. It is the function of the legislature to make laws or statutes which serve as rules of civil conduct, and it is not within the province of the General Assembly to construe and apply the law or to decide private disputes between or concerning persons.

A complete statement of the expressed and implied limitations on the legislative powers of the Iowa General Assembly would require nothing less than an enumeration of almost all of the provisions of the Constitution of 1857. However, there are certain definite limitations placed on the legislature as safeguards against certain actions which are regarded as improper.

The Iowa legislature, like many of its counterparts, finds that it is definitely limited in financial matters by the state Constitution. The maximum debt that may be contracted by the state is fixed at \$250,000. Likewise, any bonded indebtedness incurred by the state must be paid off within a period of not more than twenty years, and by serial bonds. The usual limitations concerning taxes are found in the Iowa Constitution: taxes must be uniform and equal upon all property, no matter where it is located in the state. Appropriations must of course be for public purposes, and it is necessary for any appropriation bill to be enacted before any money can be disbursed from the state treasury.

The legislature is *not* permitted to:

1. Grant divorces.
2. Authorize lotteries.
3. Pass local or special laws not of a general nature.
4. Change county seats, or change county boundary lines, without approval of those affected.
5. Grant extra compensation to any public officers, agents, or contractors, after the service is rendered, or the contract entered into.
6. Pass laws violating the rights reserved to the people in the bill of rights of the Constitution.

This list does not include all of the limitations upon the Iowa General Assembly, but it does give some excellent illustrations of the types of acts that are denied the legislature by the Constitution. It is obvious that the Iowa General Assembly is limited by all three types of restrictions commonly

found in state constitutions: (1) prohibiting special or local laws which can be covered by a general law; (2) listing in the constitution subjects which can not be dealt with by the legislature; and (3) requiring that all general laws be of a public nature and operate uniformly throughout the entire state.¹⁴

Legislation that deals with or applies only to a particular section or political subdivision of the state is called local legislation, and is actually a distinctive type of special legislation. The Iowa legislature is forbidden to pass a special law if a general law can be made to apply. With this type of restriction a great many special acts and legalizing acts are passed at every session of the General Assembly. However, the amount of special legislation is not as great as might be expected. The table below shows the number of special and legalizing acts passed by the Iowa legislature at ten-year intervals since 1900:¹⁵

<i>Year</i>	<i>General Laws</i>	<i>Special and Legalizing Laws</i>	<i>Total Laws</i>
1900	174	43	217
1911	213	57	270
1921	341	70	411
1931	263	77	340
1941	314	30	344
1951	226	40	266

The average of general laws to special and legalizing acts has been approximately seven to one over the years. It should be noted that very few of the special bills have in the last thirty years dealt with individuals.

The limitation on local legislation has been avoided in two ways in legislating for cities and towns. One has been the usual classification system according to population. The system has not been extreme, however, as only three classes have ever been used: cities of more than 15,000 population; cities of less than 15,000 but more than 2,000; and towns of less than 2,000 population. The second method of avoiding the restriction on local legislation has been to pass laws which pertain only to cities with the commission form of government, or laws pertaining to cities with the city manager form of government.

¹⁴ W. Brooke Graves, *American State Government* (Boston, 1953), 283-5.

¹⁵ *Session Laws of the Iowa General Assembly, 1900, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941, 1951.*

While bills make up a very large percentage of the measures considered by the General Assembly,¹⁶ there are three types of resolutions that must be given some consideration. A simple resolution enacted by the House or Senate applies only to the business of the house in which it originates, and is not sent to the other house for consideration or to the Governor for his signature. Simple resolutions are used largely for three purposes: (1) to express an opinion or sentiment; (2) to issue an administrative order; (3) to make temporary laws. For example, the employees of either house are directed and controlled by simple resolutions; similarly, the publication of rules, the changing of rules, and the like are accomplished by simple resolutions.

Concurrent resolutions express the will of the whole legislative assembly and are voted upon by both houses. Concurrent resolutions are used for joint conventions and sessions, recommendations to the national government, major administrative orders, adjournments, recesses, and joint rules.

The third type of resolution is the joint resolution. This type carries all the formalities of a bill. Joint resolutions are primarily used to propose amendments to the Constitution and to approve plans for such things as new buildings at state institutions. Many times they are also used in place of concurrent resolutions, when there is a desire to express opinion or sentiment.

Bills may be divided into three classes. The first and most important is the public bill. It proposes a statute which acts upon some subject in which the whole state is interested and when enacted adds to the body of the general law. In contrast, a private bill is one that proposes a law for the particular interest and benefit of some person or group of persons. The third type of bill is termed a judicial bill. Its purpose is to settle conflicts between individuals or between the state and individuals.

The structure of bills is more or less uniform, although some are very short, consisting of only a paragraph or two, while others are very long, running into a great many pages. In any case, the basic structure is the same, consisting — normally — of the following parts:¹⁷

1. *Title* — A short statement prefixed to a bill indicating its contents and purpose.

¹⁶ O. K. Patton, "Methods of Statute Law-Making in Iowa," *Iowa Applied History Series*, 3:161-284.

¹⁷ Jacob Van der Zee, "Forms and Language of Statutes in Iowa," *ibid.*, 3:285-396.

2. *Preamble* — The statement by way of introduction, giving the reasons for presenting the bill to the legislature. Relatively few bills now have preambles.
3. *Enacting Clause* — The statement of the enacting authority. The Constitution of 1857 provides that every law shall begin, "Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa." A bill without the enacting clause would be unconstitutional.
4. *Purview* — The body of the bill that expresses the legislative will.
5. *Proviso, Saving Clause, Exception* — The sections of the bill which create an exception to the operation of the general expression of the legislative will.
6. *Schedule* — The additions to the bill which contain any matters that cannot be put conveniently into the body of the act.
7. *Publication Clause* — The final part of a great many bills. The Constitution of 1857 provides that all laws of a general nature shall take effect on July 4, unless otherwise provided. Special and local laws become operative thirty days after they are approved by the Governor. If it is desired for the law to take effect before the time provided in the Constitution or by law, the bill has a final clause stating, "This act being deemed of immediate importance shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication" in two newspapers, which are usually named.

Each member of each chamber has the right to present as many bills as he pleases, subject to the rules of the house of which he is a member. Usually the Iowa Senate and House set certain time limits for the introduction of bills by individual members. Often after the first fifty or sixty days of the session, only standing committees may introduce new bills. When a member presents a bill prepared at the request of some constituent, the notation "by request" is usually placed on the bill.

The Iowa General Assembly now follows the rule that the first reading of a bill is for information; if no objection is raised the bill immediately goes to its second reading without further question. The first reading is by title only. After the presiding officer announces the first reading, the reading clerk proceeds to the second reading, which is usually also by title only.

Almost all bills except those that have been drafted by a committee are,

after the formality of the second reading, referred to a committee for further consideration. The commitment of some bills is specifically provided for by the rules of the House and Senate. For example, in the House all bills that appropriate money are referred to the Appropriations Committee, while all bills pertaining to levying, assessing, and collecting taxes are referred to the Ways and Means Committee. Bills are referred to the proper standing committee by the Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate at their discretion. If there is objection to the committee to which the bill is assigned, further discussion of the motion to commit is permitted. The presiding officers will usually accept the suggestion of the member introducing the bill as to which committee shall study the bill. It is relatively infrequent that a special committee will be established for the consideration of a bill.

Committees in the Iowa legislature are given a great deal of freedom in consideration of the bills assigned. Usually after due and careful study of the bill, which may take a few minutes or many days, the committee will make its report through its chairman. The reports usually take one of the following forms: (1) that the bill be passed; (2) that the bill be passed with amendment; (3) reported without recommendation; (4) a substitute bill be passed; (5) that the bill be re-referred to another committee; (6) that the bill be not passed; and (7), that the bill be indefinitely postponed.¹⁸

In every session of the Iowa legislature approximately 50 per cent of the bills referred to a committee are never reported out by the committee. This is commonly called killing a bill by "pigeonholing" it in the committee.

Many bills come out of committee with the committee's recommendations that certain amendments be added. However, a large number of amendments may also be added from the floor in the general debate on the bill. Occasionally, after amendments have been added, it is necessary to recommit the bill. The same committee that originally studied the bill may reconsider it, or it may be sent to an entirely new committee.

When a bill has been considered on the floor, following its return from committee, and any amendments desired have been added, it is engrossed. This is the procedure wherein all changes that have been adopted on the floor are incorporated into the bill by the engrossing officers. However, it

¹⁸ Ivan L. Pollock, "Some Abuses Connected with Statute Law-Making," *ibid.*, 3:613-87.

is customary at this stage to make the motion that the rules be suspended, the bill considered engrossed, and read a third time. This third reading is ordinarily a reading in full, although frequently by common consent many sections may be omitted in the "full" reading.

Following the third reading, the vote upon the final passage is taken immediately and without further debate. The presiding officer puts the question to a vote without the formality of a motion from the floor. Voting in the House is by means of pressing electrically operated voting machines on each member's desk — the button marked "aye" flashes a green light on the board after the representative's name, while the "nay" button will light a red bulb. In the Senate, vocal voting is still used, and the ayes and nays recorded in the journal. The Constitution of 1857 requires that for a bill to pass it must have the vote of a majority of *all* members. This means that a bill passed by the Senate must receive 26 aye votes, regardless of the number of Senators present on the floor at the time. Similarly, for a bill to pass the House, it must receive a minimum of 55 aye votes. No member can be excused from voting without the consent of the body to which he belongs. Therefore, a member who does not desire to vote on a bill may find it necessary to be absent from the legislative chamber when a vote is imminent.

After a bill is duly passed in one house it is sent by messenger to the other house, where it is dealt with as if it had originated in the receiving house. It is then subjected to the same procedure, namely: (1) first and second reading; (2) commitment; (3) consideration in committee; (4) reported on the floor by the committee chairman with recommendations; (5) consideration on the floor; (6) engrossment and third reading; and (7) vote. When final action is taken in the second house one of three courses of action is usually adopted in regard to the bill. First, the bill may pass in exactly the same form as passed in the originating house; second, it may fail to pass by the required constitutional majority; third, it may pass with amendments. If amendments are adopted, the bill is sent back to the originating house with these amendments added. The originating house will then either concur or nonconcur in the amendments. In the latter case, the bill may be sent to a conference or a joint committee for the purpose of ironing out the differences of opinion between the two houses in connection with the bill.

The report of the conference committee, if it is able to arrive at an agree-

ment, with the compromises believed most suitable, is submitted to each house and a vote taken. If the measure is passed by the necessary constitutional majority it then follows the same procedure as a bill that is agreed upon by both houses without amendments.

Passage by both houses is followed by the enrollment of the bill. It is copied on parchment by the enrolling clerk of the originating house. The caption is now "An Act" instead of "A Bill." Following examination for errors by a joint committee, it is signed by the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate in the presence of their respective houses. The signature of the presiding officers constitute the legal authentication of the legislative action.

The bill is next transmitted by the chairman of the committee on enrollment of bills to the Governor, who has several alternatives. If a bill is presented to him before the last three days previous to adjournment, he has a three-day period in which to decide whether to approve or disapprove the bill. If he desires to approve, he signs the enrolled bill with the date of approval. If he does not approve, he returns the bill to the originating house with a veto message. However, if a bill is presented to the Governor during the last three days of a session, he has thirty days in which to file the bill with his approval or objections with the Secretary of State.

The approval or disapproval is noted on the journal of the originating house. If the bill has been vetoed, the house may either reconsider the bill, refer it to a committee, or defer action until some future time. If the bill is voted upon it must receive a two-thirds vote to override the Governor's veto. If it receives this majority it is sent to the other house and considered there. Should it receive a two-thirds vote in the second house it is then sent to the Secretary of State and becomes a law over the veto of the Governor. Likewise, should the Governor retain a bill longer than three days while the legislature is in session the Act becomes law without action by the Governor. The Secretary of State retains the enrolled bill, which is the legal proof of what the legislative action has been in a particular law.

The number of bills introduced in each session of the General Assembly is large. In the 36th General Assembly (1915) 1,279 bills and 35 joint resolutions were introduced. In the 53rd General Assembly (1949) 22 joint resolutions were introduced, while 1,135 bills were thrown into the Senate and House hoppers. Of these 1,135 bills, 524 originated in the Senate, while 611 were introduced in the House. Only 307 of the bills

eventually became law, while 9 of the 22 joint resolutions were passed by both houses. The history of legislation in the Iowa General Assembly reveals that on the average one in three of the bills that are introduced in a legislative session is finally made into law. In 1951 the Iowa General Assembly considered 1,172 measures; of these 650 originated in the House and 522 in the Senate. The legislature enacted into law only 272 bills and joint resolutions. The 55th General Assembly passed 297 acts, one of which was vetoed by the Governor.

*Bills Introduced in General Assembly at Periodic Intervals*¹⁹

Year	House	Senate	Total	Enacted
1913	610	580	1190*	397
1917	631	617	1284*	434
1921	608	529	1137*	411
1929	555	520	1075*	405
1933	620	532	1152*	284
1937	568	542	1110*	283
1949	622	535	1177*	322
1953	536	458	994*	297

*Includes appropriation bills.

There has never been a formal bill drafting department to aid the members of the Iowa General Assembly. Consequently bills are drafted in various ways.²⁰ Some bills are drafted by individual legislators, while others are drawn by committees. Still others are prepared for the legislators by members of the legislative lobby.

Proposals for the establishment of a permanent full-time staff for bill drafting have always met with objections or postponement. The committee on hiring joint personnel selects a small group, usually lawyers, who are retained as a part-time bill drafting group for each session. These temporary assistants maintain offices in the State Law Library and assist individual legislators and committees in the actual drafting of bills when requested to do so. The State library has a collection of books known as the Law Library, consisting mainly of statutes, codes, and law reports of the states of the Union, which is placed at the disposal of the legislators. There can be no doubt that the Iowa General Assembly could well use a permanent staff to assist the legislators in their bill drafting efforts.

¹⁹ Figures compiled from House and Senate Journals, Session Laws, and reviews of various sessions of the Iowa General Assembly, 1913-1953.

²⁰ Jacob Van der Zee, "The Drafting of Statutes," *Iowa Applied History Series*, 3:475-531; Van der Zee, "Forms and Language of Statutes in Iowa," 287-395.

An Interim or Budget Committee is appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House at the conclusion of the regular session of the legislature. It continues to function until the beginning of the next General Assembly, and usually consists of four Representatives and four Senators. The group organizes and selects one of its number as chairman. The members are semi-ex officio, as they usually include the chairmen of the committees on Ways and Means, Judiciary, and Appropriations. It is in a way Iowa's substitute for a legislative council. One of its main activities is the approval of specifications, contracts, and claims. However, probably the most important role of the Interim or Budget Committee is in connection with its control of the contingent fund which usually includes from \$300,000 to \$500,000 for each year of the biennium.

The Committee allocates funds to the various state governmental activities for "the public interest and an efficient and economical administration of the affairs of the state." Seldom does a year pass that the Committee does not receive requests from each of the state institutions for funds out of the contingent fund. Each request is investigated by the committee and then a ruling made on whether or not the money requested will be allocated. In summary, it may be said that the Interim Committee completes some of the emergency work that the General Assembly did not find time to finish. However, the Committee does not have the power to draw up a proposed agenda for the next General Assembly, as do most legislative councils.

There has never been any concerted effort to have a legislative council formed in Iowa. However, there is a possibility that in the future Iowa may turn to the legislative council, for in both the 53rd and 55th General Assemblies bills that would have created such a council received attention but were not given favorable action by the legislators. The 55th General Assembly, like previous Assemblies, refused to approve of a legislative council.

The exact amount of influence on the General Assembly exerted by the lobbyists is impossible to determine. It is undenied that there is now and has been considerable lobbying in the Iowa legislature.²¹ One of the earliest lobby groups was maintained by citizens from Des Moines, when the 5th General Assembly (1854) was debating where to move the state capital. The success of the lobby is apparent: the General Assembly determined that Des Moines should be the permanent home of the state capital.

²¹ Pollock, "Some Abuses Connected with Statute Law-Making," 631-9.

The first official recognition of the problem of lobbyists occurred in 1878, when a bill was proposed to define corrupt solicitation of the legislators and to prescribe a penalty for the illegal action. The first action to keep lobbyists from the floor of the General Assembly was taken in 1904 when the sergeants-at-arms were so instructed. The rules of both the Senate and the House since 1906 have excluded lobbyists from the floors of the two chambers.

A House rule adopted in the 53rd General Assembly of 1949 requires "any person lobbying or attempting to influence legislation, who receives compensation or anything of value therefor, including any state employee who attempts to influence legislation, shall register his name and address, his company, firm or cause for which he is lobbying, with the chief clerk of the House." This rule, while not requiring the lobbyist to state his salary, did require more than 168 people to register during the 53rd General Assembly's regular session. This means that there are often more lobbyists than there are members of the legislature.

Many of the lobbyists undoubtedly received more compensation for their time in Des Moines than did the members of the legislature. There were over 100 different interest groups on the chief clerk's register. Included were such organizations as the Iowa League of Municipalities, Iowa League of Women Voters, Iowa Association of School Boards, Iowa State Educational Association, Iowa Farm Bureau, etc. In the past, some of the most influential lobbies have been those sponsored by school textbook publishers, bridge construction companies, public utility concerns, and the railroads.

All of the lobby groups operate essentially alike. Every lobbyist attempts to know personally as many members of the legislature as possible. Each new member is given particular attention by the various lobby organizations. Almost every night during the legislative session some pressure group entertains members of the legislature at a dinner party. Any service that they can render to individual legislators in the way of facts and figures is given. Frequently the lobbyist will draft proposed legislation and offer it to a member of the legislature. The success or failure of an individual lobbyist is probably judged by whether or not he was able to secure the passage of measures that his particular group desired or whether or not he was able to block the passage of legislation that his group had determined to be harmful to their cause.

A very questionable lobbyist activity came to light in the 1953 session of

the Iowa legislature, when at least one member of the General Assembly prepared legislation for a particular pressure group before the opening of the session. No formal charge on this action was taken, but much speculation has occurred as to the moral principles involved.

The Iowa legislature and its legislative procedures are deficient in at least six of the twelve recommendations made by the Council of State Governments in its 1948 revised report.²² The terms of the members of the legislature should probably be lengthened, with staggered terms for both members of the Senate and the House. Terms of six years for the Senate and four years for the House would be a forward step in maintaining a continuity of experienced legislative leadership. Likewise, skilled full-time legislative employees should be appointed according to merit and not according to political affiliation. The third major recommendation which should be given very serious consideration in Iowa concerns the legislative committee system. There can be no doubt that the number of committees and the number of members on the committees could be materially reduced in both the House and Senate. The distribution of bills to the committees needs to be standardized so that all of the standing committees have work instead of a small number of the committees being overburdened. More attention to public hearings on important items of legislation would be valuable. Inadequate space for hearings and for both individual and committee work by the members of the legislature constitutes another problem that remains to be solved. Iowa is lagging far behind most of the states in regard to the inadequate reference, research, and bill drafting services given to the members of the legislature. Progress would be made in this area if the General Assembly created a legislative council. Thirty of the forty-eight states have legislative councils, yet Iowa has not yet recognized this need.²³

To summarize, the efficiency of the Iowa legislature could probably be improved by several changes in both organization and procedure. Basic to improvement is the need for reapportionment of at least one of the two houses. The House, with 108 members, should not be increased in size; rather, it could be reduced to 99 members by giving each county in the state one Representative. On the other hand, the Senate of 50 members is of a workable size, although it is the largest state Senate in the United States.

²² Council of State Governments, *Report of Committee on Legislative Processes and Procedure* (Chicago, 1948).

²³ *Book of the States, 1952-53* (Chicago, 1952), 122.

Reapportionment in the Senate might be made on the basis of population, with each Senator representing as nearly as possible an equal number of constituents. This would mean that a county such as Polk would have four Senators, while as many as four or five of the less populous counties could be joined into one senatorial district.

Other changes have been touched upon. There are too many committees, and they are too large. The same number and type in each house would simplify the work, and conference committees could then be made up of members who have been working on the legislation previously. A committee system with not more than twelve committees operating in each house would seem to be adequate.

Although there is no legal limitation on the length of the legislative session, a tradition of 100 days has grown up. This is often not adequate. One way to break this tradition would be to increase the compensation of members, many of whom have to make a financial sacrifice in order to serve the state. Annual instead of biennial sessions have been suggested but not approved. Very few states, except such large ones as New York, Illinois, and California, have annual sessions of their legislatures.

The Iowa General Assembly has a long history of hard work and integrity. It is composed of 158 men and women working for the welfare of the state, and its record will compare favorably with that of every other state in the union.

DATES AND MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLIES OF IOWA,
1838-1953

Legislative Assembly

<i>Number</i>	<i>Convened</i>	<i>Adjourned</i>	<i>Council</i>	<i>House</i>
1	Nov. 12, 1838	Jan. 25, 1839	13	26
2 (regular)	Nov. 4, 1839	Jan. 17, 1840	13	26
2 (extra)	July 13, 1840	Aug. 2, 1840	13	26
3	Nov. 2, 1840	Jan. 15, 1841	13	26
4	Dec. 6, 1841	Feb. 18, 1842	13	26
5	Dec. 5, 1842	Feb. 17, 1843	13	26
6 (regular)	Dec. 4, 1843	Feb. 16, 1844	13	26
6 (extra)	June 16, 1844	June 20, 1844	13	26
7	May 5, 1845	June 11, 1845	13	26
8	Dec. 1, 1845	Jan. 19, 1846	13	26

General Assembly

			<i>Senate</i>	<i>House</i>
1 (regular)	Nov. 30, 1846	Feb. 25, 1847	19	39
1 (extra)	Jan. 3, 1848	Jan. 25, 1848	19	39
2	Dec. 4, 1848	Jan. 15, 1849	19	39
3	Dec. 2, 1850	Feb. 5, 1851	19	39
4	Dec. 6, 1852	Jan. 24, 1853	30	63
5 (regular)	Dec. 4, 1854	Jan. 25, 1855	30	70
5 (extra)	July 2, 1856	July 15, 1856	30	70
6	Dec. 1, 1856	Jan. 29, 1857	33	72
7	Jan. 11, 1858	Mar. 23, 1858	35	72
8 (regular)	Jan. 11, 1860	Apr. 2, 1860	43	86
8 (extra)	May 15, 1861	May 29, 1861	43	86
9 (regular)	Jan. 13, 1862	Apr. 8, 1862	46	94
9 (extra)	Sept. 3, 1862	Sept. 11, 1862	46	94
10	Jan. 11, 1864	Mar. 29, 1864	46	90
11	Jan. 8, 1866	Apr. 3, 1866	48	98
12	Jan. 13, 1868	Apr. 8, 1868	49	99
13	Jan. 10, 1870	Apr. 13, 1870	50	100
14 (regular)	Jan. 8, 1872	Apr. 23, 1872	50	100
14 (adjourned)	Jan. 15, 1873	Feb. 20, 1873	50	100
15	Jan. 12, 1874	Mar. 19, 1874	50	100
16	Jan. 10, 1876	Mar. 16, 1876	50	100
17	Jan. 14, 1878	Mar. 26, 1878	50	100
18	Jan. 12, 1880	Mar. 27, 1880	50	100
19	Jan. 9, 1882	Mar. 17, 1882	50	100
20	Jan. 14, 1884	Apr. 2, 1884	50	100
21	Jan. 11, 1886	Apr. 13, 1886	50	100
22	Jan. 9, 1888	Apr. 10, 1888	50	100

<i>Number</i>	<i>Convened</i>	<i>Adjourned</i>	<i>Senate</i>	<i>House</i>
23	Jan. 13, 1890	Apr. 15, 1890	50	100
24	Jan. 11, 1892	Mar. 30, 1892	50	100
25	Jan. 8, 1894	Apr. 6, 1894	50	100
26 (regular)	Jan. 9, 1896	Apr. 11, 1896	50	100
26 (extra)	Jan. 19, 1897	July 1, 1897	50	100
27	Jan. 10, 1898	Apr. 1, 1898	50	100
28	Jan. 8, 1900	Apr. 6, 1900	50	100
29	Jan. 13, 1902	Apr. 11, 1902	50	100
30	Jan. 11, 1904	Apr. 12, 1904	50	100
31	Jan. 8, 1906	Apr. 6, 1906	50	108
32 (regular)	Jan. 14, 1907	Apr. 9, 1907	(number of members not changed since this date)	
32 (extra)	Aug. 31, 1908	Nov. 24, 1908*		
33	Jan. 11, 1909	Apr. 9, 1909		
34	Jan. 9, 1911	Apr. 12, 1911		
35	Jan. 13, 1913	Apr. 19, 1913		
36	Jan. 11, 1915	Apr. 17, 1915		
37	Jan. 8, 1917	Apr. 14, 1917		
38	Jan. 13, 1919	Apr. 19, 1919		
39	Jan. 10, 1921	Apr. 8, 1921		
40 (regular)	Jan. 8, 1923	Apr. 17, 1923		
40 (extra)	Dec. 4, 1923	July 24, 1924**		
41	Jan. 12, 1925	Apr. 3, 1925		
42 (regular)	Jan. 10, 1927	Apr. 15, 1927		
42 (extra)	Mar. 5, 1928	Mar. 14, 1928		
43	Jan. 14, 1929	Apr. 12, 1929		
44	Jan. 12, 1931	Apr. 15, 1931		
45 (regular)	Jan. 9, 1933	Apr. 20, 1933		
45 (extra)	Nov. 6, 1933	Mar. 12, 1934		
46 (regular)	Jan. 14, 1935	Apr. 23, 1935		
46 (extra)	Dec. 21, 1936	Dec. 24, 1936		
47	Jan. 11, 1937	Apr. 20, 1937		
48	Jan. 9, 1939	Apr. 26, 1939		
49	Jan. 13, 1941	Apr. 10, 1941		
50 (regular)	Jan. 11, 1943	Apr. 8, 1943		
50 (extra)	Jan. 26, 1944	Jan. 28, 1944		
51	Jan. 8, 1945	Apr. 12, 1945		
52 (regular)	Jan. 13, 1947	Apr. 25, 1947		
52 (extra)	Dec. 16, 1947	Dec. 19, 1947		
53	Jan. 10, 1949	Apr. 20, 1949		
54	Jan. 8, 1951	Apr. 17, 1951		
55	Jan. 12, 1953	Apr. 29, 1953		

*Recessed Sept. 10-Nov. 24, 1908. Reconvened and adjourned on Nov. 24, 1908.

**Recessed April 26-July 22, 1924.