

The General Assembly

The members of the General Assembly of Iowa are a representative group. They come from all parts of the state, and have a wide range of occupational and vocational interests. Some of them are men of mature judgment and long service in legislative fields; others are young men with many hopes and high aspirations, but with little experience in public service. A few of the members are women, since the "male" qualification was removed from the Constitution in 1926. The members also typify a variety of social, economic, and political interests.

The General Assembly consists of two houses — the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate is composed of 50 members — one member from each of the 50 senatorial districts of the state. To be eligible for election to the State Senate, a person must be a resident of the district in which he is a candidate, and must be at least twenty-five years of age. Senators hold office for a term of four years, about half being elected at each biennial election. Accordingly there is always in the Senate a group of men who have had legislative experience. Senators who are serving in the second session of the term for which they

are elected are sometimes called "holdover senators." There are always Senators, too, who have been re-elected — having already served in two or more sessions of the General Assembly. It is interesting to note here that in the Fifty-third General Assembly, 33 members of the Senate had served in previous sessions, while only 17 members were without legislative experience.

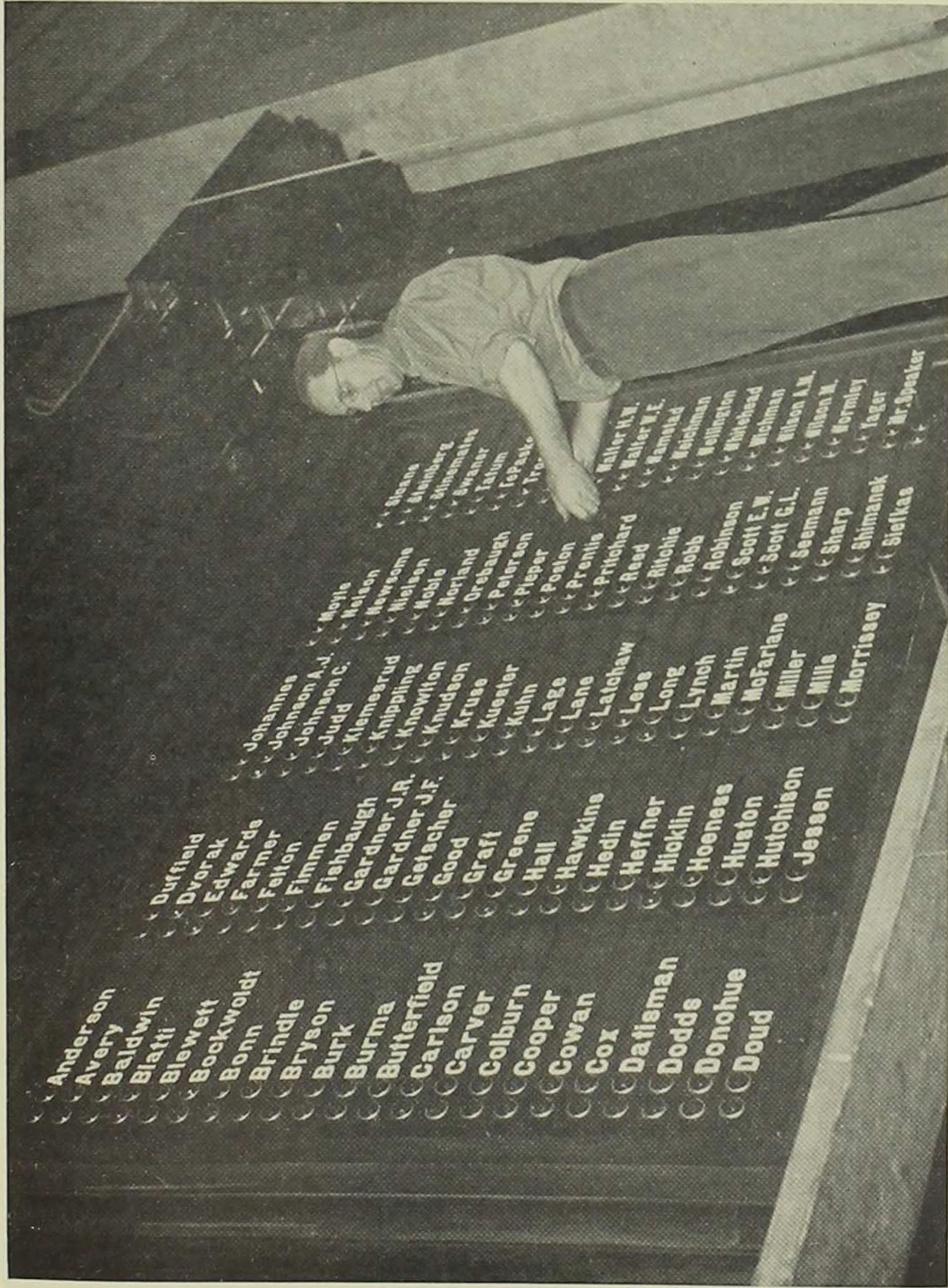
The House of Representatives is composed of 108 members — one member from each of the 99 counties of the state, and an additional member from each of the nine counties having the largest population: Polk, Woodbury, Linn, Scott, Black Hawk, Pottawattamie, Dubuque, Clinton, and Wapello. Members of the House must be at least twenty-one years of age. Their average age, over a period of years, has been found to be a little more than forty-nine years. Members of the House are usually less experienced in legislative matters than are the Senators. Of the 108 members of the House in the Fifty-third General Assembly, about 50 entered upon their duties without previous legislative experience.

In the Fifty-third General Assembly there were 79 Republicans and 29 Democrats in the House. The Senate had an even wider difference, there being 43 Republicans and only 7 Democrats. Although the Democratic members in the Iowa General Assembly are usually in the minority, they

must at all times be given due consideration, for in a particular situation they may hold the balance of power. Moreover, on many issues before the Assembly, party lines are not tightly drawn, and the influence of Democratic members is effective in matters of legislation.

While a wide range of occupational interests is represented by members of the General Assembly, farmers and lawyers usually predominate. In the House of Representatives in the Fifty-third General Assembly there were 53 farmers and 16 lawyers. In the Senate there were 14 farmers and 13 lawyers — more than one-half of the entire body coming from these two groups. The term "farmer," however, is a broad and comprehensive one, seemingly including anyone who owns, operates, manages, or assists in the operation, management, or control of a farm.

The state constitution provides that the Lieutenant Governor shall serve as President of the Senate. He may vote to break a tie upon certain motions, but since he is not a Senator he does not vote on legislative bills. This situation arises from the fact that while one section of the constitution of Iowa provides that "The Lieutenant Governor shall be President of the Senate, but shall only vote when the Senate is equally divided," another section declares that "no bill shall be passed unless by the assent of a majority of all the members



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ELECTRIC VOTING MACHINE IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

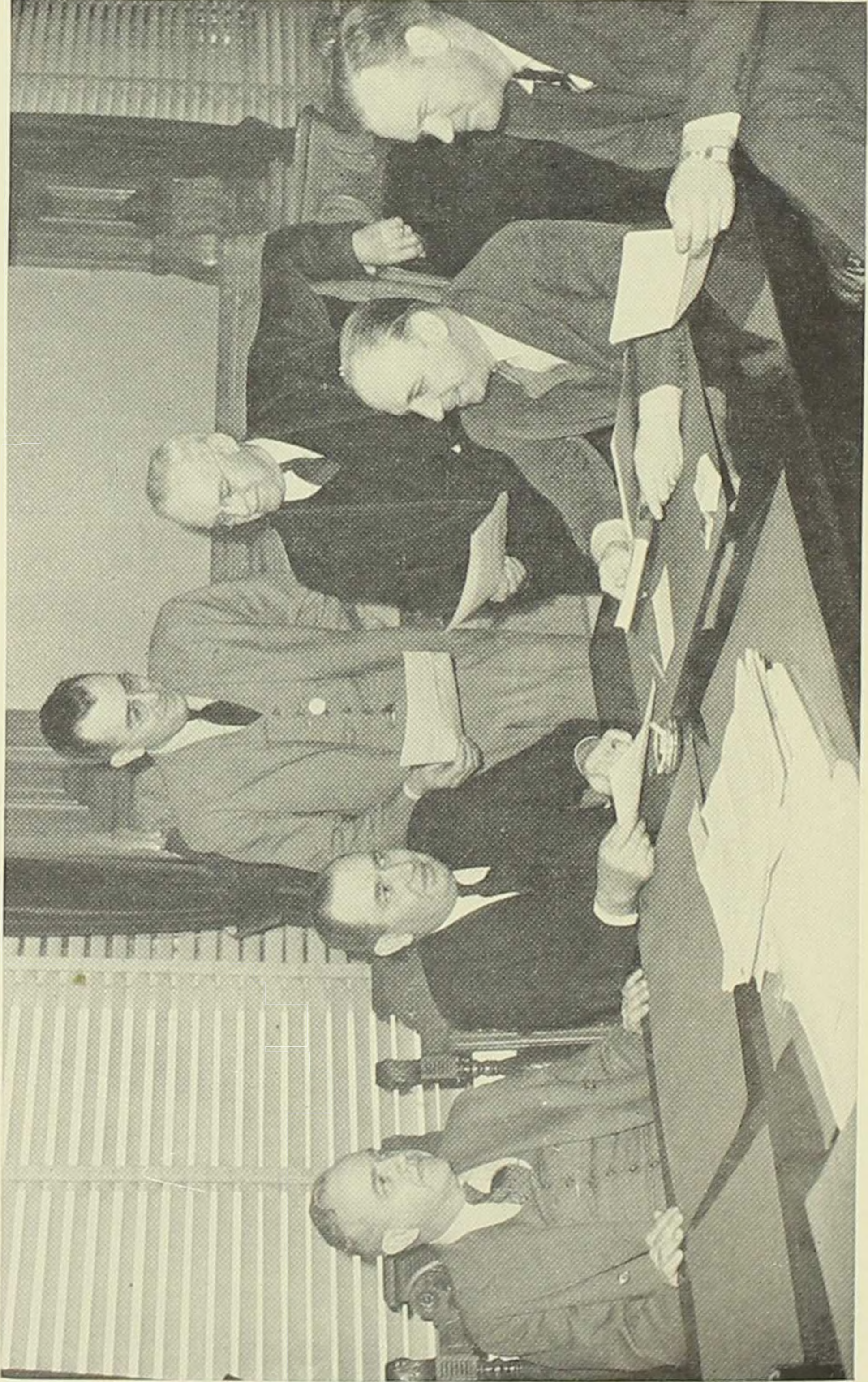
Anderson
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 Cowan
 Cox
 Datisman
 Dodds
 Donohue
 Doud

Duffield
 Dvorak
 Edwards
 Farmer
 Felton
 Fimmen
 Fishbaugh
 Gardner J.R.
 Gardner J.F.
 Gefacher
 Good
 Graft
 Greene
 Hall
 Hawkins
 Hedin
 Heffner
 Hicklin
 Hoeness
 Huston
 Hutchison
 Jessen

Johannes
 Johnson A.J.
 Johnson C.
 Judd
 Klemesrud
 Knipping
 Knowlton
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 Lynch
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 Miller
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 Norland
 Orebaugh
 Peterson
 Pieper
 Poston
 Prentis
 Pritchard
 Reed
 Ritchie
 Robb
 Robinson
 Scott E.W.
 Scott G.L.
 Seemann
 Sharp
 Shimanek
 Sietkas

Sloane
 Steinberg
 Shinnick
 Swanson
 Tatum
 TePasko
 Trost
 Waller H.W.
 Walter W.E.
 Wamsted
 Weichman
 Wellington
 Whitehead
 Wichman
 Wilson A.M.
 Wilson M.
 Wormley
 Yager
 Mr. Speaker



DES MOINES REGISTER PHOTO

STATE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: 1943

Chet B. Akers (Auditor), Wayne M. Ropes (State), Harry Linn (Agriculture), W. G. C. Bagley (Treasurer), Governor Hickenlooper, and William C. Brown (Council Secretary)

elected to each branch of the General Assembly." The first provision permits the Lieutenant Governor to vote in case of a tie, but the second provision renders his vote of no effect in the passage of a law, since a law cannot be passed by a margin of one vote but must receive at least 26 votes in the Senate and 55 votes in the House.

The influence of political parties is quite clearly apparent in the General Assembly. Since Iowa is normally predominantly Republican, the Lieutenant Governor, who is elected on a state-wide ballot, is usually a member of that party. The Speaker of the House is elected by the House from among its own members. Since the House is usually Republican, the Speaker normally will be a member of that party — he having been nominated and elected somewhat as follows.

A few days before the date for the convening of the Assembly, the members-elect hold party caucuses at Des Moines, and each political party nominates candidates for Speaker, although it is generally conceded that the candidate named by the predominate party in the House will eventually be elected. In 1949 the Republican members of the House proposed three candidates — M. F. Hicklin of Louisa County, Fred Schwengel of Scott County, and Gus T. Kuester of Cass County. At the party caucus, Mr. Kuester was nominated and subsequently elected Speaker.

In accordance with the Iowa State Constitution, the General Assembly convenes on the second Monday in January in odd-numbered years. It may also be convened in extraordinary session upon the call of the Governor. Although there is no time limit, a regular session usually continues for about 100 days, and is adjourned *sine die* whenever both houses, by concurrent resolution, conclude that a session has completed its work. The Fifty-third General Assembly convened at Des Moines on January 10, 1949, and continued in session until April 20 — a total period of 101 days. During this time 1,157 legislative measures were introduced. Some 316 of these were enacted into law, amending more than four hundred sections of the *Code of Iowa*.

The question of salaries in legislative halls is frequently discussed. For many years legislators received \$1,000 for the regular session of the General Assembly — or approximately \$10 per day, with twice that sum for the presiding officers. Compensation during an extraordinary session is on a daily basis, and is equal to the daily compensation which the member received in the last regular session. In 1949 the base pay was increased to \$2,000 per member, effective for members of the Fifty-fourth General Assembly in 1951. Salaries for the presiding officers and for services in an extraordinary session were in-

creased on a comparable basis. Under the new law the daily payment for members of the Assembly will be about \$20 and about \$40 per day for the presiding officers.

The problems that come before the General Assembly, and concerning which laws are passed, arise in the local communities. They are questions with which the average citizen is concerned, and deal with cities and towns, corporations, elections, flood control, motor vehicles, salaries, schools, taxation, veterans' affairs, and a variety of other topics. Frequently legislative measures are sponsored by groups of individuals such as members of the Farm Bureau, bankers, tradesmen, mechanics, or teachers. Whether it be an individual, a group of individuals, or an entire community that is interested in new legislation, the method of obtaining it is essentially the same.

If a citizen or group of citizens in Des Moines, for example, are interested in securing legislation relative to a state-wide problem such as liquor control, or an appropriation for a new building at the state capital, they may confer with the Senator or Representative from that district. He in turn may prepare a bill dealing with the subject and present it in the house of which he is a member. The history of a legislative measure may vary widely, depending upon surrounding circumstances. Is the question one of general state-wide

interest or merely a local issue? Are political questions involved? Does the passage of the bill necessitate the expenditure of state funds? Are the individuals, the groups, and the legislators who are sponsoring the measure influential in their communities and throughout the state?

Rules of the General Assembly provide that every bill shall be introduced by one or more members of the House or the Senate, or by a standing or special committee, and shall at once be given its first reading. "Every bill and joint resolution shall have received three several readings previous to its passage"; but no bill or joint resolution shall have its second and third readings on the same day, without a suspension of the rules, except on the last legislative day.

Much of the work of the General Assembly is done by committees and there is a large number in each house. There are, for instance, committees on agriculture, appropriations, cities and towns, claims, conservation, county and township affairs, elections, fish and game, judiciary, labor, liquor control, military affairs, motor vehicles, public health, public utilities, roads and highways, schools, taxation, and ways and means.

Because the General Assembly is composed of persons of varied experience, and because a wide variety of bills come before it, coordination and effective work is difficult at the beginning of the

session. Committees, particularly those not familiar with the work, require a great deal of time for a careful consideration of bills. As a result, the calendar near the close of the session is very crowded. To facilitate the work at this time, a sifting committee is appointed in each house, to which all legislative bills on the calendar are referred, except appropriation measures. Since all committees, including the sifting committee, are appointed by the presiding officer in each house, and since these committees virtually control legislation, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House are very influential.

When a bill is introduced into the Senate or the House it is referred to a committee for study and recommendation. It is also given a number and printed so that each member of the General Assembly may have a copy. When a committee reports a bill to the House or Senate, it may recommend that the measure be passed, or it may submit amendments or suggest indefinite postponement. On the other hand, the committee may not report or make any recommendations at all, in which case the measure is usually lost — or as they say, it “dies in the committee.” In general, committee approval of a bill is essential to its passage.

A bill brought to the floor of either house for consideration is freely debated by the members.

The House of Representatives, which is located in the north wing on the second floor of the capitol, is equipped with a modern electric voting and recording machine, and each of the 108 members is supplied with loud-speaking equipment. Votes are recorded by pressing a button on each member's desk, and electric lights on the front wall indicate the votes — a green light signifies an affirmative vote, and a red light indicates a negative vote. At the same time that the vote is recorded a photostatic copy is made to be preserved as a permanent record. In the Senate Chamber, in the south wing of the building, neither a recording machine nor loud speakers are used.

When a measure has been passed by one house, it may be adopted and passed by the other without amendments, it may be amended or rewritten entirely, or it may fail to pass. If a measure is amended or changed in any way, such changes must be concurred in by the house in which the bill originated. In order for a measure to become a law, it must have passed both houses in exactly the same form, by a majority vote of all members elected to each house. It must also be signed by the presiding officer in each house and presented to the Governor for his signature. Under normal procedure the signature of the Governor is required upon all bills that are passed. However, if the Governor holds a bill for more than three days,

Sunday excepted, it becomes a law just as if he had signed it, unless the General Assembly by adjournment prevents the bill's return. Such bills are authenticated by the Secretary of State. In case of adjournment before the Governor has had three days in which to consider a measure, he may have thirty days in which to approve or reject it. If the Governor vetoes a measure, it can be passed over his veto by the approval of two-thirds of all the members of each house. Laws which are passed by the General Assembly become operative on July 4, following the date of enactment, unless the law itself carries a provision for becoming effective upon publication.

Before the General Assembly adjourns, a group of five senators and five representatives is appointed as a Committee on Retrenchment and Reform. This committee, which controls the expenditure of large sums of money, continues to function during the interim between legislative sessions, and is therefore referred to as the Interim Committee.

Laws passed during a session are compiled by the State Printer and published in a volume known as "Session Laws." These are made available to lawyers and other interested citizens throughout the state, so that all may keep abreast of the latest legislation. At irregular intervals the new laws passed by preceding legislative sessions are codified and published in the *Code of Iowa*.