

\$7.5 million annual appropriation from the state's general fund to groups already engaged in the war against tobacco use.

House DFLers had tried unsuccessfully to amend legislation throughout the session to include the endowments, but Republicans argued the plans created another level of government and that the funds should be used to provide deeper tax relief for all Minnesotans.

Earlier in the session, Sviggum said the endowment idea had not been thought through carefully and represented a "big government" approach to solving problems.

Money for light rail

Ventura began his quest for light-rail funding by including an appropriation in his budget proposal. However, the money didn't make the cut in the House omnibus transportation funding bill (HF2387). House Republicans argued that light rail would not be an effective way to reduce congestion on the roadways of the Twin Cities and is too expensive to build.

Ventura's newly appointed chairman of the Metropolitan Council, Ted Mondale, lobbied hard for the plan, but swayed few votes in the House. The money was included in the Senate's transportation spending plan.

The funds would be dedicated to building the first leg of a light-rail transit line from downtown Minneapolis to the Mall of America in Bloomington.

Funding details

The tripartisan deal also includes reversing the Legislature's decision last year to pay cash for \$400 million in construction projects, rather than issuing bonds. Moe originally sponsored the plan at the close of last year's session.

Another item agreed to is a "settling up" process each biennium. After all the state's bills are paid, if sufficient surplus remains, a tax rebate would be automatically issued.

Policy issues unsolved

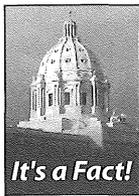
While the deal agreed to by all three parties solves many of the finance questions hanging over the session, at least two contentious issues remain.

The House-approved health and human services omnibus bill (HF2412) includes language that would ban certain late-term abortions and require a 24-hour waiting period. Another provision would require significantly more information to be reported about cases where minors seek permission from judges to have an abortion.

None of the abortion provisions were

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Small-town doctor in big-time politics



The tradition of country doctors is long and proud.

From the time settlers arrived in the Minnesota Territory until today, doctors serving rural communities have spent long hours taking a personal interest in each patient.

Several doctors have had distinguished careers in the Minnesota House of Representatives.

Today, Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe), a family physician, represents District 21B in southwestern Minnesota.

At the beginning of this century, Rep. Leverett Wright Babcock took a hiatus from his rural practice in the Wadena area and turned his attention to lawmaking.

In many ways, political service was a natural extension for Babcock, whose practice took him to every corner of his district and whose considerable medical skills held him in good stead with most of those he served.

Babcock was born in 1849 in New York. He graduated from the University of Vermont in 1869 and moved to Wadena in 1879 with little more than his black bag and a few crude utensils of his trade. Wadena is located about 150 miles northwest of St. Paul.

By all accounts, Babcock was a hard worker who spent up to 20 hours a day caring for the ill, often being seen at all hours heading out in his buggy pulled by one of his horses.

In 1888, after serving seven years on the Wadena Village Council, Babcock was elected to a House seat as a Republican. He was on an upwardly mobile political track.

By 1902, Babcock was embroiled in a struggle within the party to determine who would serve as speaker of the House in the 1903 session. The Republicans dominated the House, and the battle for speaker was between Babcock and Rep. Lawrence Henry Johnson, of Minneapolis.

As the debate grew more heated, Babcock took the unprecedented step of preparing a

campaign brochure for the job, published Nov. 28, 1902.

"The Speakership Question" responded to charges from Johnson, who had accused the doctor of being opposed to the initiatives of Gov. Samuel R. VanSant's administration.

VanSant had swept into the governor's seat on the coattails of President William McKinley, and VanSant was buoyed by his service in defense of the Union during the Civil War.

It was naturally important to House Republicans that the speaker be supportive of VanSant and his administration.

The struggle to determine which Republican would be nominated for speaker continued throughout December, and on Jan. 6, 1903, Babcock's name was placed before the body. He roundly defeated Democrat challenger J.R. Hickey.

The speakership appears to have been a capstone for Babcock's political service, and when the House assembled again in 1905, Babcock was back home in Wadena,

having returned to his practice and taken on the challenge of running the Wadena Cracker Company.

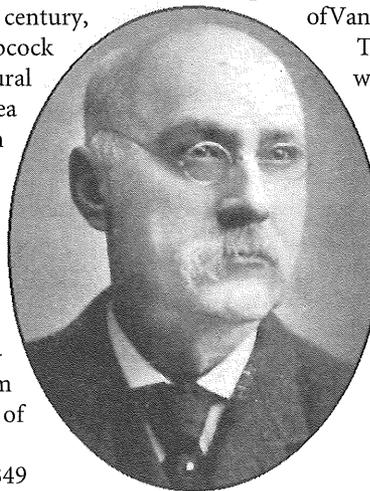
His business contacts and his continued interest in state politics meant frequent trips to St. Paul, a lengthy train ride from his home.

On Christmas Eve 1907, Babcock was concluding yet another of his visits at the Capitol when he fell from a streetcar which had been struck by another car.

The doctor stumbled into a Turkish bath house and a physician was summoned. Babcock was taken to St. Luke's Hospital, where he died early on Christmas morning.

Babcock's funeral was recorded by one of the Wadena newspapers as the largest ever to be held in the city.

Heading the delegation of dignitaries from St. Paul who arrived in a special railroad car was Rep. L. H. Johnson, Babcock's former foe and, by then, the House speaker.



Leverett Wright Babcock

Photo from the 1903 Legislative Manual