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The 63rd G. A. Reconvenes

It would be a cold day in January if the Iowa legislature ever was required to meet annually. That's what opponents of the Annual Sessions Amendment said in the 1968 debates. As it turned out, they had a point. The temperature ranged from absolute zero to a frosty 20 degrees above on January 12, 1970, the day the Sixty-Third General Assembly became Iowa's first to meet in annual sessions, as required by a constitutional amendment ratified by the people at the general election on November 5, 1968.

Supporters of the amendment had a point, too. They had predicted, among other things, that annual sessions would enable the legislature to get off to faster starts. Indeed, the second regular session of the Sixty-Third got down to business faster than any of its predecessors.

There were several reasons. The committees that served in 1969 were still intact, eliminating the necessity to await their appointment and organization. There was no need for traditional

time-consuming inaugural ceremonies inasmuch as Governor Robert D. Ray and Lieutenant Governor Roger W. Jepsen were only midway through their two-year terms. The 1969 legislative officers, Secretary of the Senate Carroll A. Lane and Chief Clerk of the House William R. Kendrick, were at their posts. In truth, it was more as if members of the Sixty-Third were returning from an overnight recess than from a seven-months adjournment between its first and second regular sessions.

There was an exception. The important office of President Pro Tempore of the Senate had been left vacant after the 1969 session by the resignation of Senator Seeley G. Lodwick, Wever farmer, to accept a federal appointment. Senate Republicans, caucusing October 29, 1969 in Des Moines, nominated Senator Elmer F. Lange, Sac City dairy manufacturer executive, to fill it and he was elected without opposition within minutes after the 1970 session opened. The Senate Republican majority also took advantage of the caucus to return Senator Robert R. Rigler, New Hampton banker, to his old post as party leader. He succeeded the 1969 leader, Senator David M. Stanley, Muscatine lawyer, who resigned to run for congressman in the First District. A 15-year legislative veteran, Senator Rigler was thoroughly experienced in the position, having held it in 1963, 1965, and 1967.

The Republican House leaders of 1969 were back for another go and so were the 1969 Democratic minority leaders of both House and Senate, who had caucused with their members to map 1970 strategy on December 8, 1969 in Des Moines.

However, with six new senators and two new representatives there was a slight change in the make-up of the two chambers as the 1970 session went to work. The newcomers were victors in special elections to fill vacancies created by seven resignations and one death following the 1969 session. Democrats gained a Senate seat in the process, reducing the Republican majority's edge there to 44 to 17. The 86 to 38 Republican majority in the House remained unchanged.

The newly-elected Democratic Senator was Joan Orr, 46, Grinnell housewife and former school teacher. She captured the Eighteenth District seat vacated by Senator Kenneth Benda, Hartwick banker, when he resigned to accept appointment to the Iowa Commerce Commission. Mrs. Orr became the third woman among the 61 Senators—the first time the hallowed halls of that deliberative body ever had been graced at one time by the presence of three members of the fair sex. In the other five special elections for Senate seats, Republicans succeeded Republicans.

Earl G. Bass, 54, Malvern farmer, in the Sixth District to succeed Senator Vern Lisle of Clarinda, who resigned.

Glen E. Bortell, 55, St. Charles youth ranch owner, in the Twelfth District to succeed Senator Joseph B. Flatt of Winterset, who resigned.

S. J. Brownlee, 42, Emmetsburg farm manager, in the Forty-Fifth District to succeed Senator Walter B. Hammer, Estherville, who died.

Wilson L. Davis, 52, Keokuk contractor-engineer, in the First District to succeed Senator Lodwick.

W. R. Rabedeaux, 50, Wilton Junction utility executive-publisher, in the Fourteenth District to succeed Senator Stanley.

Senator Davis, winner of his seat by only three votes, took it pending outcome of a contest brought by his Democratic foe, Gilbert McCarty of Keokuk. Eighty-two votes were in dispute but the contest committee found no change from the official tally and Senator Davis was officially seated early in the session.

A seat in each party was at stake in the two special elections for Representative and each party held its own seat. Elected were:

Lucile Duitscher, 47, Clarion Democrat and housewife, in Wright County to succeed Representative Ray V. Bailey, Clarion Democrat, who resigned to accept appointment to the Iowa Board of Regents.

Kenneth L. Logemann, 32, Northwood Republican and farmer, in Winnebago-Worth Counties to succeed Representative James T. Klein, Lake

Mills Republican, who resigned to accept appointment to the Iowa Employment Security Commission.

So carefully had leaders planned opening transitional moves to annual, from biennial, sessions that all newly-elected legislators took their oaths of office before the 1970 session convened except Mr. Logemann. He was sworn in shortly after Speaker William H. Harbor rapped the opening gavel about 10 a.m. in the House.

At caucuses the night before the legislature assembled, Republican leaders declared flatly that the session would be a short one—with no spring recess—and that public-interest “people bills” would be given green-light priority over special-interest bills. Moving swiftly to indicate compliance, the two chambers made short shrift of routine business after opening-day prayers by the Rev. Dr. Robert W. Rae of Des Moines in the Senate, and by the Rev. Delbert V. Terry of Emerson in the House. Quickly, new members were assigned to committees and to seats, reporters were told where they could sit in the press box and each chamber notified the other it was ready for business as the brisk efficiency spilled over into the rotunda.

In the Senate, Lieutenant Governor Jepsen did his thing to keep the spirit of the fast-moving pace by dispensing with opening-day remarks in favor of this appropriate one-sentence bit of wisdom:

"Blessed be the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving us wordy evidence of the fact." In the House, Speaker Harbor noted that the membership was sharing a new experience with the advent of annual sessions. "We are all feeling our way so to speak," he acknowledged, "but with complete cooperation it will be most productive in what are the best interests of our beloved state. This being an election year, Iowans in all parts of the state will be watching us to see if their approval of annual sessions was well-founded. In order to show that the electorate's confidence was put in good hands, each of us present must pledge his cooperation and self-discipline so that the most pressing of public interest issues occupy our time in committee and on the floor. To be otherwise could only mean a prolonged session with worthwhile accomplishments being overshadowed by our verbosity."

Speaker Harbor told the House he was implementing two guidelines to help speed the session along: 1. Points of personal privilege would be limited to 15-minute periods prior to the noon recess and to adjournment each day. 2. No member could yield his own time to another during floor debate. He based his decision to impose these guidelines on authority granted in Mason's *Manual of Legislative Procedure*.

Even before the Speaker delivered his remarks the House had moved quickly to pass and send

to the Senate the session's first resolution, inviting Governor Ray to deliver his "State of the State" message that very afternoon. No sooner had he concluded his remarks than the House received its first 21 new bills of the session. Not to be outdone, the Senate quickly adopted the House invitation to the Governor, passed another resolution of its own, and received 16 new bills. Then it went the House one better by actually passing three bills without a dissenting vote before taking time out for lunch.

Introduction of the resolutions and bills unveiled a new numbering system designed to make it easy to distinguish those of 1970 from those introduced in 1969. In the 1969 session, as in all biennial sessions, bills were numbered starting with the figure "1" in both chambers. The 1969 numbers went through 829 in the House and 699 in the Senate. Numbering of 1970 bills in both chambers started with the figure "1001." The 1969 joint resolutions were numbered from "1" and went through 19 in the House and 30 in the Senate. The 1970 joint resolutions were numbered from "101."

Certainly the opening-day transition to annual sessions was well executed and offered a good omen for the future. True, this was not the first time an Iowa legislature had met in regular session the year after its predecessor. The Thirty-First General Assembly's 1906 session was followed in

1907 by the Thirty-Second General Assembly's session when the legislature moved its biennial meeting date to odd-numbered years from even-numbered years. But those were separate General Assemblies. The Sixty-Third, then, was the first General Assembly to meet twice in regular session on an annual basis. And in the first two hours of its second regular session it had performed so expertly that the stage was set for the Governor's message on the very first afternoon.