

Organization of the Assembly

On the surface things seemed calm and peaceful. Republicans, still flushed with a substantial victory at the 1970 election, were blessed with safe majorities in both chambers. And they were in possession of all seven of the state's administrative offices. So what was their worry?

To be sure, there were a good many Democrats around—50 to be exact—enough for a loyal opposition but not enough to cause serious trouble. Not if Republicans stuck together in working out solutions to the multitude of problems looming on the legislative horizon. Big problems. Problems such as: Congressional redistricting, legislative reapportionment, increasing state school aid to relieve property taxes, modernizing the abortion law, starting a regional jail system, lowering the voting age, tightening controls on drug abuse and pollution of all kinds, governmental reorganization and, finally, dealing with one problem Democrats had predicted, and Republicans had pooh-poohed, during the 1970 campaign—a multi-million dollar state treasury deficit.

Yet, all Republican legislators and administrators had to do was to unite and to remain united, wasn't it? Together they could call the shots.

But unity is not easy to achieve without the guiding hand of experienced leaders. And the Republicans had none in the legislature. Their 1970 leaders—Robert Rigler, New Hampton banker, in the Senate, and Ralph McCartney, Charles City lawyer, in the House—had retired from office. So Republicans would have to go with inexperienced leaders. What of it? So would the Democrats. Had not Andrew Frommelt, Dubuque insurance man and the party's fiery leader in the 1969-70 Senate, bowed in defeat to a Republican, Senator Walsh, in the November election? And had not the young Democratic House leader, William Gannon, Mingo farmer, lost his party's nomination for Governor in the 1970 primary election?

Some Republicans looked for the experienced leadership that was lacking in the legislature to come from top administrative officials, Governor Robert Ray and Lieutenant Governor Roger Jepsen. But the differences that had cropped out between these two in their first terms were even more pronounced as the 1971 legislature got down to business. Moreover, there was little doubt that the conservative-minded Jepsen had his eye on spoiling any hopes the more liberal Ray might be harboring for a third term. So the chances for united leadership from that quarter hardly loomed as bright.

House Republicans did have the opportunity to choose two experienced hands as presiding of-

ficers and they made the most of it in their pre-session caucus at the Savery Hotel in Des Moines on the bitter-cold Sunday of November 22, 1970.

For a time it appeared Representatives William H. Harbor, 50, who operated a grain elevator at Henderson, and Floyd H. Millen, 51, who ran a gravel company at Farmington, might oppose each other for the party's nomination for House Speaker. But Millen withdrew before the balloting got under way and Harbor, the 1969-70 Speaker, was nominated for a second term. Millen then won nomination for a second term as Speaker Pro Tempore.

Neither won without a contest, however, in the brief but spirited closed-door caucus that lasted little more than an hour. Harbor's challenge came from Representative Edgar H. Holden, 56, Davenport businessman, and Millen's from Representative Harold O. "Grumpy" Fischer, 53, Wellsburg insurance man-realtor. Caucus leaders reported 32 votes were needed to win and that counting stopped in the speakership race when Harbor's lead was 33 to 5 over Holden. Millen was declared winner when he led Fischer 32 to 12.

To succeed McCartney as floor leader, Republicans chose a 36-year-old farmer in his third term, Representative Andrew Varley, an assistant leader in 1969-70. He was named winner when he held a 32 to 10 lead over Representative Murray C. Lawson, 47, Mason City printing firm owner.

Elected to serve as assistant leaders were Representatives Robert Kreamer, 29, Des Moines lawyer, and Richard Drake, 43, Muscatine farmer, each in his second session. They were the two top men in a four-man contest with Representatives Willard Hansen, 39, Cedar Falls insurance man, and Norman Roorda, 42, Monroe farmer. With two to be elected, each member of the caucus cast two votes. Kreamer was the winner with 43 followed by Drake with 33. Hansen received 27 votes and Roorda, 23.

Republican House members ended their session by nominating William R. Kendrick of Des Moines, for another term as Chief Clerk. A veteran in the post, who had been retained even by the Democrats when they controlled the House in 1965, Kendrick's election was assured since the minority party would not offer a candidate. Nor would the Democrats oppose Harbor and Millen.

When the House caucus was over, many representatives headed seven blocks up the street to the Fort Des Moines Hotel where Senate Republicans were still engaged in a hot contest to elect their new floor leader.

The battle was going on behind closed doors and even to this day it is doubtful that any reporter got an accurate accounting of what transpired inside, or exactly how many ballots were necessary before Senator Clifton C. Lamborn, 51, Maquoketa road contractor, emerged winner over

Senator Lucas DeKoster, 52, Hull lawyer and insurance man. Probably this was due to the failure of the caucus to designate an official spokesman. Hence, there were numerous volunteers who either could not, or would not, agree on how many ballots were taken to choose a winner. Best guess seemed to be that Lamborn won on the fifth ballot. But there were those who later confided that, no, it was not the fifth but the eighth.

According to those who kept tally sheets, DeKoster actually led on the first ballot when a third candidate, Senator John L. Mowry, 64, Marshalltown lawyer, was in the running. Under caucus rules, Mowry dropped out when he was low man on the opening ballot, paving the way for what should have been a clear-cut victory on the second ballot for either DeKoster or Lamborn.

With Senator Floyd Gilley of Maynard absent, 19 votes were needed to clinch victory. But it eluded both contestants because spoiled ballots kept either from reaching the magic figure of 19. Votes cast for senators other than Lamborn or DeKoster were considered spoiled. Yet some senators continued to vote for colleagues other than the two contestants, or abstained from voting.

When Lamborn finally rounded up 19 votes—was it on the fifth, sixth, seventh or eighth ballot?—DeKoster moved the usual “harmony” motion to make Lamborn’s election unanimous.

Nevertheless, there was a feeling of bitterness

among several senators who were convinced that Lieutenant Governor Jepsen had a hand in tipping the scales Lamborn's way. Jepsen, who had engineered the election of Senator David Stanley of Muscatine as floor leader in 1969, told reporters before the 1971 caucus started that he would be sitting on the sidelines this time.

"I have got 38 Republican friends in the Senate," he had said, "and I'm going to keep it that way. I'm not going to get into the contest."

With the big race over, DeKoster was chosen an assistant leader by acclamation. Elected to serve with him in that capacity was Senator Charles F. Balloun, 66, Toledo farmer, who earlier had withdrawn as a candidate for leader. Balloun, in his sixth session, defeated Senator R. Dean Arbuckle, 44, Jefferson businessman, for the post by an unannounced vote. Arbuckle, like Balloun, had offered his services as leader but was not nominated for that post.

Senator Vernon H. Kyhl, 62, Parkersburg automobile dealer, was unopposed for the nomination for President Pro Tempore. And Senate Secretary Carroll Lane, 65, Carroll businessman, had no opposition for his post, for which he was nominated at a patronage committee meeting following the Senate caucus. Both Kyhl and Lane would be elected without opposition from Democrats when the Senate organized.

Democratic legislators followed Republicans in-

to Des Moines by a day to select their leaders in separate House and Senate caucuses at the Savery Hotel on November 23.

Hottest battles were in the House caucus between the liberal and conservative wings of the party. All 37 House Democrats showed up for the caucus except Representative Charles J. Uban of Cedar Falls. With 19 votes needed to win, the conservatives eked out a 19 to 17 victory for Representative Dale M. Cochran, 42, Eagle Grove farmer-businessman, serving his fourth session, over Representative Ed Skinner, 34, Altoona lawyer, in his second session. At the outset, Representative Joseph C. Johnston, 32, Iowa City lawyer-accountant, was in the race but withdrew before the balloting started and announced he would vote for Skinner.

Toughest fight in the caucus was for assistant leader. It was won by Representative Berl Priebe, 52, Algona farmer, on the fifth or sixth ballot—nobody seemed to know for sure and reporters were not allowed in the caucus. It was another victory for the conservative wing of the party, for Priebe defeated a liberal, Representative Michael K. Kennedy, 31, New Hampton lawyer. A third candidate, Representative Norman Rodgers, 43, Adel grocer, dropped out of the running when he received only nine votes on the first ballot to 17 for Kennedy and 10 for Priebe. Kennedy's vote reached 18 on the second ballot, one

shy of the 19 needed. Priebe got 17, with one abstention. On the third ballot, with one member still abstaining, the vote was tied at 18. Two or three ballots more were needed before Priebe received 19 votes.

Liberals got back into the running with two of their own contesting for the party whip position. It went for the second time to Representative A. June Franklin, 40, of Des Moines, in the real estate and insurance business. She defeated Representative James D. Wells, 42, of Cedar Rapids, a Quaker Oats Company employee, 19 to 17.

With a majority of the 12 Senate Democrats in the liberal camp, little chance existed for a philosophical split in their caucus.

Senator Lee H. Gaudineer, Jr., 38, Des Moines lawyer in his fourth session, was chosen by the 11 senators present (Senator Gene Glenn of Ottumwa was absent), as floor leader. He had no opposition. Unopposed for assistant leader was Senator James F. Schaben, 44, Dunlap farmer and owner of a livestock auction market. He was in his third session.

There was a contest, however, for party whip between Senators Minnette Doderer, 47, of Iowa City, and C. Joseph Coleman, 47, Clare farmer. With 6 votes needed for election, Coleman was declared winner but the vote was not announced.

As expected, Democrats did not nominate candidates for House and Senate offices. So Speaker

Harbor, who would succeed himself, used the time between his party's caucus and the opening of the legislature to appoint House committees. Lieutenant Governor Jepsen, having been reelected in November, appointed Senate committees.

This action prepared the legislature for a break-away start on January 11, the first day of the Sixty-Fourth General Assembly. And what a break-away it was! No sooner were routine organization chores completed than Senate committees sent two measures to the calendar. Meanwhile, a House committee cleared one for floor action. All on the first day of the session!

One Senate measure was a 48-page bill proposing a sweeping revision in the state's drug control laws, designed to dovetail them with new federal legislation. The other measure was a resolution asking Congress to call a constitutional convention to consider an amendment to the U.S. Constitution requiring the federal government to share its revenue with the 50 states.

Even such fast action by legislative committees, however, had to take second place to organizational procedures. The hour to convene was set at 10 a. m., but neither chamber opened on time. Lieutenant Governor Jepsen called the Senate to order one minute late. The honor of convening the House went to the legislative dean, Representative Goode, who rapped his gavel at 10:06 a.m.

Opening prayer in the Senate was offered by

the Rev. Ronald J. Lavin of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Davenport. Family, church, friends, books, and home are among the many things that enlarge "our experiences and relationships," he said. But there are other experiences and relationships to watch out for, he intoned, such as "enemies who misquote us, false friends who want to use us, people who tempt us into trusting things and ideas instead of You. Help us to see these for what they are, lest we be controlled by them and forget why we were given life as a gift."

In the House, Bishop James Thomas of Des Moines and the Iowa area of the United Methodist Church, prayed: "... Give us poise when we face pressure, strength when we face criticism and good humor when honest differences produce fatigue and tension."

Swearing-in ceremonies for all House members and for new Senators were followed by streamlined reelections of Speaker Harbor and Speaker Pro Tempore Millen in the House, and the election of President Pro Tempore Kyhl in the Senate.

Both Speaker Harbor and Lieutenant Governor Jepsen, who was to be inaugurated for a second term on January 14, issued stern warnings, in their opening remarks, to those who seek "to destroy our form of government."

"We will make it crystal clear," Speaker Harbor said, "that the element that seeks to destroy our form of government and turn our state into a

survival of the fittest is not welcome and will be dealt with by a firm hand in no uncertain terms."

Lieutenant Governor Jepsen told the senators they faced many challenges such as redistricting, upgrading governmental efficiency, controlling pollution, protecting the elderly from inflation and the like. But the greatest challenge, he continued, would be "from the cynics in this country who say that a democratic system of government cannot deal with the problems of our complex society. . .

"I accept the challenge of these cynics. I hope you will too. If this legislature—through hard work, cooperation and bipartisan unity—can produce answers to some of our state's problems, we will have done our part to meet this greatest of all challenges. There can be no better answer to those who claim that American society is crumbling, and that its government is outmoded, than a positive example of governmental achievement."

President Pro Tempore Kyhl declared "Work with a capital W" to be the No. 1 priority of the session. Speaker Pro Tempore Millen, reminding the House that he had predicted a short session two years ago and missed the mark, smiled and said he was making "no such prediction this time in full realization of the many complex problems confronting this legislature."

House Republican Leader Varley must have heard echoes of Kyhl's admonition about "Work" over in the lower chamber, for he called a rules

committee meeting in the afternoon of opening day to get clearance for proposed rules changes. One would reduce from a two-thirds majority of 67 to 60 the number of votes necessary to suspend the rules and to withdraw bills from committees. This was done since Republicans had only 63 votes they could count on for these purposes—four shy of a two-thirds majority. Republicans had decided to make this move at a caucus the day before the legislature opened and now they were implementing it.

As the session settled down to business, Republicans controlled the House, 63 to 37, and the Senate, 38 to 11, with the seat of Senator Weimer, Cedar Rapids Democrat, vacant due to his resignation only a few days earlier. Cloyd Robinson, another Cedar Rapids Democrat, was chosen to succeed Weimer at a special election on the session's opening day. So the Senate division stood at 38 to 12 when he took his oath later in opening week. It was to change to 37 to 13 early in March when William Gross, Sioux City Democrat, succeeded the late Senator Charles Sullivan, Sioux City Republican, who died February 13. This table shows the political division of the legislature in recent years:

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
1969	.....	86	38	45	16	131	54
*1971	.....	63	37	37	13	100	50

* Senate division was 38 to 12 until the death of Senator Sullivan, a Republican, on February 13, 1971; Senator Gross, a Democrat, was chosen to succeed him at a special election March 8, 1971.

Note: The 1964 reapportionment act increased membership to 183 from 158; the 1965 reapportionment act increased membership to 185; the 1968 Amendment and 1969 reapportionment act reduced membership to 150.

Before adjourning, the two chambers joined in inviting Governor Ray to deliver his "State of the State" message to a joint session on January 12.