

Senator Lowry Outlines Reasons for Senate Deadlock; Gives Reasoning by Both Sides

(Editor's note: The following article dealing with the Oregon legislature is by State Sen. Philip B. Lowry, Medford. It is the first of a series of articles by members of the legislature from Jackson county. All three members, including Representatives Bob Duncan and Al Littrell, have been invited to use the columns of the Mail Tribune from time to time to report on the legislature, and to contact their constituents.)

By SEN. PHILIP LOWRY
Salem—The Oregon State Senate, evenly divided between 15 Democrats and 15 Republicans, completed the most rigorous week in its history without achieving the election of a President or the appointment of committees. As of Monday afternoon on the 128th roll call, all 30 votes being cast for Democrats for this high office, which furnishes the successor to the governorship in the event of a vacancy. Notwithstanding this, the deadlock has not yet been broken. The Republicans have offered to allow the Democrats to make whatever division of committees they see fit.

It is to be hoped the spirited battle has left no mark of disharmony between parties or individual members, and I think that such is the case. Tempers have been held well in check despite long, wearying hours of negotiations, caucusing and meeting on the Senate floor. A roll call takes approximately one minute, and the procedure has been to take a few roll calls, recess, negotiate and return for a continuation of the process. Roughly, the entire proceedings have been reminiscent of those of the truce teams at Panmunjon, Korea.

Committees Named
Both parties designated negotiating committees to seek a solution of the division of committee assignments, thinking this would provide the key to the selection of a president. The bipartisan committee started work in the belief that committee assignments should be equally divided between the two parties, but it soon became apparent to the negotiating committee, of which I was a member, that "equality of committee assignments" had almost as many meanings as we have members in the Senate.

The Senate has 20 standing committees to consider bills affecting all fields of legislation. These committees differ greatly in importance. Some may be relatively unimportant in one session and have tremendous power in another session, depending upon the nature of current legislation. Generally speaking, however, the taxation committee and the ways and means committee (appropriations) are considered first in rank as they control the method of raising revenue and expenditures. It was agreed at the outset that the Democrats should have majority control of both of these committees so that success or failure in this respect would follow the Democratic party. All revenue bills must originate in the House of Representatives, and it would therefore be impossible for the Senate Taxation Committee to devise a revenue program.

Seek Policy Voice
As we started negotiations, the bipartisan committee was aware that all House committees were chaired and controlled by Democrats, and it was the belief of a majority of the members of the bipartisan committee that the Republicans should be assigned control of certain Senate committees which would give them a voice in policy-making decisions and create a committee balance which would result in bipartisan support for any sound program.

Suffice to say that the bipartisan negotiating committee became a puppet for the divergent elements and was never empowered by both parties to reach a conclusion which would be binding without the ratification of all concerned. For this reason, its efforts were destined to fail despite the fact that the committee itself was able to agree.

Heart of Legislature
To those not thoroughly familiar with the Legislature, it is necessary to understand that the committee process is the heart of the Legislature. All bills must be referred to some committee, and once there the committee, for all practical purposes, has the power of life or death with respect to any bill. Theoretically, a two-thirds vote of the entire Senate can take a bill away from a committee where it has been assigned by the President. This is extremely rare and has never been accomplished within my legislative experience.

Likewise, it is necessary to understand that the presiding officer assigns all bills introduced to committee. This is a tremendous power as a bill may relate to several different legislative fields and can logically go to any one of a number of committees. Actually, the President may assign a bill to any committee, regardless of its contents, and the only check on this is the integrity of the presiding officer. The presiding officer may use one of the standing committees for a dumping or burial ground for bills he disavors, and set up another committee for bills which he wishes to expedite. To accomplish this, the presiding officer designates members of some committee which will be in complete harmony with his views. In the past, there has been little abuse of this tremendous power.

Reason for Controversy
We, therefore, have a situation where by reason of the committee process a majority of the Senate may favor a bill but be unable to get it to the floor for a vote. This committee process has in reality been the reason for the controversy on committee division and the selection of a president. Members of both parties appear to be distrustful that the other will abuse the already exaggerated powers of the committees.

An easy solution of the problem, which I greatly favor, would be to amend the rules to allow a bill to be taken away from committee on a simple majority vote of the entire Senate. This would put an end to parliamentary finagling, and allow the majority to govern. The only disadvantage of such a rule, which has now been adopted by the House of Representatives, would be that some bad legislation might sail through under the pressure of a strong lobby.

Other Solutions
The present deadlock suggests the possibility of its recurrence. This could be prevented by making constitutional provision for a Lieutenant Governor or an increase or a decrease in the Senate membership by one. The latter method may be preferable because no one as yet has indicated willingness to pay a sufficient salary to attract a Lieutenant Governor of competence or assign him any duties other than presiding over the Senate. If a Lieutenant Governor is conferred with executive power it creates friction with the Governor, particularly if they are of different political parties.

One of the ironies of this deadlock is the clear fact that neither party has members of uniform political belief. Both the Republicans and the Democrats have "liberals," "conservatives," and "middle-of-the-roadsers." The

negotiating committee recognized this by attempting to suggest personnel for certain committees which would achieve balance in this regard. My great hope is that the "moderates" of both parties will control their respective groups to insure a stable, progressive and nonpartisan course of legislation which is based upon sound policy rather than emotional appeal.

Many Proposals
To date there have been proposals which are a lure for everybody except the taxpayer, and I am beginning to wonder who is going to represent that long suffering citizen at this session. It remains to be determined which faction of what party will assume control of the Senate, and it will be a tremendous loss for Oregon if strict party discipline in either party causes partisanship on Oregon problems which are fundamentally nonpartisan.

In any event, it is to be hoped that all 30 members in the Senate will act as Oregonians rather than politicians. The debate this week has been sharp but not acrimonious. The time loss has not been significant because little is ordinarily accomplished under normal conditions during the first couple of weeks as we are waiting for bills to be introduced.

Disturbs Members
One thing which disturbed many members of the legislature was rumor, perhaps sent up as a trial balloon, that H. G. Maison was to be removed as superintendent of the Oregon State Police. I personally shared this feeling because this fine administrator of ability and integrity has continued to build our Oregon State Police with the objective of good law enforcement with no politics involved. Mr. Maison was for a time my Regimental Commander in the 63rd Infantry during World War II, and I came to know his excellent qualifications for his present position. Previous Republican ideas some years ago along this same line met with the same reaction—the Oregon State Police must not be subject to political influence or domination. We all know that we have an outstanding State Police staff in southern

\$100,000 Reward Posted for Slayer Of Chicago Boys

Chicago—(U.P.)—A \$100,000 reward has been offered for the slayer of three Chicago boys in a bid by a group of wealthy men to "buy" the solution to that and other major crimes around the nation.

The Chicagoans pledged the money to the newly-formed Crime Detection Institute in hopes that mammoth rewards will help stop crime in Chicago and elsewhere.

Institute members said their idea was that informants would not be able to resist telling what they know of major crimes under the impetus of such huge sums of money.

Scientists Study Rice Paddy Snails

Iowa City—(U.P.)—A tiny snail that lives in the rice paddies and irrigation ditches of the Orient is the object of an extensive study by a Chinese scientist at the University of Iowa's college of medicine.

Dr. Hsi Fan Hsu has been studying the problem posed by the snail since 1948. So small it can hardly be seen with the naked eye, this amphibious snail is known to carry a blood fluke in its larval stage which infects the human liver and certain abdominal veins. Any person who walks or steps in water infested with the creature is almost sure to contract the disease.

The disease, which is fatal more than 10 per cent of the time, is very hard to get rid of. Victims who don't die find it a chronic disease. Suffering from abdominal pains and enlargement of the liver and spleen, victims gradually weaken, requiring more and more rest each day until they become bedridden.

Oregon and throughout the state, Oregonians should not hesitate to let the governor know their feelings on this subject.

Jackson county residents will be glad to know that our House delegation of Rep. Al Littrell and Rep. Bob Duncan are both already doing a fine job and have excellent committee assignments. It is our mutual hope that we can find the answers to some problems which peculiarly confront southern Oregon. All of us will be glad to receive your views on any subject at any time. A letter may be addressed to us at: "State Capitol Building, Salem, Oregon."

Moving Rugged
The rugged first week of the session was less hectic than trying to move the family to Salem a week ago Saturday. The family station wagon was bulging with the children (a sack of apples to forestall hunger pains) play pen, teeter babe, suitcases and all the other paraphernalia required to keep the family going for an indefinite time. Hence my absent-mindedness in an Albany service station where I left my billfold while making change and trying to get one of the boys to the bathroom in time. The Sunday night session which lasted from 7 p.m. to 4:30 a.m. Monday was brightened by the recovery of the billfold by the Oregon State Police, who had practically no "clues." The billfold, I understand, was found in the possession of an out-of-state motorist at a point many miles south of Albany. This saved the day!

New Jersey Medical Society Takes Steps Against Mercy Killing

Trenton, N.J. — (U.P.) — The Medical Society of New Jersey condemned mercy killing today as a practice "in conflict with accepted principles of morality and sound medical practice."

The society released a short statement adopted by the organization's Board of Trustees criticizing a petition in the Legislature to legalize euthanasia. The petition, signed by 166 New Jersey physicians, was introduced in the Legislature last week.

Right to Opinions
The resolution of the 6,300-member medical society said "as private citizens those physicians have the right to their own opinions and actions." However, the society said, "those opinions are not to be construed as reflecting the official and accepted position of organized medicine regarding euthanasia."

"The practice of euthanasia has been and continues to be in conflict with accepted principles of morality and sound medical practice," the statement said.

The petition, said to have been prepared by the Euthanasia Society of New York headed by the Rev. John Howland Lathrop of Brooklyn, N.Y., urged that "voluntary euthanasia should be permitted by law, brought out into the open and safeguarded

against abuse, rather than as at present practiced illegally, surreptitiously and without regulation."

It suggested that mercy killing be authorized by a court of record after it is requested by a sufferer, and after investigation of the case by a court-appointed committee.

Would File Petition
Under such a law a person suffering from an incurable disease such as cancer would first petition for his own death. A physician would then submit an affidavit to the validity of the petition and to the patient's condition, then a court order would be sought to authorize ending the patient's life to stop his suffering.

Proponents of such a law argue that the aged and victims of incurable diseases who face long periods of agony, sometimes attempt crude methods of suicide. Some are released from the suffering secretly by relatives or doctors who are willing to stand trial for murder.

There was a similar move to legalize mercy killing in New Jersey seven years ago. It was unsuccessful.

The railroad system inside the Ford Motor company's Rouge plant at Dearborn, Mich., has 106 miles of rails, 24 diesel locomotives and over 1,200 cars.

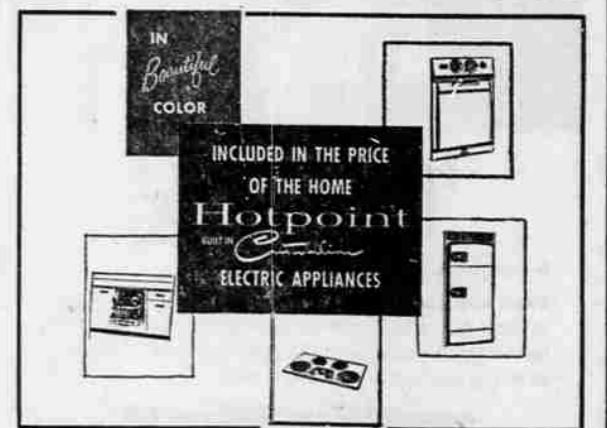
Jackson School Plans Forming Dad's Club

Fathers of students attending Jackson school have been asked to attend a meeting at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 23, in Paul Gandt's room at Jackson school. Purpose of the meeting is to form a Dad's club, the first in any of the local schools, it has been announced.

Soviet Antarctic Expedition Gets Data

London — (U.P.) — The Soviet Antarctic expedition has collected enough data for the first geological map of the Russian exploration site in eastern Antarctica and will leave for home shortly, Radio Moscow said today.

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