

SESSION SCENES

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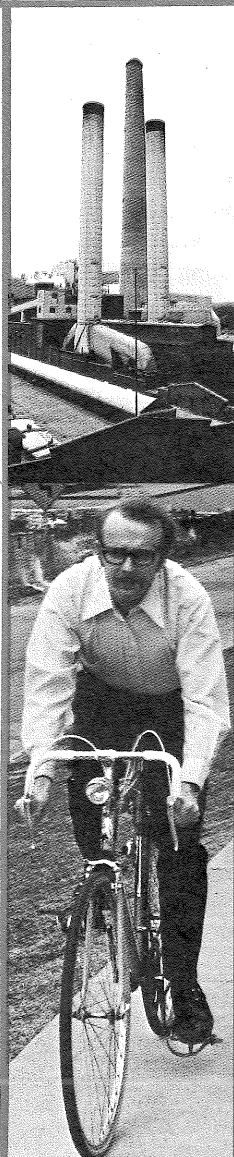
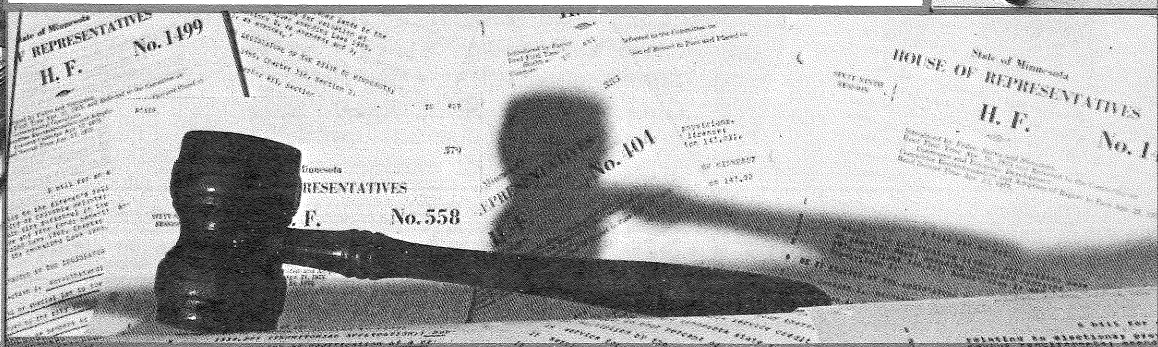
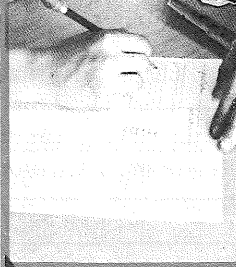
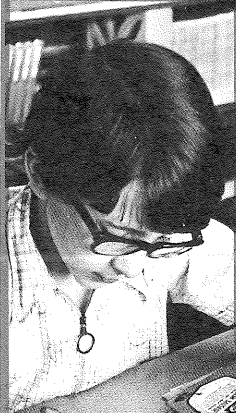
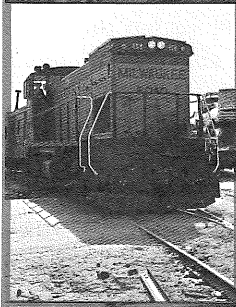
In 1776 America's first legislators faced the problems of housing, transporting, educating, and providing for the basic needs of people of all ages. In 1976 legislators still do.

On April 7 the 1976 bicentennial session of the Minnesota Legislature adjourned after passing legislation dealing with agriculture, housing, transportation, education and the people-concerns of senior citizens, children, the handicapped, etc. This issue of SESSION SCENES is an overview of legislative action 1976.

Legislation affecting elections is of high interest to most of us in an election year. Here's some of what happened on this subject in the '76 session—

- Beginning August 1, 1976, non-partisan offices having only one candidate will appear after all contested offices on ballots in the general election.
- Election precincts, county, and state officials will have to uniformly report election returns in statewide elections starting this year. The secretary of state has the authorization to
- dictate forms and methods for reporting election returns. Judges in election precincts will submit summary statements which county canvassing boards will use. They will report to their county auditors with a statement of the number of persons registering to vote on election day and the number who registered prior to election day. They are to forward this information to the secretary of state within 10 days after the election.
- Corporations may urge employees to vote and may, on a non-partisan basis, engage in public media projects encouraging registration and voting. Corporations must report any political expenditures over \$100.
- Minnesota will be able to design a plan for return of census data from the Census Bureau. New law makes the state demographer the liaison between the Census Bureau and the Legislature in preparing Minnesota's census data plan; prohibits boundary changes between precincts after January 1, 1977 until January 1, 1982

(continued on P. 2)





(continued from P.1)

when the legislative reapportionment plan will be complete; and requires boundaries to follow clearly recognizable physical features.

- Registered voter lists will be available to anyone upon request, beginning August 1, 1976. Those requesting a list must pay the cost of reproducing, or they can examine the list at no charge. County auditors, to comply with the law, will have correct lists of registered voters available 15 days before each primary election and 25 days before each general election.
- Statewide party candidates who received the smallest number of votes at the last general election will be first on the ballot for the next election. On voting machines, names of candidates will appear in rows under their particular parties. This provision does not apply to electronic voting systems.

...People

Seniors

Minnesotans who are over age 62 and have incomes under \$3,900 for a single person and \$4,875 for a couple may get some **help with their dental bills** under a new 1976 session law. The Legislature has appropriated \$400,000 to set up two pilot dental programs in the state—one for the metropolitan area, and one for an area outside the seven metropolitan counties.

Those eligible citizens the commissioner of welfare selects to take part in the pilot program will pay only 20 percent of their dental bills. The state will pay dentists in the program the remaining 80 percent of their regular fees—up to \$500 per year.

Interested seniors can contact Jerry Bloedow, executive secretary of the Governor's Council on Aging, for additional information on eligibility, when the program will begin, how they can apply for the benefits, etc. The phone number is (612) 296-2544.

* * *

Able-bodied senior citizens over age 60 who need additional income and those who are lonely, neglected, or disadvantaged, can benefit from the **"Companion Program"**. The Legislature appropriated \$100,000 to the Minnesota Board of Aging (now the Governor's Council on Aging) to set up the program.

Beginning July 1, those who qualify can apply for the job of companion to other elderly people or handicapped adults and work up to 20 hours a week. They will receive wages not to exceed the established rate under the Older

Americans Act, (a 1965 federal law) which presently is \$1.60 per hour. Persons who are interested in the program may call John Pribyl at the Minnesota Association for Retarded Citizens, 827-5641.

Veterans

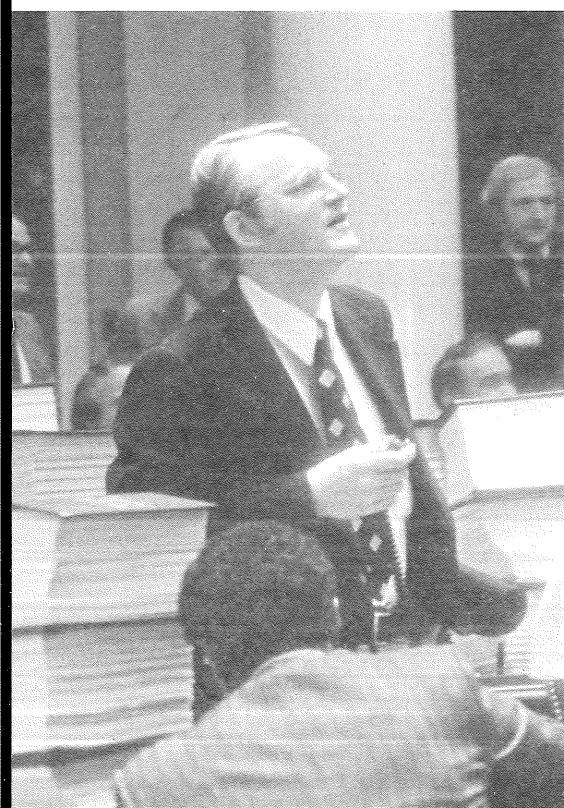
Veterans who haven't applied for the **Vietnam veterans bonus** now have until December 31, 1976 to do so. The 1973 legislature set up the bonus fund for Vietnam and other veterans with no time limit for applications.

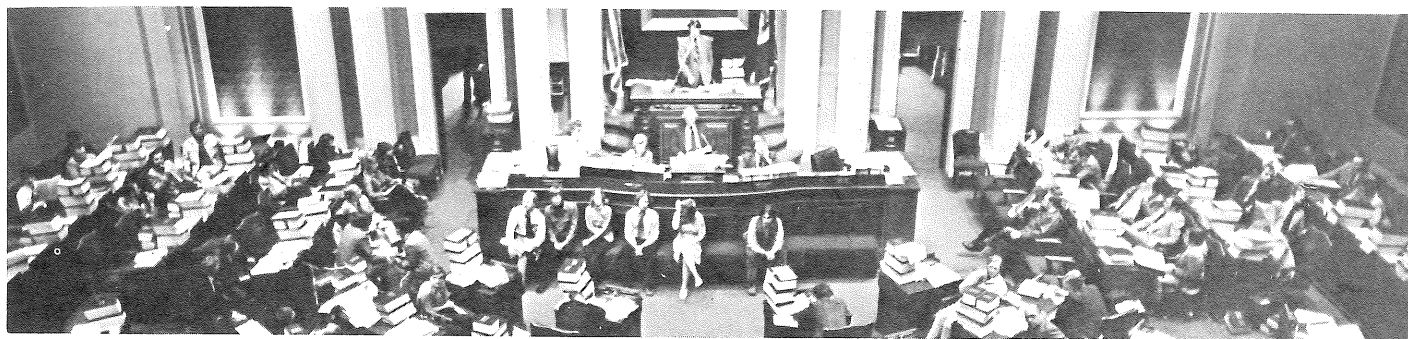
Vietnam veterans who served between July 1, 1958 and July 27, 1973 can collect \$300 plus \$15 for each month of active service up to \$600. Other veterans serving between August 5, 1964 and January 27, 1973 can get \$15 for each month of active service with a minimum payment of \$100 and a maximum of \$300.

* * *

The Minnesota Veterans Home will get an additional 250 nursing beds. The home has a waiting list of over 200 veterans, and in the past has had to reduce the number of beds because of health regulations and life safety standards while the waiting list increased.

Those favoring this legislation said the home is a bargain to Minnesota taxpayers because of VA federal fund sharing. They cited the fact that residents of the home would require state or county financial assistance to support themselves in private nursing facilities if they did not have the Veterans Home.





Issues and Action

Corrections

The joint House-Senate committee that studied **Minnesota's state prison at Stillwater** submitted its report. The report listed 178 recommendations, most of which the administration of the Department of Corrections and the prison management and staff will implement.

Some recommendations will need action by the Legislature. Some of this action began toward the end of the session. The House Crime Prevention and Corrections Committee plans to request a follow-up report from the Department of Corrections detailing what changes have taken place in response to the Joint House-Senate Committee on Minnesota State Prison report.

* * *

The special **Task Force on Correctional Institutions**, in existence since 1975, made its report. Giving approval to the recommendations of the task force, the Legislature appropriated \$800,000 for the development of an architectural design for a new 400-bed maximum security institution for Minnesota. In other action the legislature—

- removed the expiration date for the office of Ombudsman for Corrections and gave that office new powers and responsibility, including the power of subpoena to help with investigations.
- passed a bill prohibiting detaining any child under age 14 in a jail or other facility primarily in use for the confinement of adults. Children with charges against them that would not be violations of state or local

law if they were adults, authorities must confine in "shelter care" facilities only.

- strengthened other juvenile justice procedures to get to the root of the problems of the delinquent, dependent, or neglected juvenile offender.
- made it a crime to alter or remove an identifying mark or number from property; to sell or buy such property.
- expanded the eligibility for peace officer's training.
- passed legislation toughening the arson laws, and prohibiting occupying or entering buildings without a claim of right or owner's consent except in an emergency.

* * *

This session also saw the passage of a determinate sentencing bill, which among other things, would have abolished the parole board. The Governor vetoed this measure.

Taxes

Inheritance tax relief is on its way under the changes in the law brought about in the '76 session. Legislation increased the state inheritance tax exemptions and removed sex distinctions from the inheritance tax laws.

The bill the legislature passed—

- doubles the inheritance tax exemptions for widows from the present \$30,000 to \$60,000.
- increases the tax exemptions for widowers from the present \$6,000 to \$60,000.
- doubles the tax exemptions for minor and dependent children from the present \$15,000 to \$30,000.
- equalizes the inheritance tax rates so that surviving husbands are sub-

ject to the same tax rates as widows.

- increases the present homestead exemption for surviving spouses or minor dependent children from \$30,000 to \$45,000.
- allows heirs to pay their inheritance taxes over a five-year period at eight percent interest instead of within 12 months.
- provides for a two-year deferment in payment of inheritance taxes if the payment would result in an undue hardship on the estate.
- provides an alternative method of determining the tax by permitting a surviving spouse to take a marital exemption of 50 percent of the property he or she receives—up to a maximum of \$250,000.
- is effective for the estates of those people who die after June 30, 1976.



Environment

In **energy** a conservation measure passed that bans the use of decorative outdoor gas lamps. This includes all gas lights with the exception of portable camp lanterns.

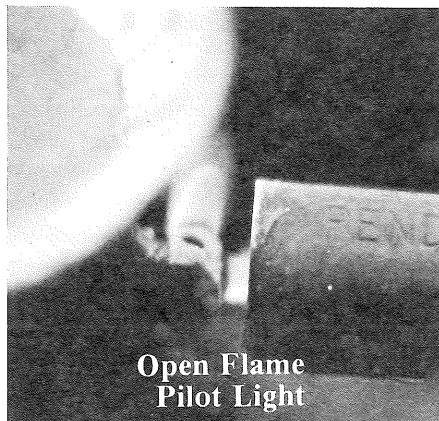
The ban begins in April of 1977. Utility firms will have to send a four-month advance notice to their customers with "do-it-yourself" conversion instructions so that owners can convert gas lights to electricity where necessary.

The Energy Agency will hold public hearings to find out what should be a "reasonable cost" for converting the lights from gas to electricity, because the law allows people to appeal the ruling on the basis of "unreasonable cost" of conversion.

This "Omnibus Energy Bill" includes a provision for studying energy-use standards for air-conditioners and energy use by open-flame pilot lights. The Energy Agency is to report back to the Legislature on their findings by March 1977.

The legislation makes the commis-

sioner of administration responsible for drafting rules and regulations pertaining to energy standards for state university and public school buildings as well as city and county buildings. It also establishes an energy conservation information center in the state Energy Agency with toll-free telephone service.



Open Flame
Pilot Light

After January 1, 1978, dealers and suppliers of industrial chemicals will no longer be selling **polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's)**. The Pollution Control Agency in Minnesota now has the authority to ban the use or sale of

PCB's which manufacturers use in electric transformers.

After July 1, 1977, all products containing PCB's must say so on the label. Supporters of this legislation said PCB's in our environment cause a variety of harmful effects on women, such as miscarriages, stillbirths, and other adverse reproductive effects.

* * *

The herbicide **2,4,5-T** also came under control. A common use of this herbicide is in bush-clearing and in the elimination of undesired timber on utility right-of-ways.

The bill that became law restricts the use of 2,4,5-T on large areas to licensed applicators, limits the amount of the toxic "dioxin" in the herbicide to one-tenth of one part per million, and requires a permit from the Department of Natural Resources for aerial application.

Environmentalists and others supporting the control of this herbicide said it upsets nature's pest control mechanism and can cause birth defects in humans.

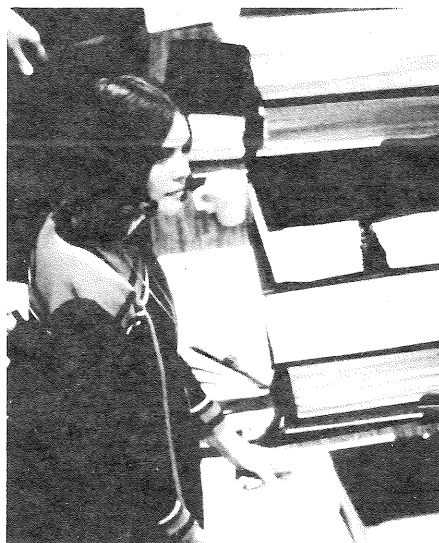
Women

An 18-member council will be studying all matters relating to the economic status of women. The legislation directs the Speaker of the House to appoint five members; the Committee on Committees in the Senate, five members; and the Governor to appoint eight citizens. Fifty percent of the members the Governor and the Speaker appoint must be women, and the council must include people who do not have employment outside of their homes.

The House members who will serve on the council are Reps. Linda Berglin (D-Mpls.), Stanley Enebo (D-Mpls.), Mary Forsythe (R-Edina), Phyllis Kahn (D-Mpls.), and Russell Stanton (D-Arco).

The council will investigate all complaints relating to the economic status of women. Due to a lack of concrete

data on discrimination against women in the past, the council's duty will be to collect and study data on "matters of credit, family support and inheritance laws relating to the economic security of the homemaker, education opportunities, career counseling, con-



Rep. Linda Berglin

tribution of women to Minnesota's per capita and family income and state revenues, job and promotion opportunities, and laws and business practices constituting barriers to the full participation by women in the economy."

The legislation creating this council also calls for a study of the programs, services, and facilities relating to families in Minnesota. The council will recommend methods of encouraging the development of coordinated, interdepartmental goals and objectives and the coordination of programs, services and facilities among state departments and among public and private providers of services to children, youth, and families.

The appropriation to the council is \$95,000. It is to report its recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature before the end of the 1977 calendar year and is to phase out after June 30, 1978.

Housing

In Housing a bill that temporarily raises the state's maximum interest rate on conventional mortgages became law. It allows banks and savings institutions to make conventional loans with interest rates two percent more than the monthly index for long-term government bond yields in order to keep up with market trends. The law went into effect April 1. It gave the state Commerce Commission, which determines the long-term bond yields each month, until April 20 to declare the usury rate for May. On May 1 banks and savings institutions were able to make conventional loans with the new interest rate. For May the interest ceiling was eight and three-fourths percent.

This legislation requires lenders to pay at least three percent interest to borrowers on money they hold in escrow accounts. This applies to existing and future mortgages.

Lenders may no longer charge "discount points" to boost their return on investments. And they may not charge a penalty when homeowners make payments before they are due.

Banks and savings and loan associations have not been making conventional loans because of the low interest ceiling. They are financing federally insured mortgages or investing the money outside the state where interest ceilings are higher.

The change in the interest ceiling should make conventional home loan money available. The new law is in force until July 31, 1977 when the

Legislature will take a look at how it's working.

* * *

Aiming at providing funds for the purchase, construction, and rehabilitation of housing in the low and moderate income brackets, the Legislature appropriated \$34 million to the Housing Finance Agency. That agency will administer the funds to go for—

- rehabilitation and loan grants to senior citizens and for home improvements that will make homes more energy-efficient.
- housing assistance programs for Native Americans through a revolving loan fund
- the basic homes program to build low cost homes
- a reserve fund to back up bond sales by the Housing Finance Agency

Metropolitan Planning

For the first time, communities in the seven-county metro area will have to prepare and submit to the Metropolitan Council detailed plans for the use of land within their borders under the "Metro Planning" bill which passed this session. The objective: to promote orderly growth in the metro area. The law requires all metropolitan local units of government to adopt comprehensive plans that are consistent with the council's overall plans for airports, transportation, sewers, and parks.

School districts will have to submit to the council, by January 1, 1980, their plans for sites and buildings that cost more than \$200,000. The council can review the plans and make suggestions, but the school districts do not have to accept any changes.

The Metropolitan Council must provide municipalities, counties, and school districts in the state with individual "metropolitan system statements" by July 1, 1977. These will contain the council's projections on the capacity and use of planned or existing metropolitan facilities, such as sewers, highways, and parks.

Local units of government can appeal the statements to a 17-member land-

use committee or an independent examiner. Three years after local units get the system statement, they must prepare and submit a comprehensive plan to the council.

Each plan will have to have "certain objectives, policies, standards, and programs to guide public and private land-use development, redevelopment, and preservation for all lands and waters within the jurisdiction of the local governmental unit through 1990." The plans will also have to contain ways of providing for housing needs, including low and moderate-income housing.

Communities can get financial help from the council in the form of a grant or interest-free loan, or they can levy a special tax outside the normal levy limits to pay for the costs of preparing the plan. Within 120 days after getting a local plan, the council must offer its comments and proposed changes.

Municipalities that do not like the changes to their submitted plans can appeal to an independent hearing examiner, but the council has the power to accept or reject all, part, or none of the examiner's findings. If a community challenges the council's

decision in district court, the court will give the council's and the examiner's findings equal legal weight.

* * *

Another new law coming out of this session relates to the powers of the Metropolitan Council. It allows the council to suspend public and private construction projects for a year if it determines that the project is of "metropolitan significance" and would affect the council's plans for sewers, parks, airports, or transportation facilities.

* * *

Further action brought about passage of a bill directing the Metropolitan Council to develop a long-range policy plan for the collection of solid and hazardous waste. It permits the Metropolitan Waste Control Commission, to acquire facilities to handle hazardous waste materials.

Metropolitan counties can operate and maintain solid waste facilities, but the law requires them to enforce the council's regulations concerning solid waste. The counties wanting to will file for a permit with the Pollution Control Agency, and the Metropolitan Council will give final approval for their operation.



Session and Celebration

At work during closing days of debate and decision are (upper left to right) Majority Leader Irvin N. Anderson (D-Int'l. Falls), Rep. Martin O. Sabo (D-Mpls.), Rep. William N. Kelly (D-East Grant Forks), Rep. James Pehler (D-St. Cloud); and Chief Clerk of the House, Edward A. Burdick (lower left).

Opposite page early patriots appeared in Renville County Art Center's production of "1776," in the House chamber. Flags of all 50 states draped the Capitol rotunda as Commemorative editions of 50 state bicentennial stamps went on sale. At far right, Rep. Bruce Vento (D-St. Paul) welcomed visitors.

Agriculture

In Agriculture the "Family Farm Act" that came out of the 1976 Legislature puts "starting" money within reach of Minnesota's young farmers who have the experience and background to qualify for state-secured loans.

The program will operate through existing lending institutions with the state guaranteeing 90 percent of each loan and paying four percent of the interest due for the first ten years. After the tenth year, the borrower pays the entire stated interest rate or has the option of asking for renewal of the four percent interest adjustment. In the twenty-first year, the borrower would pay back the money the state has paid out.

Young people hoping to use the program will have to meet certain qualifications and cannot have more than \$50,000 in assets to get the state-secured loan. A spokesman for the Agriculture Department said it will be late 1976 or early 1977 before the wheels are in motion to get the program

underway. Those wanting more information should get in touch with their local lending institutions where they would apply for a loan, or with the Agriculture Department in Room 530 of the State Office Building in St. Paul.

Public waters. The Legislature passed the "drainage bill" to clarify what are "public waters". The law now requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to catalog all lake basins of more than 10 acres and designate which are public waters.

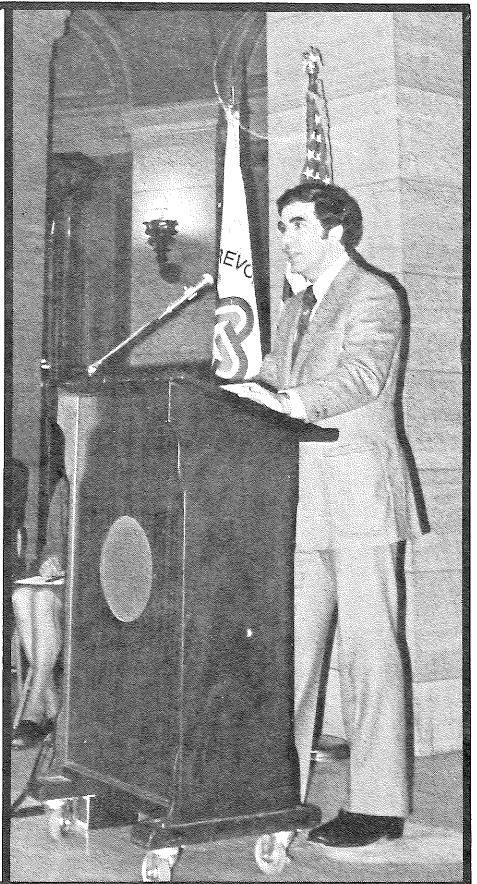
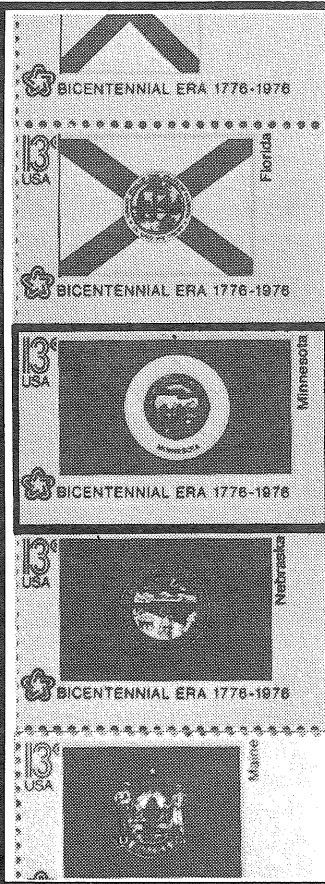
In the past, the DNR has decided for or against drainage on a case-by-case basis. The new law sets up a formal structure for compensating landowners who want to drain their land, and the law should reduce the number of disputes between farmers and the DNR over Minnesota's wetlands.

As of January 1, 1977, farmers will have to qualify for certification to spray pesticides, structural pest control substances and poisons. If

the Legislature had not acted. Federal Environmental Protection Agency rules would have taken effect bringing the state's farmers under regulations legislators thought were too restrictive for Minnesota's farmers.

Under the legislation, the commissioner of agriculture will be responsible for establishing some means for certifying farmers to use pesticides. This certification could take several forms. It is possible that the commissioner will require farmers purchasing chemicals for pest control to sign a statement certifying that they have read the labels on the products; know their contents and understand their uses.

Another likely method of certification could be for the Agriculture Department to hold extension meetings in regions throughout the state where farmers could meet and learn about pesticides. Attendance at these meetings would qualify them as users of chemical pesticides.



Drugs and Alcohol

Early intervention in the treatment of alcoholics and drug dependent persons will be possible under a \$6 million program the Legislature approved. Of those total funds, \$2.8 million will go for detoxification programs, halfway houses, and non-residential treatment.

Drug-dependency treatment for Native Americans will receive \$775,000; youth and other "underserved people" \$1.3 million; and outreach programs, \$30,000. Programs that encourage employers of fewer than 200 people to make treatment available to their employees will get \$1.1 million of the appropriation under new law.

The money will mean additional funding for welfare department efforts that identify and treat the chemically dependent. Addiction is less expensive to treat in the early stages on an out-patient basis. Treatment in residential centers later on is more costly.

The legislation requires the commissioner of public welfare to report the progress of drug-dependency programs and present recommendations for making them self-sustaining. The commissioner must also submit a five-year plan for the handling of Minnesota's alcohol and drug abuse problems to the Legislature by 1977.

* * *

Drivers who have tested blood-alcohol content of one tenth of one percent will now automatically lose their licenses for 90 days. The new law's intent is to strengthen efforts to get the drinking driver off the highways.

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First-time possession of a small amount of marijuana is now a petty

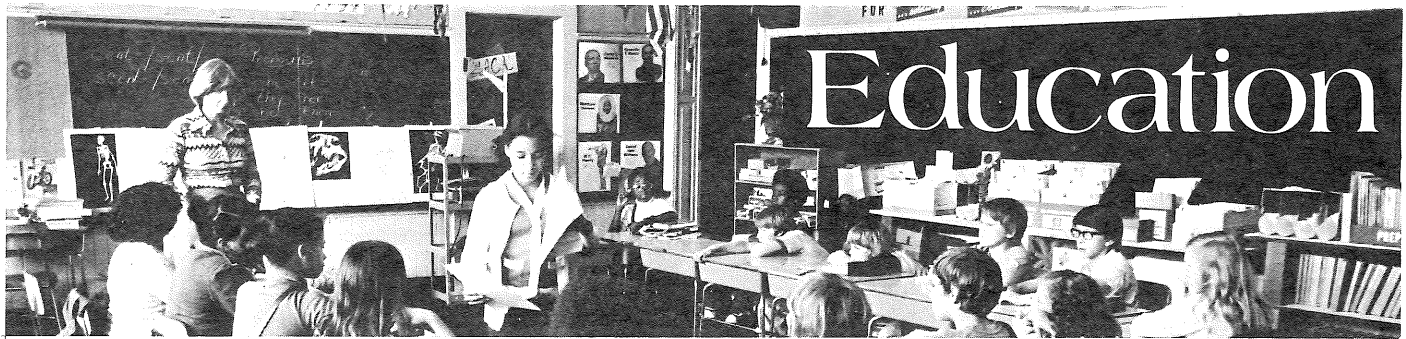
misdemeanor. Persons found guilty of having 1.5 ounces or less of marijuana will get no more than a \$100 fine, no jail sentence, and the violation will not go on their record as a criminal offense. A judge may order a drug education program for a first offender.

The penalty for the second offense within two years would be a misdemeanor, punishable by 90 days in jail and/or a \$300 fine. The offender would have to undergo testing for chemical dependency and take treatment if the test results indicate it is necessary.

* * *

As of September 1, 1976, the **legal drinking age** in Minnesota will be 19 for both consumption and purchase of intoxicating beverages.

The law "grandfathers" in those who turn 18 before the effective date. In other words, anyone who turns 18 before September 1, 1976, the law considers of legal drinking age.



In Education appropriations amounted to \$1.6 billion for the 1975-76 biennium. The Education Committee gave this report—

- Foundation aid per pupil increased from \$825 in 1973-74 to \$900 in 1975-76 to \$960 in 1976-77.
- Local school levies went down from 30 adjusted mills in 1975 to 29 mills in 1976.
- Transportation reimbursement increased \$5 million in the past year.
- Special education legislation provides for payment of special education aids on a "current basis" rather than out of last year's expense funds. Aids include help with teacher's salaries, travel, clerical, and other overhead costs. Funding will also be available for special education summer school classes and for students in residential treatment centers.
- Aid to non-public schools for special education services will begin in 1977-78 when the public schools will provide services on a shared-time basis.
- Non-public school parents and guardians may take an income tax deduction for tuition, non-religious textbooks, and transportation of up to \$500 for students in kindergarten to grade 6, and up to \$700 for grades

7-12. It was formerly \$200 maximum per pupil.

- A uniform accounting system will go into effect in each school district starting June 30, 1977. The bill the Legislature passed requires each district to be on a computer system by 1980 and to develop a method of eliminating any statutory operating debt.

The objective is to allow the Legislature to monitor the expenditure of each district to forestall problems that might be developing such as those that brought the St. Paul School District to the Legislature for financial help this year.

* * *

The 1975 Legislature created 11 **Educational Cooperative Service Units** (ECSU's) to help school districts purchase and plan jointly.

In this session, ECSU's got the approval of the Senate and House and the governor signed the legislation into law in late February. The program is voluntary for school districts. It provides a helpful tool for cutting costs and enabling smaller school districts to offer additional service and to plan for future enrollment changes.

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aeronautics departments and some of the responsibilities the Public Service Commission and the State Planning Agency currently handle.

The Transportation Committee reports the "**Bridge Bill**" as one of the major pieces of legislation to come out of the 1976 session. A spokesman said Minnesota's estimated bridge needs total more than \$600 million. The bridge bill, he said, is a start.

To begin, the program will go from July 1, 1976 to June 30, 1977 with an

Higher Education legislation brought the maximum state scholarships and grants-in-aid up from \$1,000 to \$1,100 per pupil. Revenue bonding for student loans increased from \$30 million to \$90 million.

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) got authorization to make contracts with private four-year colleges to pay \$150 per resident student, and with private junior colleges to pay \$120 for each enrolled resident student. The loans for medical students proposal passed. These loans are not to exceed \$5,000 per year, or \$20,000 per student. The students are to repay the loans by practicing in rural areas that need physicians.

* * *

The University of Minnesota Board of Regents has its first student member as a result of '76 legislation. The bill that passed both houses calls for one member of the board to be a student, or recent student, beginning in 1977.

Governor Anderson appointed Michael Unger of Cottage Grove, Minnesota to fill the seat. He will be a senior at the University in the fall of 1976.

assigned \$50 million. The first \$25 million will come from the General Revenue Fund and the second \$25 million from bonding.

This is the formula—

- \$25 million for the trunk highway system
- distribution of the other \$25 million:
 - \$13,500,000 — counties
 - 4,000,000 — municipalities
 - 7,500,000 — townships

According to the report, the Transportation Committee expects to see again in 1977 proposals to increase the bridge program for future years.

Transportation

Minnesota now has a **Department of Transportation** to carry the responsibility for evaluating the state's transportation needs and for establishing an overall program to meet those future needs. The department is also to look at how transportation requirements and development relate to energy use and resources.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation combines the highway and

Health

A comprehensive health plan to help Minnesota families avoid financial ruin by expenses of extraordinary illness passed into law.

Starting July 1, 1977, an individual or family could qualify for state payment of medical expenses after spending a certain percentage of household income, or \$2,500, whichever is greater in a period of 12 months. The scale is 40 percent of income over \$15,000; 50 percent of the next \$10,000; 60 percent of income over \$25,000.

The commissioner of insurance determines if a person or family is eligible and what expenses the state will pay. The state will then pay 90 percent of all qualified expenses for those who have spent the percentage of income that makes them eligible for the new program.

Under this legislation insurance sellers must form a risk pool to provide health coverage to those who would otherwise be uninsurable. And they must offer their subscribers "qualified plans" containing certain coverages.

Employers of 10 or more persons now have to make a health care plan available to their employees. They do not necessarily have to pay for it, but if they fail to offer the coverage, they lose the tax deduction from state income taxes for contributions for health insurance.

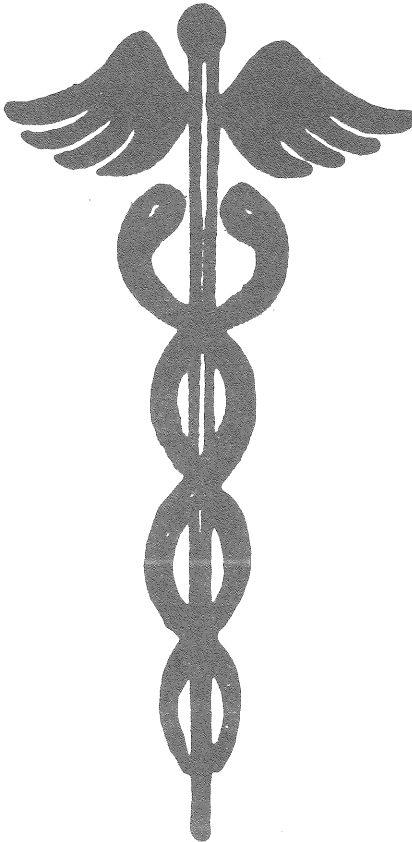
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Malpractice insurance rates loom as a problem for medical practitioners and their patients all through the nation. Working toward a solution to the problem in Minnesota. The 1976 Legislature tightened regulations through the State Board of Medical Examiners.

A physician requesting licensing in Minnesota has to give a malpractice history for the previous five years of practice for reviewal by the board. Insurers must submit malpractice reports to the board four times a year to allow better monitoring of malpractice cases.



Health & Welfare Chairman
Jim Swanson



Another new statute (the one containing the provision for placing of nursing home complaints) states insurers must make an annual report to the State Board of Health by Sept. 1 of each year, starting in 1976.

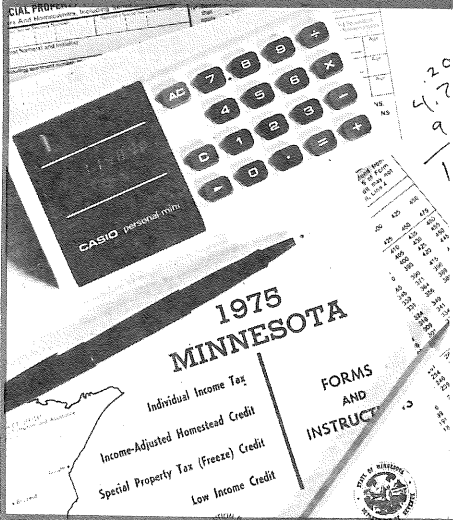
The information in this report is to include the number and dates of claims in the previous year, the allegations, the disposition of the claims, the closing date of each case, and the dollar amount of awards. The board of health is to collect and review the data and on January 2, each year, report to the Legislature with recommendations to reduce the number and size of malpractice claims.

* * *

The legislative Select Committee on Nursing Homes that did a lengthy study of these care facilities made recommendations that came before the 1976 Legislature in nine bills. All of these met legislative approval. The package includes—

- requirement for mandatory training of nursing assistants working in nursing homes beginning July 1, 1977.
- establishment of a state policy for the care of the aged
- stronger licensing and inspection requirements
- revising the system for setting rates for the reimbursement of nursing homes that care for patients on the Medical Assistance program
- establishment of an office of health facility complaints under the Board of Health which would investigate complaints about hospitals and nursing homes
- expansion of the "Patients Bill of Rights" to assure privacy, management of financial affairs, and other human rights
- establishment of a medical assistance investigative unit in the Department of Public Welfare to investigate nursing home fraud
- provision of stricter legal tools for prosecuting nursing home fraud and permitting the state to sue for triple damages.

Circuit Breakers



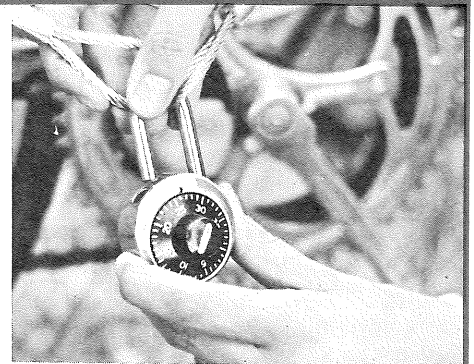
The state's 1975 Circuit Breaker Law now gives a tax credit to senior citizens who live in public housing and non-profit nursing homes. A 1976 session law provides that no one who filed under the circuit breaker will receive less than they did under previous law.

The legislature made this new law effective as of December 31, 1974. Those who have already filed and have money due them under this adjustment to the circuit breaker can expect a check from the Department of Revenue without having to file additional forms.

To simplify probate procedures, the 1976 Legislature amended the 1974 Uniform Probate Code. One provision requires a one-time only publication in newspapers that an estate is in probate; another allows verification of probate documents by unsworn statements.

PROBATE

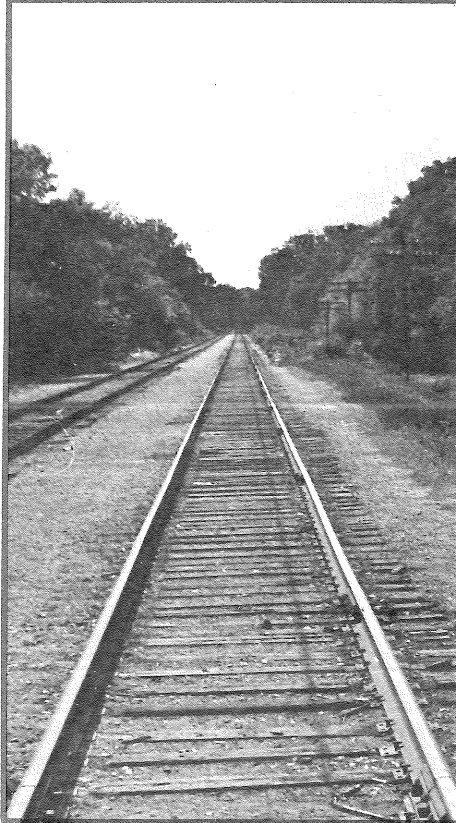
Bicycles



A voluntary state-wide bicycle registration system will go into effect March 1, 1977, with local communities having the option of joining the program. Bicycle owners in these communities would have to pay a \$3 registration fee.

The registration program is an attempt to help recover stolen bicycles. The \$3 fee would cover administrative costs and finance statewide bicycle lanes and trails. People may also register their bikes with the Department of Public Safety.

The Rails



Railroad abandonment. A \$3 million program that sets up voluntary contracts between railroads, the state, and some users could give new life to the state's railroad systems.

After passage by the Legislature, the governor signed the Minnesota Rail Service Improvement Act into law, making it possible for Minnesota to accept federal funds that are available through the Rail Reorganization and Revitalization Act of 1976. Preventing the abandonment of branch rail lines in the state will assure service to grain farmers and others who need to move commodities to market and will keep rail service going to Minnesota communities.

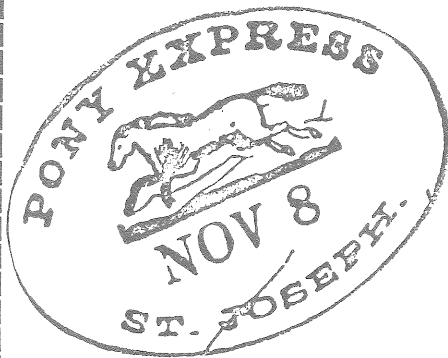
Other bills supporting Minnesota farmers included legislation on credit, farm corporations, pesticides, licensing, size and equipping of farm vehicles, control of hunting on private lands; and soil and water conservation.

Car Pools



The commissioner of administration will be able to purchase vans for car pools for state employees with an appropriation of \$100,000 the Legislature provided for that purpose. The department is to buy up to 15 vans for transporting state employees to and from work.

Using the car-pooling plan, the riders would pay for all costs, including amortization and insurance costs. Designated drivers may use the vans for personal purposes up to a 100-mile limit. They would pay the regular mileage rate.



Let us hear from you.

After August 1, the information please complete the form at the left office will renew the newsletter and return it by Sept. 1, 1976 to: mailing list. If you want to continue House Information Office, Room 8, receiving the newsletter during the State Capitol, St. Paul, MN 55155. interim and during the session,

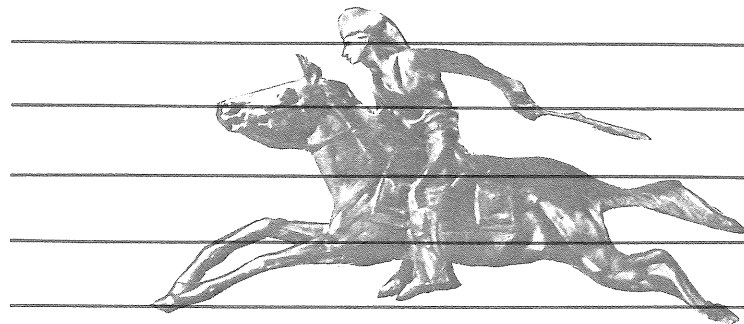
It's your newsletter. Send us your comments and ideas:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

ZIP _____



Recreation

Bingo games come under new regulations as of August 1, 1976. Any organization running bingo games will have to have a bingo manager who has been a member of the organization for at least two years.

Fraternal, religious, veterans, and other nonprofit organizations can conduct bingo games if they have existed for three years, have at least 30 active members, and have a license from their local unit of government.

Bingo managers must file reports with the Minnesota Commerce Commission and provide "checkers" to make sure the money workers turn in after the games corresponds to the number of bingo cards they sold.

For the first time, there are limits on prizes, \$100 or less for a single game and \$2,500 total for a single evening. Exceptions to these limits could occur when a player covers an entire bingo board with called numbers (a cover-all game.) On those, limits will be \$500 or less for a single game, \$3,000 for the evening.

* * *

A new law increasing the cost of **hunting and fishing licenses** next year and raising deer license and state park permits immediately also makes these provisions—

- deer hunting (big game licenses) will now cost \$10 for residents and \$60 for non-residents

- small game and fishing licenses will be \$5 with a husband-wife combination license at \$8. Non-residents will pay \$10 or a \$15 combination fee.
- a yearly auto sticker to enter state parks will cost \$5, and two-day permits \$1.50
- a new "Minnesota Sportsmen's License" (includes small game, deer and fishing permits) is available at \$17. A sportsmen's license, plus a combination (husband-wife) fishing license is \$19.
- free camping in state parks for senior citizens—Monday through Thursday.
- fifty percent reduction in cost of small game and fishing permits for senior citizens.

Labor

A recent suggestion by the Minnesota Supreme Court that the Legislature review laws concerning "**fair share**" disputes resulted in legislation spelling out procedures for non-union members to follow who want to challenge the amount of deductions (fair share fees) from their checks. The director of mediation services has

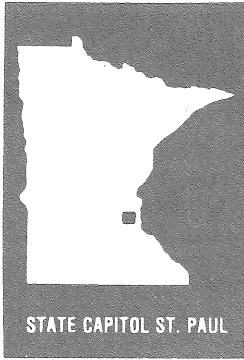
the power to hear and decide all issues in a fair share fee challenge.

The law says the fair share fee for non-members of a bargaining unit shall be an amount equal to the regular membership dues, less the cost of benefits available only to the members of the bargaining unit. This fee cannot exceed 85 percent of the regular

membership dues. Non-union members must receive an advance written notice of the fair share fee.

* * *

Effective October 1, 1976, the **minimum wage in Minnesota** will go up from \$1.82 to \$2.10 per hour with a 10 percent lower wage for people under 18. Their wage will increase from \$1.62 to \$1.89 per hour.



SESSION SCENES

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Information Office/Official Newsletter

Room 8 State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155 Phone 296-2146

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A Rite of Spring

At session's end legislators have volumes of bills and House and Senate journals on their desks in the chamber.

At left, Rep. Tony Eckstein (D-New Ulm) clears his desk as legislative aides, Jenny Schember, right, Brent Siebold, lower left, Ric Almber, and Tom Olmscheid finish the annual post-session cleanup.

