

Major Legislation

For the official record the 1951 legislature completed its work in 100 days — the exact time allotted by law for a regular session. However, the actual record shows that the solons needed an extra seven days. The way the legislature traditionally has remained within its 100 allotted days, while actually requiring more time, is easily explained.

Clocks in both chambers simply are stopped at 4:30 p.m. on the 100th day which, in this instance fell on April 17. Business went on as usual until it was ready for completion on April 24. All business enacted after 4:30 p.m. April 17 was included in the final editions of the Senate and House journals dated April 17, even though this business required an additional seven days.

The fiction was concluded when the clocks were again set in motion on April 24 for the first time since they were stopped on April 17. When the hands on each clock reached the hour of 5 p.m., Lieutenant Governor Nicholas and Speaker Lynes, looking across the rotunda at each other, brought their gavels down simultaneously to adjourn *sine die*.

While the time for official purposes was entered

in the journals at 5 p.m., April 17, the actual time was 12:15 p.m. on April 24 with fourteen legislators present.

Each journal gives away the little joke in the item immediately preceding the last entry which denotes final adjournment. This item is a copy of Governor Beardsley's letter acknowledging receipt of the legislature's message that adjournment *sine die* is at hand. The letter is dated April 24.

The 107 days — only 70 of them were actual working days — were busy ones. A total of 1,153 bills was introduced, including 638 in the House and 515 in the Senate. In addition, 12 House and 7 Senate joint resolutions were offered. Of these, 266 bills and 2 joint resolutions were adopted by both houses and sent to the Governor.

The Governor, in turn, signed 264 bills and both joint resolutions. He vetoed the remaining two bills. Both joint resolutions he signed originated in the House which also originated 143 of the bills he approved. The Senate originated the other 121 bills which became law. Each chamber fostered one of the two vetoed bills.

The House bill rejected by the Governor would have permitted employment of persons under sixteen in bowling alleys where no beer is sold. In his veto message the Governor said:

My reason for vetoing this measure is based on a decision, after due consideration, that it would weaken our present Child Labor Law. We should seek to strengthen

this law, and, while bowling is a popular recreational activity, I have been advised by juvenile court authorities and school truant officers that this type of work has contributed to the problem of juvenile delinquency and truancy from school. It is my opinion that this additional legislation would further aggravate this situation.

The Senate bill he vetoed was a discriminatory measure prohibiting issuance of hunting and fishing licenses to nonresidents under certain conditions. It was aimed directly at South Dakota in retaliation for a law passed there which was taken to be discriminatory against Iowa pheasant hunters. The Governor said in his veto message:

My reason for vetoing this measure is because of the fact that, in its general application, it will serve no material benefit or gain for the sportsmen of our state; and because of the added fact that, in my judgment, it is not a desirable policy to raise discriminatory legislation between states.

On the other hand, it is desirable for our state to set an example of good will and understanding, and I rather think the results of this action on this legislation will impress the people of South Dakota with the fact that we seek to deal fairly and considerately, and will encourage them in good faith to correct any discrimination against the sportsmen of our state.

The legislature did not officially consider the possibility of overriding either veto, thus indicating silent agreement.

It is impossible in a limited space to review every act that became law as a result of the legislature's work, so only the most important acts will

be spotlighted here. Every act is important to a segment of our society, but the legislature passed several which were of general interest.

High on that list was the act of extending the individual income tax rate of 75 per cent through 1953. Since the 100 per cent rate law remains on the statute books it would have become effective automatically on December 31, 1951, had this legislature not extended the current 75 per cent rate.

Also high in general interest items was the passage of an anti-gambling law to buttress the work of the Attorney General and local law enforcement officers. This is a law with teeth, for it provides for the loss of all business licenses by places where gambling apparatus is found.

Other major legislation included: an appropriation of an additional \$8,000,000 to enable the state to complete its payment of a bonus to World War II veterans; increasing the Governor's recommendations of approximately \$8,000,000 a year to provide more adequately for state subdivisions; increasing the size of the highway patrol from 165 to 225 men and increasing the biennial fee for drivers' licenses from 50 cents to \$1.50 to help pay the increased cost; increasing the salaries of many state officials and of county officials approximately \$800 a year each; doubling and trebling filing fees for documentary work in counties to help meet the increased salaries; a change in the fiscal year of cities and towns to coincide with

the calendar year; a change in starting dates of terms of elected city officials from April to January of even-numbered years; and a change in city election dates from March to November of odd-numbered years.

Nor was this by any means all of the major legislation adopted. The recommendation of the interim municipal code study committee that funds of cities be lumped into seven categories, with a maximum municipal levy of 30 mills for these funds was approved. This law later was to get Iowa cities in difficulty with bonding companies who wanted clarification of the law before bidding on certain types of improvement bonds — thus pointing the way to amendment in the 1953 legislature.

In the field of school legislation, the legislature provided many new laws. It paved the way for initiation of school reorganization plans at the local level, increased the maximum school tax levy, provided for appeals from school bus controversies to be carried to the District and Supreme Courts, and gave school teachers permission to ride in buses and to participate in teacher exchanges with other districts and nations.

The lawmakers increased the fifteen-day period for collection of the one-cent-per-pound butterfat tax to cover all of May and June, a 61-day period, and set up a Grade A milk program. Also in the field of farm legislation, the solons approved in-

creasing county aid to local Farm Bureau extension programs from \$3,000 and \$5,000 a year, depending on the size of the county, to from \$5,000 to \$7,000 a year.

New truck legislation gave enforcement officers the right to go on private property to check trucks for overloading, increased fees for interstate operators, and required intrastate truckers to carry liability and property insurance.

The solons gave fishermen permission to troll from motor and sail boats in most Iowa lakes and allowed hunters to shoot live pigeons in dog-training programs.

They provided a way for service men to vote *in absentia*, kept their homestead tax exemption alive while they were away, and exempted them from paying a personal property tax on equipment if it was unused during their absence.

The communities of Spirit Lake and Clear Lake each got \$350,000 grants to help finance sewage work.

Workmen's compensation was raised for totally disabled from \$24 per week for 400 weeks to \$28 per week for 500 weeks, and maximum employment security benefits went from \$22.50 to \$26 per week.

Courts were authorized to grant final adoption papers for children removed from their parents but not until final litigation involving children had been settled.

Judges were given discretion in determining the penalty where the maximum penalty is life imprisonment.

Prospective newlyweds also felt the hand of the legislature which eliminated exemption from pre-marital blood tests.

Fair associations were given the green light to lease their facilities in non-fair periods.

Banks were given permission to do business on holidays and after hours.

Polk, Pocahontas, Dickinson, Hamilton, Montgomery, and Woodbury counties got a total appropriation of \$252,000 to help carry on lake projects.

Alcoholics were given permission to enter state mental hospitals voluntarily for treatment.

The four state hospitals themselves got a change in name from "state mental hospitals" to "state mental health institutes," while the name of the Iowa School for the Blind was changed, likewise for psychological reasons, to "State Braille and Sight Saving Institute."

A budget and financial control committee, to be tabbed the "watchdog" committee by the press, was created to supercede the "retrenchment and reform" committee of the legislature, heretofore known in the news as the "interim committee." A pre-audit law affecting state sub-divisions was passed. These two recommendations were the only two of those made by the governmental re-

organization, or "Little Hoover," committee that won the legislature's favor.

The legislature passed the proposed constitutional amendment, clarifying the line of succession to the governorship, in identical form as adopted by the 1949 legislature and put it to the people for a vote. The people passed it at the November 4, 1952, general election.

The Assembly also created a special committee to study the state employee pension system during the interim between the 1951 and 1953 legislatures.

However, the legislature turned down or failed to act on a number of other proposals. In some instances bills passed one house but failed, or weren't acted on, in the other. In other cases they weren't acted on, or were rejected, in one house, and in a few cases both houses acted but could not agree on the final form.

The civil defense bill suffered the fate of going through both houses in different forms and failing because no agreement could be reached.

An attempt in the Senate to attach a "loyalty oath" for all school teachers and public employees to the civil defense bill failed after one of the hottest debates in the history of the legislature.

The House again passed the proposed state building code bill by an overwhelming vote, but it failed of passage in the Senate.

On the other hand the Senate adopted a bill to

equalize taxes in school districts throughout Iowa but it got nowhere in the House.

The lawmakers refused to change the marriageable age of girls, with their parents' consent, from fourteen to sixteen.

Nor would they take the action required by the state constitution to reapportion the Senate on 1950 census figures.

Union organizations failed to win approval for legalization of the union shop but staved off a proposal for compulsory arbitration of labor disputes.

The bill requiring each school district to levy a 15-mill tax annually against every property holder got nowhere.

Liquor-by-the-drink proponents, although aggressive, failed to win any support for their pet measure.

The solons refused to declare an open season on deer nor would they provide a closed season on rabbits.

A bill to make county assessor posts elective rather than appointive failed, and the solons also refused to make the state superintendent's office appointive rather than elective. Nor would they create a state board of public instruction for secondary schools.

Cities failed to win approval for a bill exempting them from paying state sales taxes on supplies. They still have to pay it, then apply for a refund.

A proposition to prohibit the Secretary of Agri-

culture from issuing permits for sale of anti-freezes, unless the solutions got approval of University of Iowa and Iowa State College chemists, died. Nor would the legislature press recommendations for action against the Secretary for issuing an earlier permit for sale of a salt-base anti-freeze. In this connection, a proposed full-scale legislative investigation of the state liquor control commission's operations didn't get far.

The House adopted a bill to end rent control in Iowa, but it didn't get by the Senate. The House bills to establish a 55-mile per hour night speed limit and compulsory motor vehicle inspection met similar Senate fates.

The Senate's bill to authorize the University of Iowa to borrow money to finance a new addition to the Memorial Union failed to get action in the House.

A heavily citizen-supported proposal for establishment of a legislative council wound up in the appropriation committees of both houses.

On the slightly frivolous side, the legislators argued for several hours over whether small boys should be allowed to buy caps for their cap pistols but wound up by refusing to exempt caps from an earlier anti-firecracker law.

The word "necking" got into the arguments as to whether there should be a law prohibiting anyone from entering a cemetery between sunset and dawn. The legislators decided against it.

Inasmuch as 107 days — including the spring recess period, Sundays and most Saturdays when the legislature did not meet — were required to conduct this much business, it is no wonder legislators were jubilant that 131 bills — 94 in the Senate and 37 in the House — were withdrawn, along with one Senate joint resolution, from consideration.

The legislature was in session 70 working days and passed 266 bills, although it considered many more than that. Such a work program takes on enormous size when viewed in that light.

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