

Organization of the Assembly

Determination—that was the feeling in the air as those elected to serve in Iowa's Sixty-second General Assembly gathered at the State Capitol in Des Moines on January 9, 1967. It was evident in the grim smiles with which they greeted one another. It was reflected in the jutting jaws of leaders as they contemplated the problems ahead.

Indeed, determination was the unmistakable tone heard in the low rumble of conversation among the members as presiding officers took their places in Senate and House. And it echoed from the sharp whacks of the opening gavels wielded by Lieutenant Governor Robert D. Fulton and Representative-elect Ray Cunningham, who served as temporary speaker.

What did it mean? Almost any member could tell you. For one thing, it meant this legislature was set on handling its voluminous business in less time—much less, if you please—than the record-setting 145-day session in 1965. For another, it meant this legislature would be less expensive than that one, which cost a record \$1,608,894, even though the pay was up to \$40 a day per member from \$30 in 1965. Finally, it meant this legislature would get more done. It would tackle the

big, complex problems—property tax relief, temporary and permanent reapportionment, tax revision, school aid, governmental reorganization, and the budget—early in the session. It would have them out of the way before the spring recess. And the recess? Instead of the traditional first weekend in March, it would be delayed until the Easter holidays late in the month so there would be plenty of time to handle those big problems.

Yes, the prevailing mood was one of determination. And the reason was obvious. After all, was not this the first divided legislature anybody could remember, with Republicans controlling the House—89 to 35, and Democrats the Senate—32 to 29? So each party was on its mettle, anxious to outperform the other and ready, if need be, to prove its members could and would rise above partisanship to work with those of the other party for the greater common good of the state.

That is what Representative-elect Cunningham's gavel seemed to say as the Ames Republican called the House to order at 10:13 a.m. And that is what Lieutenant Governor Fulton's gavel seemed to repeat when the Waterloo Democrat hammered the Senate into session seven minutes later.

Representative-elect Cunningham, who was chosen to preside as a tribute to the many Republicans who, like himself, had recaptured seats after sitting out the 1965 session, moved things along at a swift pace in the House. Once members were

sworn in they wasted no time electing Representative Maurice E. Baringer, 45, a Republican and an animal nutritionist of Oelwein, as Speaker. Representative Wm. J. Gannon of Mingo, new Democratic leader, moved for a unanimous vote.

Speaker Baringer, starting his fourth term, pledged "a full measure of the leadership and responsibility you have entrusted to me." This legislature, he said, "has a unique opportunity to build a base for Iowa growth and development" with each party controlling one house. But, he warned, "we also have an opportunity to fail dismally if we become mired down in a partisan struggle for selfish political advantage." He promised to listen to reason always, to make fair decisions, and he urged all hands to work for good government because "history has proved good government is good politics."

Then the House unanimously elected Representative Lester L. Kluever, 46, Atlantic lawyer and Republican, as Speaker Pro Tempore. He was starting his sixth term.

Routine opening day business was enlivened in the afternoon when a spirited hassle broke out over seat assignments. It started when Representative Vincent B. Steffen, the 1965 Speaker and a Democrat from New Hampton, chose the seat to which Representative John L. Mowry, Marshalltown Republican, had staked a claim, Mowry, returning after a two-year absence, explained that

the seat was his when he served as Republican floor leader in 1963 and he had "dibs" on it now. The House voted to end the fuss by giving the former Speaker and the 1967 floor leaders first choice of seats. Representative Steffen promptly insisted on the seat Representative Mowry wanted and the latter, who had lost the speakership nomination to Baringer at a pre-session G.O.P. caucus, reluctantly took another seat. But it was as if he had served notice he would be leading his supporters in opposition to Speaker Baringer on various issues as the session progressed.

Across the rotunda in the Senate it was not a hassle over seats that shattered the opening day calm. It was the howl of lobbyists who suddenly found themselves cooped up for the session in a newly redecorated lounge adjoining the rear of the chamber. It had been converted from a dingy old cloakroom of long service. Together with several new second-floor House and Senate committee rooms, reached by newly-installed elevators, the colorful lounge brightened up the premises considerably. But even though these new quarters were more comfortable, and were equipped with a loud speaker system, enabling them to follow Senate debates, lobbyists were unimpressed. They preferred the stiff leather chairs and sofas around the fringes of the Senate where they could watch, as well as hear the proceedings.

But their complaints were to no avail. Senate

Democrats, with some Republican help, stuck firmly to their new "greater decorum" rule, restricting not only lobbyists, but wives and relatives of Senators to the lounge or the galleries. The lobbyists' only consolation was that they still had floor privileges in the House, and the right to use the sparkling new lounge there as well.

The Senate had only one officer to elect, the President Pro Tempore, and Senator George E. O'Malley, 61, Des Moines Democrat and a lawyer, starting his tenth session, was chosen unanimously to succeed himself. In accepting, he recalled that the 1965 legislature "tackled problems that had been skirted for years," and hoped the 1967 Assembly would be as constructive.

Although he was to be inaugurated for a second term three days later, the presiding officer, Lieutenant Governor Fulton, chose opening day to address the Senate. This might have been because of the outside chance that his razor-thin margin of victory over his Republican opponent, Senator Max Milo Mills, 46, Marshalltown lawyer, might not hold up in the official canvass by the legislature. In any event, the Lieutenant Governor took the occasion to urge that the legislature assume its proper role in the federal-state governmental structure. Legislatures, he continued, generally had defaulted many responsibilities to the federal government simply by refusing to accept them. It was time to find out whether legislatures

were doing an adequate job and, if not, to consider "what can be done to make them more decision-making bodies." He suggested the legislature's job performance could be upgraded through (1) a reduced membership, (2) a new legislative building where each member would have his own office and (3) a citizens advisory committee.

The suggestion for membership reduction had real meaning for, thanks to the addition of two new seats by the 1965 reapportionment act, the 1967 Senate now had 61 members, making it the second largest (to Minnesota) of any state's. The 1967 House membership of 124 remained the same as in 1965.

If elections of House and Senate officers went smoothly it was because the way had been paved, as usual, at post-election caucuses where each party also named its leaders for the session.

Democrats assembled at the Hotel Savery in Des Moines on November 22 to hear briefly from Governor Hughes and then to break into separate caucuses of House and Senate members. Both were closed to newsmen, even though Democrats still pointed proudly to their action two years earlier in ending secrecy in legislative committees.

When the caucuses ended, Senate Democrats announced they had nominated Senator O'Malley for President Pro Tempore and had re-elected Senator C. Joseph Coleman, 43, Clare farmer beginning his sixth term, assistant leader. Neither

had opposition. Re-elected majority leader was Senator Andrew G. Frommelt, 45, Dubuque realtor and insurance man, over nominal opposition from Senator F. S. Main, 50, Lamoni farmer.

House Democrats chose a youthful one-termer, Representative Gannon, 29-year-old farmer, as their leader on the second ballot over Representative-elect William D. Palmer, 32, Des Moines insurance man. Representatives Charles P. Miller, 48, Burlington chiropractor, and Steffen, 38, a manufacturer, withdrew after receiving first ballot votes.

Named assistant leader was Representative Bernard J. O'Malley, 29, Des Moines lawyer and son of Senator O'Malley. He won a second-ballot victory over Representative Dale M. Cochran, 38, Eagle Grove farmer-businessman, after Representative Keith H. Dunton, 51, Thornburg farmer, withdrew following the first ballot. Democrats chalked up a "first" when they chose a woman, Representative Minnette Doderer, 43, Iowa City housewife, as party "whip" on the first ballot over Representative James V. Gallagher, 33, Waterloo telephone employee. Both the new assistant leader and the "whip" were starting second terms.

House and Senate Republicans met in separate caucuses in the same hotel a week later, November 29, to name their leaders. Representative Baringer was nominated for Speaker on the first ballot over Representative-elect Mowry, 61, a law-

yer—58 to 30. Prospects for a three-man race went out the window the previous weekend when Representative Kluever sent a letter to colleagues withdrawing as a candidate. However, Representative Kluever was nominated for Speaker Pro Tempore over Representative Floyd P. Edgington, Sr., 68, retired Sheffield farmer, 57 to 29.

Elected majority floor leader was Representative Floyd H. Millen, 47, Farmington businessman, who received 57 votes to 17 for Representative Charles E. Grassley, 33, New Hartford farmer and production worker; 14 for Representative-elect John Camp, 51, Bryant farmer; and 1 for Representative-elect Mowry. Unopposed choice for assistant leader was Representative-elect Maurice Van Nostrand, 41, Avoca editor and grain dealer. The new leader was starting his third term and his assistant was beginning his second.

At their caucus, Senate Republicans unanimously re-elected Senator Robert R. Rigler, 43, New Hampton banker, starting his seventh term, as their leader. Senator Rigler served in the same capacity in 1963 and 1965.

Democrats gathered again for dinner at the Hotel Savery the night before the legislature opened. They were guests of the State Central Committee, which promised no speeches, "just a get-better-acquainted session."

Republicans breakfasted together at the Hotel Kirkwood, the morning the legislature convened,

as guests of their State Central Committee. There they were told by State Chairman Robert Ray that a "new era" was dawning for the party in Iowa. Republican legislators are "more receptive to new ideas," he said, "and more open-minded."

Republicans also had met the previous afternoon at the Hotel Savery to hear from their new leaders. At the meeting of House Republicans, Speaker-designate Baringer said he had increased the number of House committees to 21 from the 15 in 1965. There had been 42 in 1963. He would also allow Democrats 28 per cent of the members of each committee, the same as their percentage of House membership. Furthermore, the Democrats could assign their members to committees, a departure from the past when the Speaker made assignments for both minority and majority.

Lieutenant Governor Fulton did not permit Republicans to make their own committee assignments in the Senate, where he reduced the number of committees to 14 from 15 in 1965. There had been 30 in 1963.

Membership division in past legislatures showed that the political pendulum had swung vigorously down through the years. But the 1967 legislature was unique, according to available records, for its divided control as shown below:

Year	House		Senate		Total	
	Rep.	Dem.	Rep.	Dem.	Rep.	Dem.
1931	70	38	45	5	115	43
1933	32	76	25	25	57	101

1935	.....	50	58	22	28	72	86
1937	.....	54	54	28	22	82	76
1939	.....	89	19	43	7	132	26
1941	.....	87	21	45	5	132	26
1943	.....	98	10	45	5	143	15
1945	.....	91	17	45	5	136	22
1947	.....	98	10	46	4	144	14
1949	.....	79	29	43	7	122	36
1951	.....	93	15	41	9	134	24
1953	.....	105	3	46	4	151	7
1955	.....	89	19	44	6	133	25
1957	.....	72	36	40	10	112	46
1959	.....	60	48	33	17	93	65
1961	.....	78	30	35	15	113	45
1963	.....	79	29	38	12	117	41
1965	.....	23	101	25	34	48	135
1967	.....	89	35	29	32	118	67

(Note: House membership was increased to 124 from 108, and Senate membership to 59 from 50, by the Reapportionment Act of 1964; Senate membership was increased to 61 from 59 by the Reapportionment Act of 1965. House membership changed to 90-34 when Representative Miller succeeded the late Representative Utzig.)

With routine business handled, the legislators arranged to canvass the vote for Governor and Lieutenant Governor, and for joint sessions to hear the Governor's messages and to inaugurate the state's top officials. The canvass confirmed Governor Hughes' 99,741-vote victory over William G. Murray, his G.O.P. opponent. It gave Lieutenant Governor Fulton a second term by 1,260 votes over Senator Mills. Now the legislature awaited the messages of the Governor.