

January 9, 1929

The Minneapolis Morning Tribune



## Senator Wins Fight for Seat by 13 Ballots

**Heated Debate Marks  
Opening of Legislature  
in St. Paul.**

**Dry Conviction Is Cited  
in Attempt to Unseat  
Lawmaker.**

**Constitution and Bible In-  
volved in Fiery Battle  
for Position.**

**By Jack Quinlan.**

Minnesota's forty-sixth legislative session, which convened at noon Tuesday, was suddenly highlighted by a long and heated debate in the senate which resulted in defeat of a proposal to unseat Senator A. L. Lennon of Minneapolis because of his conviction in the famous Eagle's club liquor case. The final decision of the senate on rollcall was 25 for and 38 against unseating the senator from the twenty-eighth district.

Following this fiery preface to the regular business of the senate, the members with their colleagues in the house adjourned until 10:30 a. m. Wednesday when they will convene in joint session to witness the inaugural ceremonies of Governor Theodore Christianson and hear the executive's annual message.

The inaugural ceremony will be carried to radio listeners in a special broadcast over KSTP. Special microphones have been placed in the house chamber and the proceedings will be carried from this time until noon.

**Johnson Leads Fray.**

Hardly had the routine of organizing the senate been completed when Senator L. P. Johnson of Ivanhoe tossed the firebrand into the chamber by moving to unseat Senator Lennon. Senator Victor Lawson of Willmar who had threatened earlier in the day to introduce a resolution calling for Lennon's expulsion, which would have been submitted to the committee on elections, responded to Johnson's motion with a quick second.

This immediately gave impetus to nearly two hours of debate which roamed the wide range of authorities from the constitution to the Bible.

If it was not apparent after the first half hour of debate that Lennon's seat was secure, it became openly obvious after Senator J. D. Sullivan of St. Cloud declared that Lennon had been sent to the senate by his constituency after they had full knowledge of the facts concerning his arrest and conviction. Sullivan referred to Lennon's conviction as "technical" and insisted that if the senate did unseat him it would simply mean sending him back to the voters in his district who would return him to the upper house with probably a larger majority.

#### **Denounced by Lawson.**

Referring to Senator Victor Lawson's prefacing remarks that "he had nothing personal" against Lennon, Senator Sullivan said:

"It looks to me like you have set out to take a crack at him to square yourselves with your voters."

Senator Lawson placed some robust expression behind his indictment of Lennon, declaring that the senator under fire "was not only a disgrace to the senate but a menace to the enforcement of the eighteenth amendment."

He lost no time in putting the buck squarely up to the senate, and insisted that "no man here can go on record in favor of keeping Lennon in his seat" and added that "such action will be held as evidence against you."

#### **Bible Quoted.**

Senator W. B. Anderson of Minneapolis, coming to the defense of Lennon, quoted both from the state constitution and the Bible. Anderson held that under the constitution, the senate had only the limited power of passing on the eligibility and election returns in Lennon's case. And Anderson held that on the face of the election returns, Lennon was eligible.

"I can't help thinking, as I contemplate Senator Lennon's case here today, of Him who said: 'Let him among you who is without sin cast the first stone.' This biblical quotation brought smart retorts from various sections of the chamber, choice among which was one asking, 'What was done with the money changers in the temple?'"

Senator Sherman Child of Minneapolis, speaking for the Hennepin delegation, declared that regardless of the fact that every member of the delegation "except one" was a "dry," they "could not be convinced that Lennon should be expelled."

#### **Qualifies Stand.**

He qualified his stand by explaining that Lennon's constituency was composed for the most part of foreigners "who have been accustomed to receive the necessary sugar parts of their food from liquor," and added that this is the only district from which Lennon could be elected.

The principal argument against the unseating of Lennon was the declaration, by opponents to the motion, that the senator was seated after his conviction and that therefore the senate had no legal authority to review his eligibility or fitness. Many held that if the constitution was not definite on this point, the actions of any senator for 29 years back could be used as the basis for his unseating.

After the vote, Senator J. D. Sullivan moved to reconsider and make Senator Lennon's seating unanimous. This was lost on a viva voce vote. Just before the vote was taken

(Continued on Page 2, Column 2)

# Lennon Wins Senate Place in Close Vote

## Ouster Is Voted Down as Legislature Meets in St. Paul.

(Continued From Page 1.)

Lennon himself rose to his feet and for half an hour outlined to the senators the circumstances of his case. He insisted that those attempting to deprive him of his seat were spreading a lot of propaganda and that he was being victimized by organized efforts to discredit him, although there had never been any evidence of any violation on his part for personal gain.

### Favor Expulsion.

Those who voted in favor of Lennon's expulsion were: Blanchard, Cleary, Christgau, Duempke, Frost, Johnson, Landby, A. S. Larson, H. A. Larson, Lawson, Lee, Lillygren, Long, L. P. Lund, McCubrey, Naplin, Orr, Richardson, Rockne, Schmechel, Serline, Sharpe, Solberg, Spindler.

Those who voted no, or opposed the expulsion, were:

Adams, Anderson, Arens, Bessette, Bonniwell, Bridgeman, Cannon, Child, Hausler, Haugen, Johnston, Lemn, Lommen, C. A. Lund, MacKenzie, MacLean, McKnight, Mangan, Millett, Morin, Nelson, Nordlin, Olson, Putnam, Putzier, Ribenack, Roepke, Rollins, Romberg, Rosenmeier, Stemsrud, G. R. Sullivan, J. D. Sullivan, Swenson, Thwing, Turnham, Widell and Zamboni.

Those who were recorded as not voting or absent were:

Peterson and Trazler.

Senator Lennon did not vote.

The organization of the senate which preceded the Lennon matter was done with dispatch. Lieutenant Governor W. I. Nolan took the oath of office and took his place as presiding officer of the senate. The introduction of resolutions providing for senate officers and employes and naming them followed. G. Howard Spaeth of Ada was elected secretary. Three new senators who were elected to take the place of those who had died during the last biennium were sworn in.

The rest of the senate officers include: Clinton McDonald, North Marquette, first assistant secretary; Harry Fowler, Baudette; E. C. Lincoln, Park Rapids; Winnifred N. Campbell, Slayton, and John A. Blackwell, Grand Marais, assistant secretaries; Matt Neurenberg, St. Cloud, sergeant-at-arms; Fred Newton, Princeton, assistant sergeant-at-arms, and the Rev. N. D. Haferman, Lindstrom, chaplain.

### House Opens Quietly.

In sharp contrast to the senate, the house opened its biennial deliberations with no contest of any kind. Organization was effected rapidly, after which a recess was de-

clared during which the members were allotted seats, the customary procedure of granting precedence to veteran members being followed.

The final adjournment until Wednesday morning was taken at 1:40 p. m., at least an hour before the senate quit, and many house members drifted down the corridor to listen while the upper house decided whether Senator Lennon would be permitted to take his seat.

Mike Holm, secretary of state, called the house to order and the oath was administered by Associate Justice Holt of the supreme court, whose appearance in judicial robes aroused the interest of the assembled legislators. Ray J. Quinlivan of St. Cloud, placed the name of John A. Johnson of Preston in nomination as a candidate to succeed himself as speaker.

### Johnson Re-elected.

There were no other nominations and Johnson was elected with 113 of his colleagues voting for him. The other members did not vote or were absent. The failure to vote on the part of some Farmer-Labor members was interpreted as a silent protest against the conservative majority. The nomination of Johnson was seconded by Mrs. Mabeth Palge of Minneapolis and E. P. Scanlon of Crosby.

Secretary Holm named John B. Hompe of Deer Creek, Oscar Swenson, Nicollet, and Otto C. Neuman, Wheaton, a committee to notify Mr. Johnson of his election and escort him to the chair. It was the largest vote ever given a speaker, and the presiding officer was greeted by applause and was congratulated frequently at the close of the session.

Immediately after Johnson's election, the house proceeded to elect John I. Levin, St. Paul, chief clerk. It is Mr. Levin's second term in that office.

The session opened with prayer, led by the Rev. Frank A. Doran of St. Paul, who later was re-elected chaplain.

The house officers, besides Mr. Levin, were named as follows: C. L. Stevens, Warren, first assistant chief clerk; George R. Howe, Duluth, second assistant; Oscar Morse, Slayton, postmaster; J. D. Ross, Ortonville, sergeant-at-arms; the Rev. Frank Doran, St. Paul, chaplain; P. J. Long, Ironton, enrolling clerk; George W. Empey, Hinckley, engrossing clerk; Ed Fanning, Minneapolis, assistant postmaster, and William Peterson, assistant sergeant-at-arms.