

SESSION SCENES

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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House Information Office/Official Newsletter

Benefits increased for unemployed workers in state

Maximum weekly benefits for unemployed Minnesotans, now set at \$85 a week, would increase to \$113 a week, starting July 1, under a bill approved by the House March 31.

Currently, unemployed workers can receive 50 per cent of their actual wages in benefits after four consecutive weeks of unemployment. Under the proposed legislation, workers would qualify for benefits if they had been out of work for any four weeks of a given year. To help protect workers from inflation, benefits would equal two-thirds of the prevailing average Minnesota wage, the benefit rate would be re-calculated each year, based on the previous year's wages.

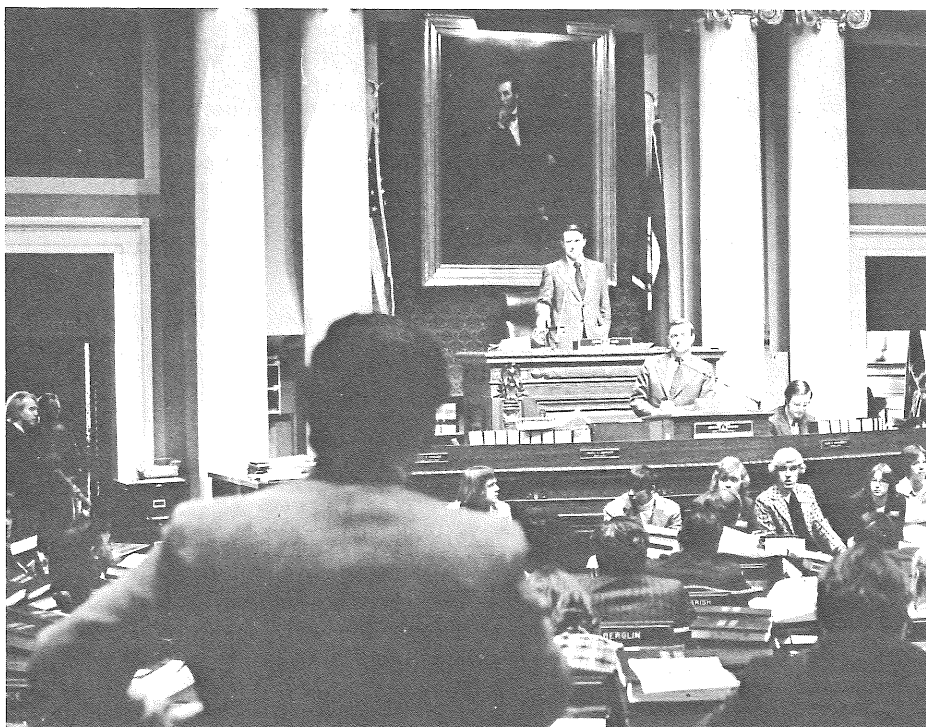
House author Harry Seiben (D-Hastings), said the measure is an insurance program, not a welfare program. "This bill doesn't cost the taxpayers anything."

The bill increases rates paid by employers for unemployment insurance from \$43.20 to \$240 per employee to \$55.80 to \$310 annually. These rates would also be adjusted annually based on changes in the average wage paid to Minnesota workers.

The bill changes current law which provided for the Legislature to adjust unemployment benefits and tax rates for employers every two years.

A new feature in the bill provides for private school employees to collect unemployment compensation if they lose their jobs. This provision would be effective July 1, 1977.

The House voted 87 to 45 to approve the measure. There were 82 DFLers and 5 Republicans who voted for the bill; 25 Republicans and 20 DFLers voted against the measure. The bill now goes to the Senate for further consideration.



Minnesota's Senator Walter Mondale listens to a question from Rep. William Kelly (D-East Grand Forks) during an address and dialogue session in the House Chambers last month. Sen. Mondale praised President Ford for signing the tax cut bill but said the administration's economic is "inadequate". The senator opposed administration cuts in the domestic budget, particularly in programs affecting the elderly, disabled, and state and local governments. The senator answered several questions from House members on state and federal issues, and in answer to Rep. Kelly's question, said the federal government should take steps soon to insure a continuing supply of Canadian crude oil to the Minnesota refineries.

House rejects gas tax increase

House members rejected an increase in the state gasoline tax by an 82-50 margin April 11. The measure, increasing Minnesota's gas tax by two cents per gallon, had been awaiting House action for more than a month, while sponsors tried to convince fellow legislators that the tax boost was needed to improve and maintain state roads.

Most of the support for the tax increase came from law-makers outside the Twin Cities area. They argued that more money

is needed to build and improve roads in rural Minnesota.

Critics said the Highway Department has not responded to legislative and citizen pressure for better rural roads. They also argued that declining use of gasoline means smaller tax revenues.

The bill is still alive in both the House and the Senate, but the preliminary House vote indicates that chances for passage this session are slim.

House defers action on reducing size of Legislature by 33 members

A bill for a smaller state legislature after 1980 was referred to a House committee after debate by the Minnesota House of Representatives April 9. The measure calls for a 33-member cut in the Legislature after the next census, giving the Minnesota House 112 members and the Senate 56 members.

Rep. Ray Faricy (D-St. Paul), sponsor of the bill, said state law-makers would be more visible to their constituents, more accountable, and better able to give serious study to proposed legislation, if the House and Senate were reduced in size. "With fewer legislators, we will increase our ability to carry on a meaningful dialogue, and the process will be improved by greater individual involvement," Faricy concluded.

Leading the opponents of the proposal, Rep. William Kelly (D-East Grand Forks), told House members that a smaller legislature could mean changes in the current committee system, in interim study, and in the time each law-maker allotted to constituents. "Let's give the committee assigned to study legislative operations and procedure a chance to study the effect of this bill," Kelly said.

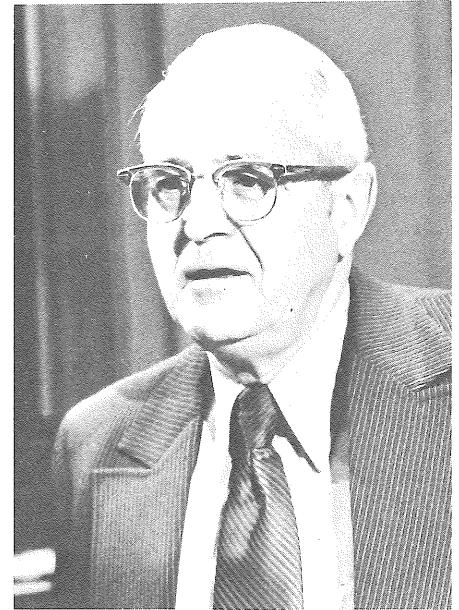
Rep. Henry Savelkoul (R-Albert Lea),

tried to amend the bill so it would take effect before the next election. Rep. William Schreiber (R-Brooklyn Park) suggested a new census next year, after urban and suburban legislators opposed Savelkoul's amendment. But the amendment got only 31 votes, while 103 voted "no".

"No matter how good, how clear, how honorable our intentions, the people will suspect us of having some vested interest, so the issue belongs with the people," Rep. Arne Carlson (R-Mpls.) asserted. He proposed a Constitutional amendment, so citizens could vote on the size of their legislature. His proposal was ruled out of order, since such a bill is currently before a House committee.

The arguments of Rep. Mike Sieben (D-Newport) did not persuade members that the bill should pass. "This is a modest proposal. The people want it. The reformers suggest it. Many of us want it," Sieben said. "Don't send it back to committee."

Legislators voted 67-62 to send the bill to the Rules and Legislative Administration committee whose chairman is Irvin Anderson (D-Int'l Falls). No hearing date has been set for the bill.



Former Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives Aubrey Dirlam of Redwood Falls will be honored at a recognition dinner April 22. Having served 34 years in the House, Dirlam retired after the 1974 session. During his tenure, Dirlam was Speaker of the House, Majority Leader, and Minority Leader. In 1972 he was elected president of the National Conference of State Legislative Leaders. The dinner will be co-hosted by Speaker of the House Martin Sabo, Assistant Minority Leader Rod Searle, and Chief Clerk of the House Edward Burdick.

The House of Representatives passed a resolution designating April 22, 1975, as Aubrey W. Dirlam Recognition Day.



Mrs. Winifred Whitney Garber, one of the first female pages for the Minnesota House of Representatives, returned to the House Chambers April 10. Mrs. Garber was appointed a page 50 years ago by her father, Rep. Charles E. Whitney, and served as a page for the 1925 and 1927 sessions. She was then one of seven pages and earned \$6 a day. Mrs. Garber recalled how when a member needed a page, he would stand and snap his fingers; and there were no microphones or electronic voting. She said the Chambers haven't changed much, "still quite beautiful". Rep. Richard Wigley (R-Lake Crystal), who represents what was once Rep. Garber's district, escorted Mrs. Garber during her visit.

Increase in state minimum wage bill approved by full House

Paychecks for minimum wage earners will increase January 1, and again July 1, 1976, under a bill approved by the Minnesota House March 24, by a 89 to 26 margin.

The measure provides a minimum wage of \$2.10 an hour on January 1, next year, and an increase to \$2.30 starting July 1, 1976. Rep. Ray Faricy (D-St. Paul) told House members that his bill was a modest attempt to help workers earning the minimum wage "keep up with the way the cost of living has spiraled."

The measure was altered on the House floor to include youths under 18 in the minimum wage law. Rep. Ken Zubay (R-Rochester) said it was discriminatory to pay teenagers at a lower rate, and House members agree, adopting his amendment 92 to 28.

The representatives rejected an amendment that would have exempted retailers with less than \$150,000 gross volume from paying the minimum wage. Proponents of that change said it would help mer-

chants in small towns. Rep. Faricy said the increased earning-power of workers would boost the main street economy and help owners of small businesses.

It was argued that the legislation would put a drain on employers who couldn't afford to pay the minimum wage. But Rep. Faricy said if small town employers paid less than the minimum, it would drive people out of the community to larger cities where they can make more money.

The House defeated an amendment by Rep. Joe Niehaus (R-Sauk Centre) which would have exempted senior citizens from receiving the minimum wage. Rep. Niehaus said many retired people work "at little jobs here and there", and wouldn't demand the minimum wage. If employers were forced to pay them the minimum, they would lose these jobs.

After passage by the House, the bill was sent to the Senate and it was referred to the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee.

Bill protects union agreements

Labor unions could block the sale or transfer of a company, if the change of hands jeopardized a contract with the union, under a bill passed by the House of Representatives March 26.

The measure would make all negotiated bargaining agreements binding if a company is sold. Unions would get 30 days' notice from the owner when a sale or transfer was planned. The union would then go to district court to try to stop the sale, if workers' contract benefits were threatened.

Rep. Stan Enebo, (D-Mpls.), author of the bill, said some workers have lost everything after years of work with one company. "This bill is a top priority of many labor organizations," Enebo said.

During hearings by the House Labor-Management Relations Committee, testimony was given by workers who had lost all their benefits when the company they

had been working for suddenly closed or was sold.

One witness told the committee he lost his job and pension benefits after 35 years of service to the company. Another witness had worked for a food store for eight years and, when the company sold out, lost nearly \$5,000 in accumulated pension benefits when she was not rehired by the new firm.

Opponents said the bill would give workers veto power over property-owners' rights. Rep. Henry Savelkoul, (R-Albert Lea) said, "It is tragic that this legislation is before us."

The House members defeated a series of proposed amendments to the bill during preliminary consideration and adopted the bill March 26 on a 80-48 vote. The bill was sent to the Senate for its consideration.

Free tuition possible for senior citizens under bill

Persons over 62 years old could be entitled to a free college education under a bill presently before the House Appropriations Committee.

The bill, authored by Rep. Douglas St. Onge (D-Bemidji), would permit Minnesota senior citizens to attend courses free of tuition and fees at any community college, state college, University of Minnesota branch, or vocational-technical school.

Senior citizens could enroll in any course that has space available, but they could be "bumped" or removed by regular students transferring into a course.

The bill allows senior citizens to take any course an unlimited number of times, and senior citizens could either take the courses for credit or just audit them.

Rep. St. Onge said the bill is not intended to cost anything, but potential problems are being considered by the Appropriations Committee.

Timber law sales, procedure may be changed with House bill

The limitations on values of timber sold by informal sales will be raised and other sale procedures modified under a bill approved by a House committee and sent to the full House for action.

The bill, recommended to pass by the Environment and Natural Resources Committee would change the provisions for informal and auction sales of timber by the Department of Natural Resources. The bill would also try to maintain reasonable proportions of volume in each sale method.

The state Department of Natural Resources manages state timber lands and holds informal and auction sales to harvest mature and damaged trees. More than half of the sales are informal, the other portion by auction.

The maximum lots of timber sold at public auction would be changed from \$15,000 to \$7,500 and no sale will be held in more than one location on any one day.

Informal timber sales would be raised to a \$1,500 limit from the current \$500 appraised value of the lot. Citizens who testified before House committees at the Capitol and at a hearing at Cook, Minnesota, on the bill indicated they favor an increase in the informal sales value limit.

The bill, authored by Rep. Irvin Anderson (D-Int'l Falls) adds a provision to existing law which prohibits anyone from holding more than two permits for informal sales at one time. Under current law, there is no limit.

Rep. Anderson said his bill is designed to provide equal opportunity for the small logger to participate in the sale

process who cannot afford competitive bidding with large companies and prevent the purchase of large volumes of the state's timber resources by any one individual or corporation.

Another proposal would cut the time allowed to harvest stumpage from ten years to five years. A permit would be for two years, with a three-year extension.

Annual reports of all auction and informal timber sales would be submitted by the commissioner of natural resources. The reports would include the names and addresses of all purchasers, volumes of

timber purchased, species, appraised value, and sale price.

The committee amended the bill to make it effective the day after it becomes law, instead of July 1, 1975. A similar bill is being considered by the Senate Natural Resources and Agriculture Committee.

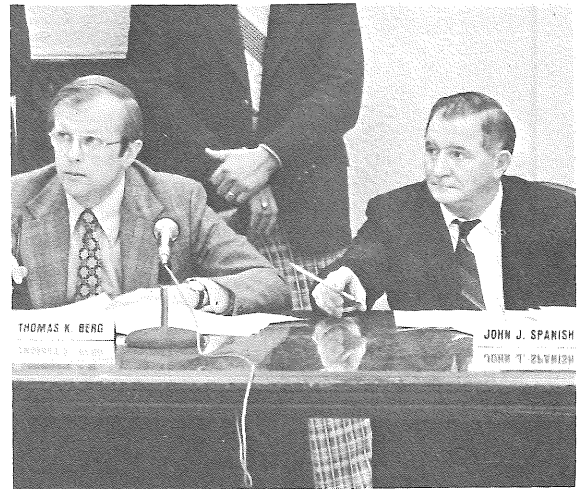
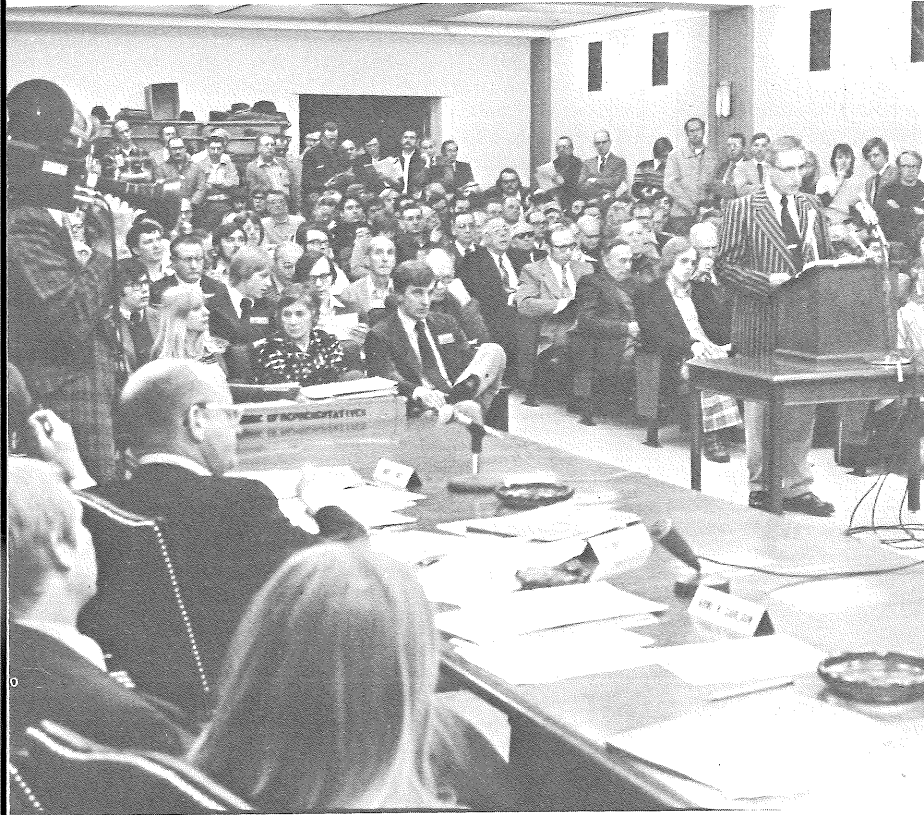
Co-authors of the bill with Rep. Anderson are Reps. Douglas Johnson (D-Cook), Art Braun (D-Greenbush), Norman Pahl (D-Keewatin), and John Biersdorf (R-Owatonna).



Nearly 200 people met with lawmakers in the Cook High School gymnasium last month to discuss changes in the state timber laws. Members of the House subcommittee who attended the public hearing were, left to right, Reps. Norm Pahl, Henry Kalis, David Fjoslien, Douglas Johnson, Irvin Anderson, Walter Hanson, Art Braun, Glen Sherwood, and Wesley Skoglund.

Handgun opponents heard

More than 300 people attended a House committee hearing to testify and listen to opponents of handgun registration. Opponents said the bill would be a stepping stone to more restrictive laws regulating the ownership of handguns. Fifty-three witnesses, among them sportsmen, gun collectors, and law enforcement officials, spoke against the bill. Below, House author Tom Berg (D-Mpls.) and John Spanish (D-Hibbing) listen to the testimony during the five hour meeting. Rep. Berg calls the bill "an enforceable, reasonable measure", while Rep. Spanish strongly opposes the bill, saying he has received over 500 letters against it and only one for it.



Handgun control bill sent back to House floor

A bill to control the use of handguns in the state was again before the full House of Representatives after being sent to the Appropriations Committee for consideration.

The committee heard the bill April 9 to determine the fiscal impact of the measure and recommended 17 to 12 passage of the bill. An amendment by Rep. Neil Haugerud (D-Preston) to appropriate \$230,000 to local governments to help administer the bill was defeated by the committee. No figure was set as to what the administrative costs of the bill will be.

The bill provides for the regulation of handgun sale, purchase, or transfer. Permits would be required in order to carry a pistol. The bill would also keep pistols out of the hands of people with current drug or alcohol problems, people convicted of violent crimes, the mentally ill, and untrained minors.

Handgun dealers would be licensed. A person who wanted to buy a pistol would apply to the chief of police or county sheriff for a permit. The applicant would provide law enforcement authorities with vital statistics including name, address, physical description, and thumbprint. During a 14-day waiting period, police would check necessary records. The permit would then be granted unless the

applicant was a member of a prohibited group.

Before the bill was sent back to the Appropriations Committee, the bill was amended on the House floor to provide for stricter punishment for first offenders, do away with a central file of those persons who have purchased handguns, and to make "Saturday night specials" illegal in the state.

The action to send the bill back to committee was initiated by Rep. Irvin Anderson (D-Int'l Falls) who said the financial impact of the bill has not been studied as is done with other bills. "We should review the financial obligations of this bill — the costs of the record keeping, clerical help and postage — before we vote."

An amendment offered by Rep. Carl Johnson (D-St. Peter) provides that there will be no central list of people who own guns. The only record of a purchase will include the serial number of the gun and the seller of the weapon. These records of purchase would be forwarded only to the local police authorities. The amendment was adopted 110 to 18.

The bill was also modified to ban the sale or manufacture of inferior made pistols or "Saturday night specials". Rep. Gerald Knickerbocker (R-Hopkins) told the House members these types of guns

"have no value to sportsmen, hunters, or collectors". The amendment was adopted 122 to 7.

The mandatory minimum sentence for persons convicted of a violent crime using a firearm was increased. Rep. Paul McCarron (D-Spring Lake Park) offered the amendment to make the minimum sentence one year plus one day for first time offenders. The amendment, adopted 110-18, would make the minimum sentence for second or subsequent offense of three years.

The pistol regulation bill does not deal with shotguns, long guns, or rifles, and does not require registration for those who currently have handguns.

Permits would be required to carry a pistol in a public place. These permits would also be obtained from local law enforcement officials. Permits would not be required to carry a pistol on the owner's property, in transit from the owner's home to place of business, or to and from hunting or target range areas.

House author Tom Berg (D-Mpls.) said the bill is a partial solution to the problem of murder and aggravated assault in the state. "This bill is an enforceable, reasonable measure," he told the House. "It will save some lives and help our police, and I believe the majority of the people of the state want this legislation."

Generic drug substitution allowed in House passed bill

There could be savings for consumers under a bill approved 126 to 0 by the Minnesota House of Representatives that would permit pharmacists to substitute less expensive but equally effective drugs for those prescribed by doctors.

Under a bill sponsored by Rep. Lyndon Carlson (D-Brooklyn Center), doctors would have to check one of two boxes on each prescription. One box would allow the pharmacist to make the substitution while the other box would not unless the substituted drug was made by the same manufacturer and equivalent in ingredients and dose as the drug prescribed.

Supporters of the bill say generic drug substitution could provide the consumer with substantial savings and cut public welfare medical expenses by up to \$1.3 million.

The bill is supported by the Minnesota State Pharmaceutical Association and the state Office of Consumer Affairs.

Some doctors however, say that not all drugs that seem to be identical have the same effect on patients, and some can have dangerous side effects. Supporters say that doctors could then check that box on the prescription which would not allow substitution.

A similar bill has passed the Senate and both versions are now before a conference committee where differences in the two bills will be worked on and reported back to each house.

Conference committees work to resolve differences on House, Senate bills

The House and Senate often pass different versions of controversial bills. Both houses of the Legislature must pass a bill in identical form before it goes to the Governor for signature into law.

Sometimes representatives and senators will agree on an approach to a problem, but disagree on specific points. Sometimes one body of the Legislature will write its own version of a bill as an amendment to a bill passed by the other body.

To try to resolve these differences, a conference committee is appointed. Usually three representatives and three senators serve on a conference committee. On major bills, five members are appointed by each body. There is always an equal number of representatives and senators on a conference committee, and the chief sponsors of a bill are almost always included.

House conference committee members are appointed by the Speaker, who consults with the chief author of the bill in selecting representatives who will try to



Legislation to insure that all tents and sleeping bags made or sold in the state are durably flame resistant has been approved unanimously by the House of Representatives. House author Harry Sieben said tents that are not flame retardant can burn in a matter of minutes, trapping the victim inside. Tent fire burns are usually severe, if not fatal. If the bill becomes law, tents and sleeping bags must be labeled as durably flame resistant.

Interest rate ceiling proposed

Legislation to put a 12 percent ceiling on installment contract interest rates was passed by the House of Representatives by a 111 to 12 margin.

Installment contracts — also called "closed-end accounts", are used to pay for single items like major appliances or furniture. There is no limit under current law on installment contract interest rates, and some retailers charge from 20 to 50 percent interest.

House author Neil Dieterich (D-St. Paul) designed the bill to make top interest on closed-end accounts, the same as that

for revolving charge accounts which are used by most of Minnesota's major stores.

Small businesses have opposed the measure because, they say, they cannot break even with a 12 percent ceiling. Opponents feel that the ceiling would drive prices up in order to compete with large businesses, and force small businesses to close.

The bill was sent to the Senate where it was referred to the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee.

uphold the House position in conference. Senate conference committee members are appointed by the Committee on Committees.

When representatives and senators sit down to discuss their differences, they have wide latitude in reaching an agreement. Sometimes one house accepts the other's version. Usually each body gives a little, but some conference committees scrap both versions of a bill, then write a new version. Generally, however, the new version stays within the philosophy and intent of the bill it replaces.

Once conference committee members have reached agreement, it is the job of the conferees to make a case for their compromise, and convince their colleagues to support it. If time permits, a bill may return to conference committee several times before getting approval of both houses.

Sometimes a bill does not become law because conference committee members cannot reach agreement; or because the

compromise bill does not win support of the Senate and House before time runs out.

In the first year of a Legislative session, a bill does not die if conferees do not reach agreement. The bill returns to the House or Senate, where it is tabled, and the conference committee is dissolved. The bill can be sent to a new conference committee when the legislature reconvenes. But if the differing versions of the bill are not resolved during the second year of session, it does not become law.

Conference committees, like all House and Senate committees, are open to the public. Every effort is made to provide advance notice of meetings. However, in the closing days of session, citizens who are watching the fate of a bill in conference should keep in touch with legislators or staff, since conference committees sometimes meet while the House and Senate are in session in their Chambers.

In Joint Convention

House, Senate members elect University regents

The Minnesota Legislature met in Joint Convention March 20 to elect members to the University Board of Regents, following a legal obligation established by the Territorial Laws of 1851.

State representatives and senators crowded into the House Chamber where extra chairs had been placed to accommodate the 201 lawmakers during the joint convention. Speaker of the House Martin Sabo presided as President of the joint convention.

After the members heard and debated proposed amendments, a long and complicated roll call began. A regular vote by the 134 House members, using the electronic voting machine, takes about 10

seconds. However, there is no system set up for an electronic vote at joint conventions.

One by one, the representatives and senators answered to the roll call, and either voted "Slate", the list recommended by the House and Senate Education Committees, or voted slate, with certain exceptions.

After two hours of proposed amendments, debate, roll calls, and the voice vote, the legislators had elected four regents and reelected five incumbents.

The Board of Regents is a policy making body for the University of Minnesota. There is one Regent from each of the state's eight Congressional Districts and

four elected at-large. The board is responsible for electing a president and setting the policies of the University.

Usually four regents are elected every two years. This year, however, nine regents seats were open because the House and Senate did not meet together two years ago.

Four regents were appointed by the governor to serve until this joint convention. Four more seats were vacant when regents' terms expired this year, and one additional opening was created when Regent Elmer L. Andersen resigned.

Representatives and senators met together in Congressional district delegations to approve candidates from the district. Traditionally, eight regent positions are filled by legislators of the eight Congressional districts. At-large candidates were selected by the House Higher Education Committee and the Senate Education Committee.

Prior to 1931, the Governor nominated regents candidates. Laws passed at that time established a committee process for the Legislature to select candidates.

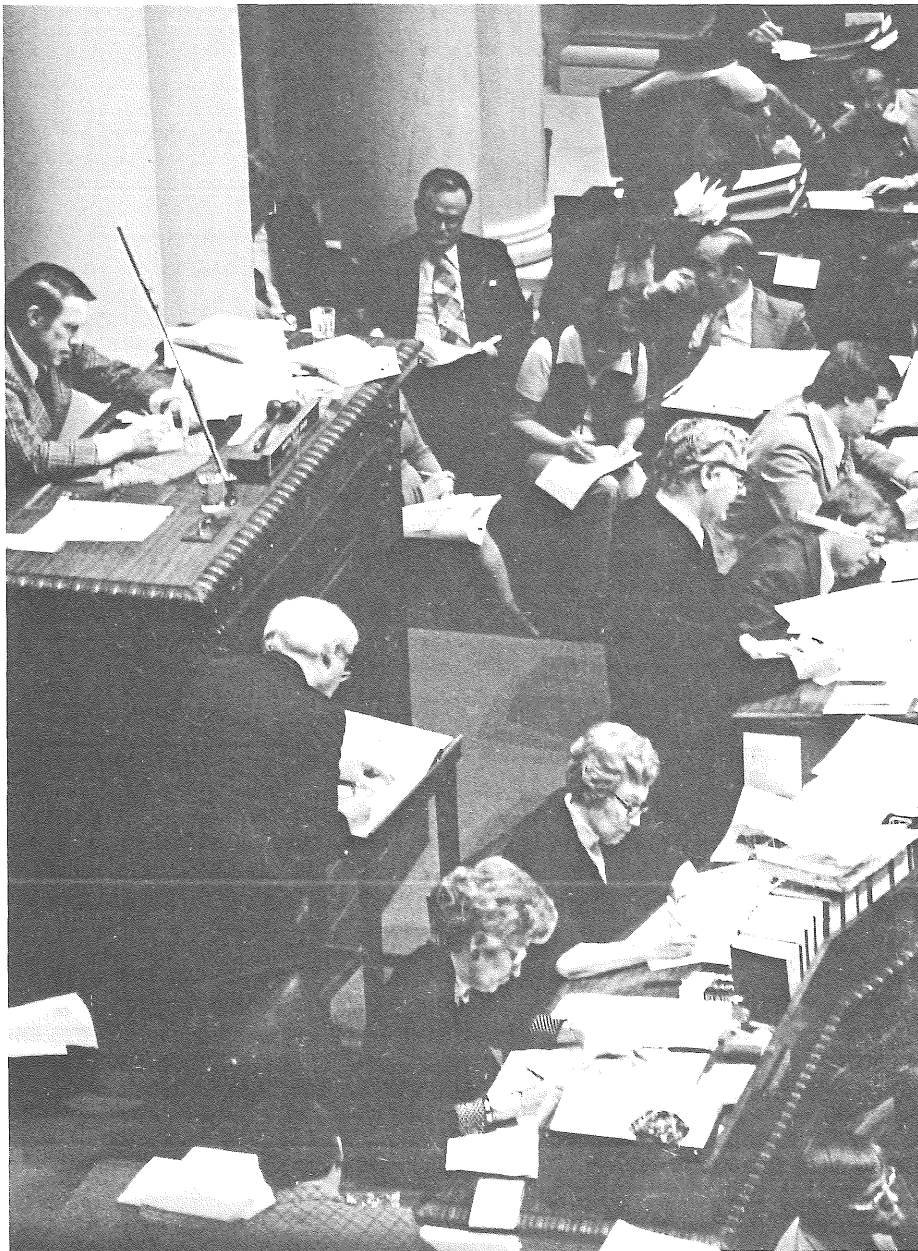
The candidates selected by the congressional district caucuses are traditionally honored by the joint convention. At the March 20th meeting, the only candidate to run into any opposition was 7th District Regent L. J. Lee. Lee was criticized for raising the question of religion when the Board of Regents interviewed candidates for the University presidency. Lee received the fewest votes of those regents elected, with 67 either voting against Lee or not voting for that seat.

The new members to the Board of Regents and their terms are:

Robert Latz, a Golden Valley attorney, who replaces incumbent Regent John Yngve in the 3rd Congressional District, six years; George Latimer, a St. Paul attorney, who replaces retiring Regent Elmer L. Andersen in the 4th Congressional District, four years; Lloyd Peterson, a Paynesville turkey farmer, who replaces incumbent Regent Kathryn Vander Kooi in the 6th Congressional District, six years; Erwin Goldfine, a Duluth businessman, who succeeds retiring Regent Fred Cina in the 8th District, six years.

Reelected to the Board of Regents and their respective terms of office are:

Wenda Moore, Minneapolis, at-large Regent, two years; Neil Sherburne, Lakeland, at-large Regent, six years; Dr. David Utz, Rochester physician, 1st Congressional District, four years; Lauris Krenik, Madison Lake farmer, 2nd Congressional District, four years; L. J. Lee, Bagley, 7th Congressional District, four years.



House Speaker Martin Sabo and members of the Chief Clerk's front desk kept a written tally of the House and Senate members' votes for regents during the joint convention last month.

Internship program offers unique learning experiences

When people around the Capitol learn that Douglas Legg is interning with the House of Representatives, they naturally ask him if he is in college. Most interns are college students, but Douglas, at age 12, is too young for college.

Douglas, a student at the Minneapolis Southeast Alternatives Free School, is interning with Rep. Phyllis Kahn (D-Kahn), and like most interns, is earning credit for what he learns while working at the House.

Douglas spends two days a week at the Capitol, doing research on legislation, attending committee meetings, and any other special assignments Rep. Kahn may have for him.

He is one of more than 150 students who have interned or are interning with the House this session. None are paid, but they can earn from one to 15 credits depending on the individual program arranged. Interns work for legislators or House staff, and responsibilities vary

according to the person or office to which the student is assigned.

Most of the interns are political science majors, but there are also many history, economics, journalism, and government majors. There is one Scandinavian major, one recreation major, and four interns with nursing majors.

Of the students interning with the House this session, there are 30 from the University of Minnesota, 15 from Macalester, 9 from Hamline, and 9 from the state colleges, plus 25 high school students.

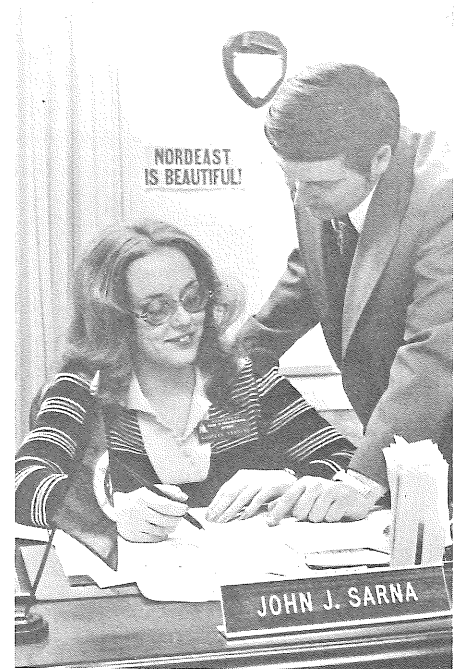
According to Julie Roles, internship coordinator, about 20 states have internship programs. Her job is to place interns who apply, arrange briefings, handle correspondence, and deal with any problems between interns and the person they are working with.

The intern briefings, Roles said, give the students a chance to meet with and ask questions of legislators, state officials, staff, or lobbyists, in an informal situation.

Sometimes an intern's work can take him away from the Capitol. Maureen Keating, as part of her work with Rep. John Sarna (D-Mpls.), spent some time recently helping senior citizens with their taxes. Maureen received training with the state Department of Revenue and the Governor's Council on Aging before going to northeast Minneapolis to help the senior citizens with their tax problems.

Maureen can look at the Minnesota Legislature from a unique perspective since she is a native of Nebraska, the only state with one house, or a unicameral legislature.

A political science sophomore at St. Benedict's College, Maureen feels the bicameral legislature is more representative and gets more people involved in the political process. "In Nebraska, people don't seem to have as much access to

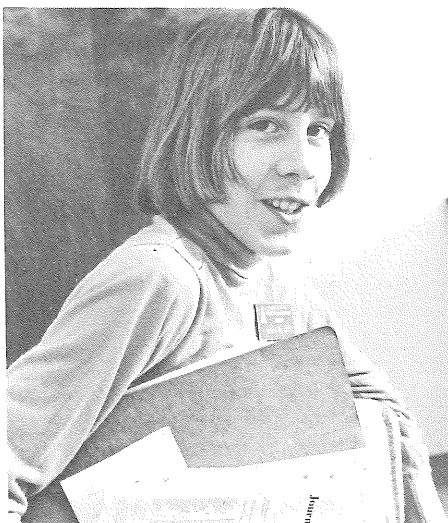


Maureen Keating, who is from Nebraska and attends St. Benedict's College, is interning this session with Rep. John Sarna.

government, and in Minnesota especially, people are more apt to get involved."

She said the one house system is more economical but, "you have to draw the line to be representative or economical." What has impressed Maureen most, besides the excellent medical and education programs in the state, is the openness in government. "There are so many opportunities to get in on so many things."

Douglas Legg feels it has been worthwhile for him to intern with the House, "to know how it works". Douglas said he would like to arrange similar internships for some of his friends, or assist at another agency. "Working with what you're interested in is a lot better than reading about it, or watching a TV lecture."



Intern Douglas Legg is one of more than 150 students who have interned with the House this session.

State presidential primary election proposed

Minnesota may have its first presidential primary since the 1950s if a bill before the House Appropriations Committee becomes law.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Tad Jude (D-Mound), would reinstate the presidential primary in Minnesota on the first Tuesday in April, the same day as Wisconsin's primary.

Minnesota repealed its primary law in 1959 and Jude's bill would re-establish the primary in time for the 1976 presidential elections.

The bill includes a \$300,000 appropriation to help communities finance the cost of operating primary elections. Delegates selection would have to reflect

the results of the primary, but the method of selection is left to the parties.

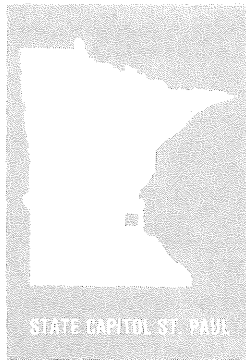
Paper ballots only would be used for voting and the paper ballots and voters certificates would be color coded for the different political parties. Supporters of the primary have said that keeping the party-labeled voters certificates for four years would discourage members of one party from crossing over and voting in the opposing party's primary to sway the results.

Some opponents have said, however, that voters do not wish to publicly state their political party affiliation. Others say that this system will prevent crossover. Opponents also have said that a

presidential primary would weaken not only the precinct caucus system for endorsing candidates but also the political parties.

But proponents have said a primary would increase citizen participation in nominating presidential candidates far above the present caucus system. They say a primary would enable many voters who could not attend caucus meetings to be involved.

Supporters also have said a primary in Minnesota on the same day as the Wisconsin primary would attract candidates into the Midwest, and in effect, would become a regional primary.



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MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Corporate farm law changes approved by House

Legislation designed to protect Minnesota farmlands from speculation from non-farming corporations was given approval by the Minnesota House of Representatives at its April 14 session.

The bill is designed to close loopholes and strengthen the Family Farm act of 1973 and restrict non-resident corporations from owning too much farmland. The Family Farm Act placed controls on ownership of farmland by corporations. The only corporate farming allowed as a result of that law were family farm corporations where members of a family held majority shares; "authorized corporations" or corporations with 10 or fewer shareholders; non-farm land owned by corporations, experimental projects, and breeding stock operations.

If the bill becomes law, the only people

who can buy farmland in the future are actual farmers, or corporations in which the majority of the shareholders are of the same family and at least one of the related shareholders work on the farm. Rep. Russell Stanton (D-Arco) is chief author of the House bill.

Current law requires that a majority of the shareholders belong to the same family but there is no requirement that the family either live on the farm or be involved in farming.

Rep. Stanton cited examples of a group of West German investors who own about 2,000 acres near Hector, and a Minneapolis record shop which owns acreage in Stearns County. "These corporate units take away land from the small farmers," Stanton said.

Another provision of the bill would

remove the exemptions from the law for farm land operated by corporations for breeding stock, growing seed, wild rice, or sod.

Those corporations currently owning farmland are allowed to expand, but only at a rate of 20 percent over a five year period. If a corporation is found to be in violation of the law, it will have one year, not five, as current law allows, to divest itself of its holdings.

The proposed legislation also requires names of the principal shareholders of the corporation to be filed with the Commissioner of Agriculture, and the types of farm products which the corporation produces or intends to produce.

The bill was approved 109 to 21 and then sent to the Senate. A similar bill is being heard in a Senate committee.



Family farm hearings held throughout state



Members of the House subcommittee on Family Farms took the issue to several hundred people with public hearings in Morris (above left), Marshall, Faribault (above right), and Thief River Falls, to gather testimony and discuss with the people possible legislation. The proposal would provide assistance to retiring farmers who wish to sell their acreage, and offer financial assistance to young farmers making initial land purchases. House author of the original program Agriculture Committee chairman George

Mann (D-Windom) said the plan will receive interim study if not acted on this session.

Members of the Family Farm Subcommittee are Reps. Willis Eken (D-Twin Valley), chairman, Raymond Albrecht (R-Brownton), Glen Anderson (D-Bellingham), Janet Clark (D-Mpls.), John Corbid (D-Oklee), Frank DeGroat (R-Lake Park), Henry Kalis (D-Walters), Bud Philbrook (D-Roseville), and Russell Stanton (D-Arco).