

## The Future in Iowa Government

Modernization of the Iowa State governmental structure has been a slow and gradual process. The "Long ballot" has been shortened with greater authority for appointment of administrative officers vested in the Governor. For example, the members of the Iowa Commerce Commission are no longer elected but are, since 1963, appointed by the Governor subject to approval by the Senate.

The 1965 session of the Iowa General Assembly approved several constitutional amendments designed to update the governmental organization. These amendments, which must be approved by the 1967 session of the legislature and then be submitted to the voters before the amendments may take effect, are as follows: (1) Increase the term of office of the governor and lieutenant governor from the present two years to four years and requires that they run as a "team," thus avoiding the selection of a governor from one political party and a lieutenant governor from a second party; (2) grants the governor the power to veto individual items in appropriation bills; (3) permits the governor to appoint the secretary of state, the state treasurer and the attorney general, with approval of two-thirds of the senate; (4) the state



auditor would be appointed by the state legislature; and (5) annual sessions of the legislature, instead of biennial sessions that have been held previously. An amendment, which was approved for the second time and will be submitted for ratification of the people in 1966, would provide that laws passed by a legislature would be effective the next July 1st rather than July 4th.

If these amendments are approved without change by the 1967 session of the Iowa General Assembly and are approved by a vote of the people, an excellent start upon streamlining the Iowa governmental structure will have been taken.

Another amendment approved for the first time by the 1965 Iowa General Assembly would grant constitutional home rule to the municipalities.

One glaring weakness which has not yet been remedied in the Iowa governmental structure at the state level is in the matter of personnel administration. Uniform personnel recruitment and retirement policies, promotion, in-service-training, demotion, and compensation policies should apply to nearly all of the non-professional employees.

Centralized purchasing also is another area in which Iowa at one time appeared to be leading the other states but which has now fallen far back in that a relatively small percent of the total is centralized. Likewise planning for future growth and development of the state is still diffused among a number of state agencies and bureaus.



The transfer of administrative functions from boards and commissions to agencies headed by single directors appointed by the governor would unify and tend to integrate the administrative area of Iowa government. It would also facilitate the executive direction and control of services performed by the departments.

The Judicial Reform amendment of 1962, while excellent as far as it went, did nothing about the inferior courts of the state. Much of the justice is still rendered by justice of the peace courts and by the mayor's courts. Both of these judicial offices are in need of improvement. Many of the justices of peace have no legal training or background and virtually all of the mayor's courts are presided over by men not experienced in the law. The municipal court judges are still popularly elected as are the presiding officers of the justice of the peace courts and mayor's courts.

County government is one governmental area in which Iowa has great need of revision of the administrative structure. For nearly one hundred years a long line of elective officers, including the county treasurer, auditor, sheriff, recorder, clerk of court, and county attorney clutter the election ballot. The county board of supervisors could easily be made into the policy determining branch of county government and the administrative operation could be turned over to an appointed, professionally trained administrator.