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THE NONPARTISAN LEGISLATURE

IN MINNESOTA

-by-

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Department of Political Science
at the University of Minnesota

University of Minnesota
Minneapolis
December, 1950

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OD Ad 842

PREFACE

No individual can prepare a lengthy study without the assistance and cooperation of a large number of persons. I am very much indebted to the many members of the legislature, past and present, who have kindly consented to interviews. For various reasons, most of these men are not named, but their offerings have been virtually indispensable.

By no means all of those who deserve acknowledgements can be mentioned here, but I am especially indebted to the librarians of the University of Minnesota, the University of Michigan, the State University of Iowa, Wayne University, the Minneapolis Public Library and the Minnesota Historical Society. The members of the faculty of the Department of Government of Wayne University were kind enough to arrange a teaching schedule that allowed me to devote a maximum amount of time to this work. Several persons, particularly Arthur Naftalin of the University of Minnesota and Ivan Hinderacker of the University of California, Los Angeles, have kindly granted me permission to use materials that are not otherwise generally available.

I probably owe my greatest debt to two persons. First, to my wife, Audrey, who never once complained as I spent week-ends and evenings over the typewriter and who furnished much needed moral support as well as more direct assistance. Secondly, to Professor Lloyd M. Short, for guidance and assistance in approaching this problem and in preparation of the manuscript. He has saved me from many embarrassing mistakes, while at the same time remaining tolerant of my idiosyncrasies.

It need scarcely be stated that errors are chargeable only to me.

C. R. A.

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INTRODUCTION

The Minnesota Legislature. The law-making body for the state of Minnesota is legally titled the Legislature.[1] It is a bicameral body, with a House of Representatives elected every two years in even-numbered years and consisting of 131 members. The Senate, the largest found in any state, has sixty-seven members and is not a continuous body. Since 1882 it has been elected in its entirety every four years, in non-presidential election years.[2]

One senator is elected from each legislative district.[3] Each district chooses from one to four representatives, based roughly upon the population distribution found in the census of 1910. Representatives in some districts are elected at large and in others by divisions within the district, such divisions usually being the whole or parts of counties. Two districts, the forty-fifth (including St. Cloud) and the fifty-seventh (Cook, Lake and southeastern St. Louis counties), are slightly more complex in structure than are the others. The present arrangement dates from the reapportionment act of 1913.

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1. The state has no direct legislation through the initiative or referendum.

2. Although the Minnesota Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. 24 appears to call for the election of one-half of the Senate every two years, two opinions of the attorney-general, one in 1883 and another in 1892, are the legal bases for the present system.

Prior to the election of 1878 senators served two-year, and representatives one-year, terms. The legislature met annually before that date.

3. A map showing legislative districts is published in each edition of the Legislative Manual.

The legislature meets on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January of odd-numbered years.[4] Sessions are limited by the constitution to ninety days.[5] In practice, the legislature meets somewhat longer than that through the use of the technique of "covering the clock". By pretending that time stands still, the legislature may work up to three additional calendar days--the time allowed the governor to sign or veto a bill after the date of adjournment. Since governors have refused to "cover the clock", any measure enacted thereafter would be dead by a "pocket" veto, technically.

Extra sessions can be called only by the governor. They are not limited in length and the governor does not have the authority to limit the subject matter of such sessions.

A veto by the governor requires a two-thirds vote of the members elected to each house in order to be overridden. The chief executive has three days in which to act on a bill and any measure not signed within three days after adjournment is considered vetoed (the "pocket" veto). The governor possesses the power of the item veto on appropriation bills.

The unique feature of the Minnesota legislature is to be found in the fact that its members are elected without party

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[4] An excellent brief description of the legislature is to be found in the Minnesota League of Women Voters, Ninety Days of Lawmaking in Minnesota (revised edition, 1949), 14 pp. For comparison with other legislatures, see The Council of State Governments, Our State Legislatures (revised edition, 1948), 36 pp.

[5] Minnesota Constitution, Article IV, Section 1.

designation. This is true in no other state with the exception of Nebraska, which has a nonpartisan, unicameral legislature.

It is often popularly assumed that legislative nonpartisanship is provided for in the Minnesota constitution. Such is not the case. The current method of electing legislators is based, with minor amendments, upon a portion of an election act of the 1913 legislature. The current law reads in part as follows:[6]

> CANDIDATES TO BE CHOSEN AT PRIMARY ELECTION. Candidates for office shall be chosen at such primaryelection by voters of several political parties and not otherwise. The chief justice and the associate justices of the supreme court and judges of the district, probate, and municipal courts, and all members of the state legislature, and all elective county officers and municipal officers in cities of the first and second class, shall be nominated upon separate non-partisan ballots, as hereinafter provided . . . . all members of the state legislature [etc]. . . . shall be placed upon a separate primary ballot hereinafter designated as "ballot of candidates to be nominated without party designation."
>
> No party or other designation, except as above, shall be placed on such ballot except as hereinprovided, nor shall any candidate filing for nomination on said ballot be permitted or required to state his party affiliation on said filing affidavit. . . . The names of candidates nominated by certificates for offices herein above designated as non-partisan shall have no party or other designation on the certificate or on the election ballot . .

In all senatorial districts and in single-member House districts, the two highest candidates in the primary election are nominated. If only one or two candidates file for the office, the names do not appear on the primary election ballot. In multiple-member districts, candidates numbering no more than twice the number of offices to be filled are nominated, each voter marking as many choices as there are offices to be filled. Thus, in districts

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[6] Minnesota Statutes (1945), section 202.02.

electing two representatives, the four highest in the primary (providing there are that many candidates) are nominated and, in both the primary and general elections, each voter marks the ballot for two choices.

Unlike the provisions for partisan offices, petitioning onto the general election ballot is not permitted for nonpartisan offices, hence there are never more than twice as many candidates as there are offices to be filled.

Purpose of the Study. The purpose of this study is not only to learn the methods used in the election of legislators without party labels, but also to examine the nature of the problems created by the absence of party organization and the attempted solution of those problems in the areas of tenure, executive-legislative relationships, and legislative organization and leadership, including the choice of officers, especially the speaker, committee assignments and chairmanships, and responsibility to the voter.

In order to present an overall picture of the problem, the story of the creation of the nonpartisan legislature, a history of the legislature under nonpartisanship and a comparison with legislatures in other states is offered with the purpose of indicating the characteristics of the nonpartisan legislature, its contribution to the governmental process, its strengths and weaknesses and recommendations concerning its desirability in Minnesota.

Undertaking of the study results in part from the increasing amount of interest being taken in recent years in the question of legislative nonpartisanship as is evidenced in political party and gubernatorial comments and recommendations.

CHAPTER I

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NONPARTISAN LEGISLATURE

The Background

Precedents. The year 1913 found the state of Minnesota, like most of the rest of the United States, affected by a reform movement in state and local government, a movementthat had spread the concept of "efficiency and economy" even to the national government. The movement was inspired by the example of the success of the corporate structure in the business world, coupled with a revulsion against the low standards of morality to be found in many places in the "great game of politics" around the turn of the century. The contemporary brand of politician had recently been exposed by the "muckrakers" and the prestige of the political party had reached a very low level.

Using the basic assumptions that (1) the political party and politicians in general were not to be trusted and (2) the principles of "efficient business administration" could and should be applied to democratic government, the great reform movement that centered in the second decade of the twentieth century urged, in various degrees of intensity in various parts of the nation, all or part of the following: the primary election, proportional representation, a shorter ballot, concentration of responsibility in state administrative structure, the unicameral legislature, council-manager and commission government in cities, the initiative, referendum and recall, and the nonpartisan election of certain public officials. Nonpartisan elections, according to the views of various reformers,

should be used for choosing judges and city and county officials. A few extremists proposed its use for all state officials.

Politically, the election of 1912 had brought a Democrat, Woodrow Wilson, to the presidency as a result of the split in the Republican party caused by the defection of Theodore Roosevelt and his progressive followers from the regular organization that supported the "stand-pat" views of William Howard Taft. The rift in Republican ranks had spread to Minnesota where it helped to confound a situation already complicated by the increasingly serious wet-dry issue that transcended party lines.

When the thirty-eighth legislature of the state of Minnesota met in January, 1913, not one member of that body had the slightest idea that before the session's end the state would be the surprised possessor of a law-making body chosen without party designation. It was generally assumed that the chief points of debate at the session would include the questions of county option on liquor prohibition, industrial accident insurance, the desirability of the initiative, referendum and recall, and the nonpartisan election of county officials.

The last named issue was designed to be an extension of the nonpartisan principle already applied in Minnesota to the election of state judicial officers. Prior to the adoption of the plan by Minnesota in the extra session of 1912, five states had removed the party label from their judicial ballots and the move to "purify" this branch of government was in full swing.[1] In the space of four

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[1] Arizona, California, Ohio, Washington and Wisconsin were the states

years, twelve states had accepted the plan.[2] Using the arguments that judges are neutral referees and hence not policy makers, and that local officials should be businesslike administrators -- there being no Republican way to gravel a road and no Democratic way to lay a sewer -- the reform movement spread into other areas. The state of California made all of its district, county, township, judicial, school and city officials "nonpartisan". Other states considered the plan for use in electing the state superintendent of public instfuction, university regents, local school officials, and city and village officials.

Reformers in Minnesota, looking at the ministerial duties of most county officials and being anxious to exclude the highly suspect political party from all areas possible, had a two-fold precedent for urging the nonpartisan ballot for the county. Not only had California recently furnished an example, but Minnesota itself had the year before applied nonpartisanship to county superintendents of schools as well as to officers of first-class cities and to judges. These changes had taken place in the special session of the legislature held in 1912 at the call of Governor Adolph O. Eberhart.

The political atmosphere in the state in 1912 was filled

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2 The movement died almost as suddenly as it had sprung forth. Many states abandoned the plan after a few years trial. Since the plan was adopted by Nevada in 1923, no new states have tried it. See, Malcolm C. Moos, Nonpartisan Legislative and Judicial Elections in Minnesota (1938), pp. 2-3.

with a more than average number of the elements of discord and rivalry. The Republicans, rapidly assuming the role of the dry party and in complete command of all three branches of the state government, were embarrassed by having at the head of the party a man who had opposed county option and who was allied with the wet wing of the party under the leadership of Edward E. Smith of Minneapolis, who has been Minnesota's closest approximation to a state Republican "boss".[3] As time for the party's state convention approached, Eberhart was faced with the very real prospect of being refused renomination for the governorship. In order to avoid such a personal catastrophe, he seized upon the expedient of joining the reform movement then in vogue, even though he had never been associated with the progressive movement in any way.

The governor, on the advice of Smith, called a special session of the legislature for early June, 1912, after hearing a "great demand" from the people. Knowing that the incumbent is at a considerable advantage in a popular election and that the popular nomination of public officials by use of the direct primary election was part of the reform movement program, Eberhart presented a proposal for the general overhaul of the state's election

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[3] The term "dry" refers generally to those who advocated severe restriction or outright prohibition of the sale and use of intoxicating beverages. They were opposed by the "wets". The term "progressive" as used in this paper is not intended as a value judgment, but refers merely to the branch of the Republican party that supported the general principles of Theodore Roosevelt together with the sundry moderate reform proposals popular prior to World War I. The "progressives" were opposed by the "conservatives", "standpatters", or "regulars" -- all fairly synonymous appellatives. Since these terms are commonplace, they are used without quotation marks.

machinery.[4] He asked for a state-wide primary election, a corrupt practices act and a reapportionment of the legislature. Perhaps because these proposals were of the type that could not very well be openly opposed, the lawmakers adopted them with little opposition (except for reapportionment, which was realized in the next regular session). The primary law actually adopted was based upon that already put into practice in Wisconsin, and in order to remain faithful to the blueprint, the act provided that judges, county superintendents of schools and officers of first-class cities should be chosen on a nonpartisan ballot.

The Thirty-eighth Legislature. The new primary election law enabled Governor Eberhart to secure his own reelection, but the people indicated the direction that policy on the liquor issue should take by sending to the legislature a majority of Republicans pledged either to outright prohibition or to the enactment of a county option law. The third-party defection in the 1912 election did not greatly affect the legislature, most Roosevelt Republicans preferring to retain the old party label, especially since the Progressive party was not on the ballot except by petition. The Democratic party had little more than token representation in the 1913 session. The general support given to the Republicans by the

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4 For background on the 1912 extra session, see Lynn Haines, The Minnesota Legislature of 1911; C. J. Buell, The Minnesota Legislature of 1913; Theodore Christianson, Minnesota: The Land of Sky-Tinted Waters, Vol 2, p. 325; Moos, op. cit., pp. 5-6; Charles B. Cheney, Minnesota Politics: Highlights of Half a Century of Political Reporting (1947), pp. 17-18, 43; William A. Schaper, "New Primary and Corrupt Practices Acts in Minnesota," American Political Science Review, Vol. 7 (Feb., 1913), pp. 87-93.

Anti-Saloon League had reenforced the tendency of the brewery and liquor interests to support the Democrats, so that by 1912 the donkey was vilified, in all except the few Democratic newspapers, as a drunken sot bent upon destroying the morality of mankind.

In the organization of the legislature, the Senate was guided by Lieutenant-Governor J. A. A. Burnquist of St. Paul, a dry Republican. A fight for the House speakership developed as a result of the repudiation of the wet leadership. The 1912 session had been presided over by H. H. Dunn of Freeborn county, a wet conservative who had lost de facto control of the House to the insurgent progressive Republicans midway through the session. Since his views had been effectively rejected, the dry Republicans held a secret caucus before the session of 1913 to decide upon a speaker. A close fight developed among the dry progressives, some supporting Henry Rines of Mora and others William I. Nolan of Minneapolis, the former winning by one vote on the second ballot. Rines, a county optionist and no radical prohibitionist, was a man who shunned liquor, eschewed tobacco, pursued a middle-of-the-road philosophy and had a solid reputation for honesty. He was a natural choice for presiding officer -- a man acceptable both to the drys and to the progressive Republicans. He was elected as speaker after the Democrats failed to draw away the vote of wet Republicans and the Republicans in turn had succeeded in convincing the prohibitionists that they would not be unwise in voting for a county

optionist.[5] The vote was 101 for Rines and 19 for Frank E. Minnette, Democrat. One Democrat voted for Rines, saying that he was quite satisfied with the Republican candidate.[6]

The Haycraft Bill

Introduction. After the adjournment of the special session and prior to the convening of the regular 1913 session, reformers had publicly discussed the desirability of extending the nonpartisan provisions of the new primary election bill to include all judges and all city and county officers. When the legislature met in January, Senator Julius E. Haycraft of Fairmount, a progressive Republican and chairman of the Senate elections committee, promptly introduced a bill to this general end.[7] He was convinced that the plan represented sound progressivism and the general feeling around the capitol seemed to be that, although important and powerful party regulars opposed it, the bill was almost certain

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5 During this period the drys were regularly split between the county optionists, who favored leaving the liquor question to the voters of each county, either because they did not feel strongly on the matter and were willing to accept the views held on the matter locally, or because they felt this to be the broadminded point of view, and the prohibitionists, who would settle for no less than state-wide prohibition and opposed the county option plan. The latter group had elected men to the legislature both as members of the Prohibition party and of the Republican party.

6 Buell, The Minnesota Legislature of 1913, p. 13.

7 Senate File 412, 1913.

to pass.[8] It was introduced on February 7 and a special order was procured for it for February 13.

In the Senate. When the Haycraft bill reached the floor of the Senate, it was attacked from several angles by leading members of that body. F. A. Duxbury of Caledonia immediately attempted to have the provision regarding county officers eliminated. Joining with him in leading the opposition was Senator Anton J. Rockne of Goodhue county, a conservative and a long-time leader both in the Senate and in the Republican party. He argued that the political party was necessary to our system of government, that it was anchored in the local community and that elimination of the partisan municipal and county ballot would destroy the roots of an important American institution.[8a] When the Duxbury amendment was lost 34-20 and it became evident that this type of argument would not achieve the defeat of the measure, Rockne, urged on by thirteen conservative party regulars led by Duxbury and George H. Sullivan of Stillwater, conceived the idea that the proposal could certainly be killed by adding to the list of non-partisan offices those of the members of the legislature. After conferring with Speaker Rines and being assured that the House would kill any such provision in its elections committee, Frank

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8 Red Wing Republican, March 31, 1913, p. 7; Fergus Falls Daily Journal, April 24, 1913, p. 2.

8a It should be kept in mind that the Republicans, entrenched in all branches of state government and powerful in county and city government, had nothing to gain from a change in the system.

Clague, representing the Rockne group, proposed the amendment on February 27.[9]

The unique idea caught the Senate by surprise and battle lines that had been forming slowly were altered and reenforced, for the bill now affected every member. Senator Haycraft, who introduced the original bill, argued that he had not at all contemplated including state officers and that he was opposed to the plan. He, too, hurried to the speaker of the House where he was assured that the bill would not pass if it included legislators, or that it would at least be changed enough so that a conference committee could become deadlocked on the matter. Progressive senators, who had looked with favor upon the bill, now had to reconsider their position in light of the maneuvers on the part of the conservatives. Confusion on the matter seemed general. Party regulars assumed that the party position was in favor of the proposal, some progressives evidently assumed that if a little medicine would improve the condition of the body politic, a lot of medicine should improve it even more, and other senators apparently felt that a favorable vote would earn more votes than it would lose and, besides, it was common knowledge that the bill was to be killed in the House anyway. The Senate was more concerned with the proposal to eliminate the second choice provision in the primary law, and the Clague amendment passed, almost without

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9 Minneapolis Journal, February 27, 1913, p. 1. The Rockne clique had no choice but to fight the bill on the floor of the Senate. Senator Haycraft's elections committee was made up of progressives except for F. A. Duxbury. However, W. S. Dwinnell of Minneapolis, a progressive member, opposed the bill in its entirety, including the Rockne amendment.

discussion.[10] It was adopted by a vote of 35-22, although only twenty-one senators actually favored the proposal.[11] The amended bill then passed, 53-8, with only a few of the Rockne group opposing, and it was sent on to the House.

In the House. Senate File 412 was given a first reading in the House on March 1 and was referred to the elections committee, where it remained for nearly three weeks. During this period, the political significance of the bill was given real thought and lobbyists went to work. The liquor and brewery interests, seeing the Republican party securely in the hands of the drys and viewing with dismay the fact that that group nearly always controlled the legislature, began quietly to work for the bill in the form adopted in the Senate. The Willmar Tribune made the obvious observation:[12] "The supposition is that . . . they have concluded that it will prove easier to manipulate the individual than the party organization." Lacking a majority in either house, the wets resorted to an ancient propaganda technique in order to advance the cause of the bill. Acting through a Democrat in the Senate, John Noonan, and two Republicans in the House, G. W. Brown and former speaker H. H. Dunn, the wets vowed that they were opposed to any type of nonpartisanship since only the drys could benefit from abolishing parties. Many drys rose to the bait.

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10 In order to help Governor Eberhart's cause, the 1912 primary law had allowed the voter to express both a first and second choice in primary balloting. The provision was confusing to most voters and was discarded after several elections.

11 For progress of S. F. 412 through the Senate, see the Senate Journal (1913), pp. 251-252, 281, 288-289, 337-344, 436-437, 472-475, 494-500, 513-515, 1055, 1409, 1680.

12 Willmar Tribune, April 2, 1913, p. 6.

Other arguments in favor of a nonpartisan legislature began to appear and receive serious consideration.[13] Country members, feeling that the proposal to make county officials nonpartisan was sure to win, were fearful that the whole burden of local political organization and support would fall to them and, unhappy at the thought of assuming this thankless task alone, decided that a simple solution would be to remove themselves from the political arena, too. City members had still another reason for becoming interested in the novel and unexpected Clague amendment. They had been troubled in recent elections by the upsurge of the Socialist party in the poorer sections of the large cities. Since the bill provided that only the two highest candidates in the primary could run in the fall -- petitioning onto the final ballot not being allowed -- it was thought that this would prove to be a way to get rid of this menace.[14] There was still another group of representatives interested in the new plan. The legislature was giving consideration to legalizing Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive party. If this were to happen, the "Bull Moose" Republicans would be faced with the difficult decision at the next election as to whether it would be more profitable to run as Progressives or as Republicans. If the legislature were elected without party

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[13] For summaries of the attitudes of various groups, see: Red Wing Republican, March 31, 1913; Willmar Tribune, April 2, 1913, as well as the metropolitan dailies of the period and especially Charles B. Cheney in the Minneapolis Journal, March 28, 1913, p. 2.

[14] The effort proved unsuccessful. Minneapolis elected two avowed Socialists in the fall of 1914.

designation, this problem could be avoided. The bill appealed to still others as being a de facto recognition of the considerable breaking down of party lines that had happened in the previous session.[14a]

Opposition to the bill was centered in a few party regulars, including the speaker and Rep. Holmberg, Republican, chairman of the elections committee, who believed that the bill would destroy the vitality of political parties and that parties are necessary to express the "natural cleavage" that appears on questions of public policy. They also argued that partisan state administrative officers would be unable to effectuate party policy with a nonpartisan legislature.[15] Minor party members, evidently fearful of losing their identity, tended to oppose the bill.[16] Some opposition also came from drys who were skeptical of the argument, subtly put forth by the wets, that nonpartisanship would bring a happy end to the situation in some districts where Prohibitionist candidates were drawing votes away from dry Republicans. Apparently it occurred to some county optionists that they were entrenched within the larger of the major parties and could make the state "dry" without altering the traditional legislative arrangement, and that, further, if nonpartisanship could enable the drys to concentrate on one candidate, the same could be said for the wets.

[14a] See Infra, Chapter II, 1911 session.

[15] Interview, Henry Rinne, August, 1949.

[16] The legislature contained a Populist, a Prohibitionist, and a Public Ownership member. Rep. George E. Vaxland, Prohibitionist, favored nonpartisanship. Senator Ole Sagene, Populist, was the only minor party member returned to the 1915 legislature.

The elections committee reported the bill out on March 20 with the unanimous recommendation that the bill do pass after being amended to exclude members of the legislature and county officers (except the county superintendents of schools) from the nonpartisan ballot. This was the form of the bill that had been promised to Senator Rockne and his group, but the elimination of county officials was not acceptable to the progressive followers of Senator Haycraft.

The effects upon the House of lobbying and propaganda were fully evident when the bill was taken up on a special order on March 27. During the debate, Rep. George W. Brown of Glencoe (Republican), moved to reinsert county officers and members of the legislature into the list of nonpartisan positions. He asserted that no partisan issues had been raised in the current session of the legislature and he assured his colleagues that none would be.[17] Rep. W. I. Nolan, a leader among House Republicans, made the substitute motion that only county officers be reinserted. This move would have restored the bill to its original status, but the amendment was defeated by an overwhelming 74-34 margin.[18] Rep. G. B. Bjornson of Minnista, speaking in favor of making all state officers nonpartisan, said that such positions were not political in nature. "The governor," he explained, "is the state's official traveling lecturer."[19] Rep. Charles Orr of St. Paul

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17 St. Paul Pioneer-Press, March 28, 1913, p. 10.

18 For progress of S. F. 412 through the House, see the House Journal (1913), pp 626, 1028, 1166, 1168, 1170, 1193, 1214.

19 Minneapolis Journal, March 28, 1913, p. 12.

pointed out to the House that the Senate had included the legislature in an effort to kill the bill and that the Senate action had not been sincere. He warned the House against thinking that affirmative action would be in support of the genuine attitude of a majority of the senators. Albert Pfaender of New Ulm, a Democrat, thought the Senate version was an excellent one, but was fearful lest a nonpartisan governor be added. He thought that such a change would encourage the creation of a great many deadlocks.

After debate was closed, the Brown amendment prevailed, 71-59. Opposing the idea, either because they objected to nonpartisan county officers, or a nonpartisan legislature, or both, were thirty-seven Republicans,[20] one Democrat (Henry Steen, a wet), and one who had been elected on the Public Ownership ticket. Opposition came from both progressives, such as Henry Rines and Charles A. Lindberg, and from conservatives, such as W. I. Norton and O. E. Stone. Republican leaders, convinced that nonpartisanship would greatly weaken the party, voted against the Brown amendment. Negative votes were recorded by R. C. Dunn, Thomas Frankson, W. I. Nolan, W. I. Norton and Henry Rines.

The bill, which also contained numerous amendments to the primary election act of 1912 (changing the date of the primary and authorizing the placement of the Progressive party on the ballot, among other things), was then placed on final passage and was adopted 94-17. The die-hard opposition came from the Public

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20 Including thirty-four drys, three wets. Viewpoints were determined by the vote on the county option bill of 1913.

Ownership member, the already mentioned Democrat and fifteen Republicans, all but one of whom were dry.

The vote on the bill was especially interesting in light of the fact that no evidence can be found to indicate that the relative merits and demerits of a nonpartisan legislature were considered either on the floor of the House or in private discussions. Voting seems to have been motivated by the questions of political expediency discussed above.[21] Eighteen wet Democrats supported the bill, while Steen, also a wet Democrat, opposed it. Most Republican wets favored it, as did a large number of the drys, including the Prohibitionist. The efforts of the beverage lobby seem to have been successful.

On the following day, O. H. Warner (Republican) moved reconsideration, but the proposal lost, 63-47. W. I. Nolan, supporting Warner's motion, claimed that liquor groups had supported the nonpartisan measure and that this alone should be enough to warrant reconsideration.[22] It was reported[23] that "the brewery interests, and their representatives, were beside themselves with delight when the House, setting aside the recommendation of its committee, decided to retain this feature in the primary election law."

<u>In Conference Committee</u>. The bill was not yet law, however. The Primary Election Act of 1912 had set the balloting date in

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21 <u>Supra</u>, pp. 14-17

22 <u>Minneapolis Journal</u>, March 28, 1913, p. 12

23 <u>Willmar Tribune</u>, April 2, 1913, p. 6

September. The Senate version of the Haycraft bill proposed to change the time to June, while the House suggested an October date. This discrepancy appears to have been arranged for intentionally at the last minute as a possible method of creating a deadlock between the two houses.[24]

The conference committee, appointed on March 29, was deliberately "stacked" against nonpartisanship by Lt. Gov. Burnquist and Speaker Rines.[25] When it did not report back promptly, the "County Chairman" writing in the wet, Democratic St. Cloud Daily Times commented:[26]

> Though passed by both houses over a week ago the nonpartisan primary bill is still a long way from being a law. A conference committee composed of members of both houses has it in charge, and . . . they are out to either kill it or make it so obnoxious that neither house will adopt the changes proposed. The objectionable feature is the nonpartisan idea as applied to the election of members of the house and senate and which the house leaders, after giving their sanction, woke up to the fact, or rather they charged it, that unfriendly interests had put one over on them. They are trying to get back now by proposing that the nonpartisan idea be extended to state officers, which would include the governor. This simply means that the bill will never become a law.

Just what the conference committee wanted to do is not certain. It seems improbable that the members believed they could add the executive officers of the state to the nonpartisan ballot and force the two houses thereby to reject the whole

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24 Fergus Falls Daily Journal, March 29, 1913, p. 2; St. Paul Pioneer-Press, March 28, 1913, p. 10; Minneapolis Journal, March 29, 1913, p. 9. Charles Cheney, in the Journal, pointed out that, technically, there was no point of difference between the houses, since the hastily drawn amendment referred to the incorrect line in the bill and hence was not validly adopted.

25 Interview, Henry Rines, August, 1949

26 St. Cloud Daily Times, April 18, 1913, p. 2.

bill, especially in the light of the insistence of the House in replacing the provisions removed by its elections committee. The committee members did, however, unsuccessfully search for a precedent in Minnesota legislative history for adding completely new material to a deadlocked measure.[27] The committee was forced to content itself with stalling as long as possible. On April 11, it finally reported that it was not able to agree on the scope of its authority.[28] Specifically, it did not know if it could consider striking out the provisions concerning the nonpartisan legislature. Holmberg, one of the House managers, moved that the committee be allowed to consider this. H. H. Dunn, leader of the wet Republicans, made the substitute motion that the House committeemen be instructed to confer only on the one matter of differences between the houses -- the question of the date for the primary election. G. W. Brown criticized the committee for attempting to say it knew what the House wanted better than did the House itself.[29] The Dunn motion carried, but by a vote of only 64-47. This represented eight more votes in the negative than had been cast against the crucial Brown amendment to override the recommendations of the House elections committee. The changes of heart took place among the dry Republicans who had come to be very

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27 St. Paul Pioneer-Press, April 12, 1913, p. 5.

28 House Journal (1913), pp. 1621-1622.

29 Minneapolis Journal, April 12, 1913, p. 2.

doubtful about the whole matter after viewing the interest taken in the bill by brewery representatives.[30]

Opposition to nonpartisanship then collapsed. The committee held a brief meeting after which Senator Haycraft announced that he remained opposed to a nonpartisan legislature, but that he was willing to go along with the majority. The report of the defeated committee was heard but light attendance in the House forced proponents of the bill to engage in hasty parliamentary maneuvering to get a lay-over until April 16 on a motion to reconsider, after the roll-call on the adoption of the conference report lacked an absolute majority, the vote being only 48-32. On the following Wednesday, after two attempts by dry Republicans to adjourn the House failed, the bill was repassed by a vote of 65-48.[31]

In the Senate, some of the members explained their votes. Senator Haycraft made it clear that he was merely going along with the majority, Senator Edward Rustad of Wheaton made the rather revealing explanation that he opposed the nonpartisan legislature principle, but he found the change to a June primary so desirable that he would vote for the bill. Senator George H. Sullivan of Stillwater, a politician of nineteenth century vintage, explained that there were no party lines any longer anyway, since the abolition of the state convention, so one

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30 Willmar Tribune, April 16, 1913, p. 3; St. Cloud Daily Times, April 18, 1913, p. 2; Red Wing Republican, March 31, 1913, p. 7.

31 House Journal (1913), pp. 1745-1746. See also, St. Paul Pioneer-Press, April 12, 1913, p. 5; Minneapolis Journal, April 12, 1913, p. 2.

might just as well vote for a nonpartisan legislature and make it so in name as well as in fact.

The Senate adopted the report, 36-15.[32] Among the fifteen negative votes, were six who had joined in the scheme to inject the legislature into the bill and who had opposed Senate passage the first time. Many confirmed opponents of the bill, including Rockne, Clague and Duxbury, found it expedient to support it. The bill was signed by the governor without comment on April 19.

Reaction to Nonpartisanship

Among Legislators. The Minnesota legislature had become nonpartisan without a single word of debate being devoted to the merits of the question. The proposal had been introduced with no forethought and with no intention of it ever becoming law. Its sponsorship by the wets had been quite spontaneous and based upon simple political expediency: it would help break the strength of the Republican caucus in the legislature and might disorganize the forces demanding county option. The drys had been subtly brought around to the view that they, too, could realize political gains by supporting the bill. To add to the confusion and the unusual combination of bed-fellows, the opposition consisted of progressives, who viewed local nonpartisanship as desirable but who could not accept the idea of including the legislature, and the extremely conservative Republicans, who saw the destruction of party organization in the plan.

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[32] Senate Journal (1913), pp. 1409-1410.

The novelty of a nonpartisan legislature "was a suggestion so new and so radical that even members who voted for it hardly realized what a revolutionary change they had made." [33] In fact, there is no evidence to indicate that any member expected the new arrangement to cause important problems of organization, executive-legislative relationships, or responsibility. A few were concerned lest it weaken party strength needed for more important state and national offices, but on final passage, other provisions of the bill seem to have been the determining factors for most legislators.

In the Press. The general lack of interest in the new law and the lack of realization of the important problems it would produce is indicated in the press comment of the day, which indicated no deep concern for the fate of the legislature. Much of the rural press did not even bother to comment upon the change. Country editors who did offer an opinion seemed chiefly concerned with the probability that the new law would "hamstring" local party organization. The metropolitan dailies were not enthusiastic about the change. The Minneapolis Journal gave the plan tenative approval, although its chief political observer, Charles Cheney, was skeptical from the beginning and never approved nonpartisanship. The St. Paul Pioneer-Press opposed the change. Peculiarly, the metropolitan "kept" press was accused,

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[33] Red Wing Republican, March 31, 1913, p. 7. Professor Cushman, a few years later, commented that the enactment was a surprise, not only to the state at large, but to "most of the members responsible for its enactment into law." See, Robert E. Cushman, "Non-Partisan Nominations and Elections," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. CVI, No. 195 (March, 1923), p. 90.

in the fight for prohibition that followed, of opposing nonpartisanship because it had been such a boon to the drys. While it is true that the large dailies were tolerant of brewery interests, they withheld endorsement of the Clague amendment even as liquor representatives were actively supporting it.

The overwhelming preoccupation of the state and nation in the prohibition issue is indicated by the way in which the Red Wing Republican, absorbed in the municipal fight to set-up saloon "patrol limits", noted casually that "a great change was brought about" that went further than any other state. No qualitative judgment was offered.[34] The Fergus Falls newspaper stated simply:[35] "The nonpartisan primary bill is a step farther than any other state has gone and much farther than any member dreamed of going when the session opened."

The Willmar newspaper reported that the county officials seemed pleased with nonpartisan offices and suggested that the new system would be worthwhile simply because of the money it would save in the elimination of ballot space in the general election for the sundry minor parties.[36] After considering the change in the light of the 1912 election, the editor suggested that a nonpartisan gubernatorial campaign might be very desirable since, with but two persons in the autumn run-off, the winning candidate would always have a majority vote.

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34 Red Wing Republican, February 26, 1913, p. 7, et seq.

35 Fergus Falls Daily Journal, April 24, 1913, p. 2.

36 Willmar Tribune, April 9, 1913, p. 6; April 23, 1913, p. 4.

"Men," said the editorial, "are elected to office, not parties. . . . In our humble judgment, the official state ballot should not recognize any party organization." The inequity in the Australian ballot, readers were told, lies in the fact that "the state has granted patent rights to certain party names and protected the holders. . . ." This should be corrected by the abolition of party labels.[37]

The St. Cloud newspaper, noting the progress of the primary election bill in the legislature, was nostalgic:[38] "Truly the day of political parties is passing away." This newspaper reported that Stearns county officials generally favored the nonpartisan bill for counties, but some of them felt it might be detrimental in state and national politics. They proved to be poor prophets, however, in predicting that the bill would result in shorter official lives, in expecting increased competition for offices, and in anticipating the total elimination of party lines in offices elected without party designation.[39] Some thought the plan would work to the advantage of a candidate known to be active in a party since he would get the support, not only of his party, but of independents as well.

After the bill had passed both houses, the St. Cloud

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[37] Willmar Tribune, May 20, 1914, p. 4. The term "Australian ballot" is loosely used here and refers, of course, to the American adaptation, which includes party labeling.

[38] St. Cloud Daily Times, March 3, 1913, p. 1.

[39] Ibid., March 7, 1913, p. 5.

editor still could not shake off his feeling of nostalgia and doubt:[40]

> Perhaps it is all for the better, but many will view with regret the passing of the party in the selection of candidates for county and state officers below that of those named in the constitution as executive officers. Reluctantly the house gave its sanction to the bill providing for a nonpartisan primary and now all that remains is the signature of Gov. Eberhart to make it a law. How it will work out is the interesting thing. It was not the progressive element in the two bodies that put the bill over. W. I. Nolan and Speaker Rines in the house were suspicious from the start and advised caution, but the deed had been done and they were powerless to stop its completion. . . . Democrats are jubilant. They say it will increase their standing in the next legislature and the reactionary element declares that it will do away with new party ideas.

A few months later, this newspaper gave a preview of an attitude that was later to characterize the viewpoint taken toward incumbents of nonpartisan offices, when an editorial suggested that all Stearns county officials were "honest, faithful and efficient" and therefore there was "no good cause to remove them and chance the uncertainty of a new candidate."[41]

Another out-state journal saw a hidden danger in the new plan. "The legislature seems to be determined to so amend the election laws that candidates for the legislature must run on a nonpartisan ticket. It is a mistake. Extravagance, rampant now, will be worse without an alert opposition."[42] The Anoka publisher

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40 Ibid., April 22, 1913, p. 8. The term "new party" in the quotation refers to the Progressive party.

41 Ibid., October 14, 1913, p. 4.

42 Caledonia Journal, cited in the St. Paul Pioneer-Press, April 18, 1913, p. 8.

did not like it any better: "A non-partisan ticket finds no favor with the Union. It believes in party organizations, and particularly the old Republican party. . . .

"If a non-partisan ticket for county officers does not work out any better than the non-partisan judiciary ticket did last election, it will prove a gigantic failure. Think of Judge Start being almost defeated by a young, unknown attorney," it added indignantly.[43]

The St. Peter Free Press may have been thinking of men such as A. J. Rockne when it suggested that the new system "means a concentration of political power in a comparatively few people. . . "[44]

Opinion was more favorable, however, in Fairmount: "Thank the Lord and the Legislature, hereafter a good and deserving man will not have to wear the brand 'Republican' in order to get a county office or be elected to the Legislature in Minnesota."[45]

Of all the newspapermen, the Minneapolis Journal's veteran observer, Charles Cheney, proved to be the soundest seer. After the Senate had added the legislature to the primary election bill, he commented:[46]

> Nonpartisan nominations in local government are sound in principle and work well in practice. But the case is very

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43 Anoka Union, cited in the St. Cloud Daily Times, February 6, 1913, p. 2.

44 St. Peter Free Press, cited in the St. Cloud Daily Times, February 7, 1913, p. 7.

45 Fairmount Sentinel, cited in the St. Paul Pioneer-Press, April 24, 1913, p. 8.

46 Minneapolis Journal, March 1, 1913, p. 10. Italics added.

> different with legislative nominations. The Minnesota plan throws the door open to nominations of the liquor and other interests. They find it easy to juggle the contests, once these have degenerated into mere personal struggles.

A few weeks later, Cheney demonstrated that he had a better crystal ball than did the brewery lobbyists:[47]

> However, the result might properly fool the liquor interests. The law would also wipe out the prohibition factor which has divided the temperance forces in many legislative districts. With nothing but the temperance issue involved and the temperance forces united, the demand for county option would very likely be able to make gains in several districts.

A Journal editorial of the following day took a different view from that of its star political writer. Commenting that party lines, through the adoption of the primary and "other changes", had been all but obliterated and that there was no longer a responsible party within the state, the newspaper concluded that for these reasons "the Legislature has dropped the party distinction."[48] The writer was not sure how the new system would work but he expected that there would be some self-seekers, some one-idea men, a scramble for places and an outcropping of personal platforms.

The Democrats, noted the writer, had been so weak that they had tended to make secret bargains in "horse-trading" rather than to serve as an alert opposition. This was thought, by the Journal, to be unfortunate and it concluded:

> A nonpartisan legislature could hardly be worse . . . The lines have become so crossed it is perhaps just as well

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47 Ibid., March 28, 1913, p. 12.

48 Ibid., March 29, 1913, p. 4.

to eliminate the party element and allow the native disposition of the legislators to fit them to their places.

An editorial in the St. Paul-Pioneer-Press expressed orthodox political theory:[49]

> The Legislature would do well to consider carefully whether it is desirable to extend the nonpartisan feature to legislative and other state officials. There is no doubt about getting rid of party politics in local affairs. . . . But there is grave doubt if such should be the case in state and national affairs. . . .
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> The best check against authority is a vigorous and well organized opposition. One party will keep another up to its duty. . . . A party organization in every state at present furnishes to the people a means of getting together for concerted action, and should not be abandoned without careful consideration.

Among Observers and Lobbyists. A writer in the official journal of American political science made only a brief disapproving comment regarding the change in Minnesota politics:[50]

> It may be seriously doubted, . . . whether the nonpartisan movement is not overreaching itself when it invades the field of political offices as it does for the first time in Minnesota. . . .

The general lack of interest in the matter is indicated in the fact that the official report of the railroad brotherhoods' lobbyists did not even mention the change.[51] Only the comments of muckraking C. J. Buell, an ardent prohibitionist, seem to have been enthusiastic:[52]

> It is to be hoped that the time is near when men will

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49 St. Paul Pioneer-Press, April 13, 1913, p. 6.

50 Victor J. West, "Legislation of 1913 Affecting Nominations and Elections," American Political Science Review, Vol. VII (August, 1914), p. 439.

51 Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1913, 32 pp.

52 C. J. Buell, The Minnesota Legislature of 1913, 112 pp. Quotation is from p. 13.

be chosen for public positions in state, city, village and county, upon their honesty and fitness instead of how they line up on national issues that have no necessary relation to state and local affairs.

In California, a state that had preceded Minnesota into the nonpartisan field, an able orator for the cause appeared in the form of Governor Hiram Johnson. In his 1915 inaugural speech to the legislature, he took time to discuss nonpartisanship:[53]

> We now suggest applying the principle to the State as well, so that candidates for state positions will come before the people upon what they themselves are; . . . their merits or their demerits, rather than upon the blind partisanship of themselves or their forefathers. . . . The government of the State has become now a matter of efficient business management. . . .

Commenting upon the familiar argument that parties are necessary as a means of holding officials responsible to the public, he countered:[54]

> The fallacy of this argument is found within the memories of all of us. In the state government today, none holds a particular party responsible for any specified act. All hold responsible the individual who is supposed to have caused the act. . . . If a party be in charge of a corrupt boss or a number of corrupt bosses, to speak of party responsibility is absurd. . . . experience. . . has given us the absolute knowledge that there is, in reality, no party responsibility for the acts of individual officials.

Among Attorneys. Less than a week after the bill passed, a group of prominent attorneys active in the Republican party publicly announced that the nonpartisan legislature act was, in their opinion, unconstitutional,[55] They argued that the act

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[53] Frank G. Bates, "Nonpartisan Government," American Political Science Review, Vol. VIII (May, 1915), p. 314.

[54] Ibid., p. 315.

[55] The material in this section is drawn largely from Moos, op. cit., pp. 11-12, 55 where a more lengthy discussion of legal technicalities is to be found.

violated article IV, section 27 of the Minnesota constitution in that it embraced more than one subject and that the subject was not expressed in the title. The act had simply been entitled "An Act to Amend Sections 181 and 192 of the Revised Laws, 1905." The new law, in truth, was a fairly extensive revision of the Primary Elections Act of 1912 and it actually amended sections of the Revised Laws in addition to the two listed in the title. There was a sound argument to be made that the act had not been adopted in a strictly constitutional fashion, and the attorneys urged someone to file for office on a partisan basis. The legal procedure would be to seek a writ of mandamus to compel the county auditor to accept the filing. Despite this free advice, no one made such a move, perhaps because both wets and drys expected to gain from the law in the election of 1914.

The nonpartisan legislature, thus, was never tested in the courts. The state supreme court did uphold the form of the nonpartisan ballot for judicial nominations and elections. It had been challenged on a technicality, but the case did not involve a point that might apply to that part of the law involving the legislature.[56]

Closing Statement. The purpose of this chapter has been to give an exposition of the circumstances under which the Minnesota legislature came to be elected without party designation. A summary of arguments, pro and con, observations, comments

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[56] State ex rel. Nordin v. Erickson, 119 Minn. 142, 137 N. W. 385 (1912).

and predictions is offered in order to compare and contrast them with later developments. A qualitative evaluation of the sundry arguments for and against legislative nonpartisanship will be made in the closing chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE NONPARTISAN LEGISLATURE: TO 1929

The Background in Partisanship

The Nineteenth Century. Generally speaking, from the early days of statehood until the establishment of the nonpartisan legislature, Minnesota was predominantly Republican in all three branches of government. After Henry H. Sibley of St. Paul defeated Alexander Ramsey, also of the capital city, by 240 votes[1] to become the state's first governor (in 1858), the Republicans staged a come-back that enabled Ramsey to be chosen over the Democratic candidate, George L. Becker, in the next election,[2] after which the Grand Old Party won nineteen consecutive gubernatorial contests. The Democrats were out of the chief executive's office for thirty-nine years and returned in 1899 only with the help of the People's party and John Lind, a renegade, free-silver Republican.[3] Lind served only a single term, but the Democrats did manage to win one more hold on the office before the advent of the long Eberhart administration when they captured the governorship in 1905 under the leadership of the able John A. Johnson, whose political ambitions were aided by a serious rift in the

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1 The vote was 17,790 for Sibley to 17,550 for Ramsey.

2 The vote was 21,335 for Ramsey to 17,582 for Becker.

3 The vote was 131,980 for Lind to 111,796 for William H. Eustis. Lind received support from Democrats, Populists and free-silver Republicans.

Republican party.[4]

The Democrats did not have to wait quite so long in order to have a voice in organizing the legislature, although that branch of government, too, tended to follow the Republican predilections of the midwestern farmer. In 1891, both houses of the legislature fell to the control of a coalition of members of the Farmer's Alliance and the Democratic party. The gubernatorial office remained in Republican hands at that time, perhaps largely because that party renominated William R. Merriam of St. Paul and hence enjoyed the incumbent's advantage in the race. The coalition elected the speaker of the House, E. T. Champlin of Blue Earth county and, in the Senate, it took the unprecedented action of taking the power of committee appointments away from the Republican lieutenant governor, G. S. Ives of St. Peter.[5] This was the first experience the state had had with divided executive-legislative loyalties and it was not found to be very satisfactory.

The legislature returned to its customary Republican domination in the next election, and remained in that situation through the Democratic administration of John Lind, during which little legislation was enacted, and John A. Johnson, whose relationships with the law-making branch were more friendly, partly because of political circumstance and partly because of the governor's personal appeal. After the turn of the century, the legislature

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[4] At the same time, the Democratic strength in the legislature reached an all-time low.

[5] The power was returned to the presiding officer at the next session.

remained overwhelmingly Republican.[6]

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to an examination of party and caucus organization in the various sessions of the legislature. For purposes of contrast, several sessions preceding the adoption of nonpartisanship are reviewed briefly.

The 1907 Session. The legislature was so strongly Republican in the early years of the century that contests for the various offices became intra-party battles. The Republicans were divided into several factions and sub-factions, with the wet-dry issue beginning to play the leading role in determining alignments. Six members of the G. O. P. were leading candidates for the speakership in 1907. The important ones were Lawrence H. Johnson of Minneapolis, A. J. Rockne of Zumbrota and Ambrose Tighe of St. Paul, although the last named had not been in the previous session and was largely ignored by the press. Johnson and Rockne were the chief contestants and the three lesser lights were put into the picture in order to draw votes away from Rockne until his opponent could make a bid for them.[7] Johnson the "corporation candidate", supported by flour, railroad and Twin City street railway interests, was the eventual winner. Both the speakership campaign and the later

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6 For references on this section, see the Bibliography.

7 A detailed account of the 1907 contest in the House is to be found in Lynn Haines, The Minnesota Legislature of 1909, pp. 15-18. The 1909 booklet was the first in a series that extended to 1925. They were Progressive, dry and muckraking in character.
In his early days in the legislature, Rockne was regarded as a progressive. As the years went by, legislative observers classified him as increasingly more conservative until, as head of the Senate finance committee during Floyd Olson's administration, he was viewed by Farmer-Laborites as the very epitome of reaction.

battles over legislation largely ignored the Democratic party. The important cleavage was between the "special privilege" representatives and the "progressives" of the Republican party, with the wet-dry division becoming increasingly important.[8]

The 1909 Session. The "insurgent" Republicans plus the Democratic members actually constituted a majority of the House in the 1909 session, but the more carefully organized "regular" Republicans were able to control both chambers. A coalition against the Republican regulars was not possible since the Democrats, too, were divided in much the same fashion as the majority party.

The speakership campaign was fairly simple in 1909. A. J. Rockne, for reasons that have never been made fully public, had deserted from his position at the head of the insurgents in the midst of the 1907 session and had been a strong factor in the defeat of the highly controversial iron ore tonnage tax bill of that year. Considering this act, Haines said:[9]

> Probably it was ambition that prompted the change; perhaps at that time the steel trust assured him of the speakership at the next session. At any rate that interest backed his candidacy and together with the brewery-controlled Ramsey county members turned the tide in his favor, and he was duly installed as Speaker of the last legislature.

Rockne, with support both from conservatives and from his former insurgent colleagues who had no other choice in the matter,

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8 To complicate the picture, there were various shades of conservative wets and drys and progressive wets and drys.

9 Haines, Minnesota Legislature of 1909, pp. 18-27. Quotation is from pp. 18-19. At this time, the most conservative Republican members of the legislature were generally those from the three large cities.

defeated the incumbent speaker, Lawrence H. Johnson. In making committee assignments, Rockne considered the fact that he had had support from the progressives and he tendered them a few chairmanships, including railroads and rules. Both of these important committees, however, had conservative majorities. Committee chairmanships were assigned to Republicans, but otherwise the chief distinction at the session seems to have been between conservatives and progressives or "insurgents", with the terms being attached to individuals without reference to party membership. Probably the ignoring of party membership was in part due to the overwhelming strength of the Republican party in the legislature.

The Senate of 1909 was under the domination of Senator Edward E. Smith of Minneapolis, state Republican leader, who distributed the patronage and guided the actions of Lieutenant Governor Adolph O. Eberhart. Smith was the man who had to be reckoned with by Democratic Governor John A. Johnson. Legislation depended to a considerable extent upon the compromise between these two party leaders.

Smith assigned Senate committee chairmanships only to conservative Republicans.[10]

The 1911 Session. The next regular meeting of the Minnesota legislature took place at a time when the nation as a whole and the state of Minnesota, too, was in a period of confident

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[10] The 1909 session organization and political background is described in Lynn Haines, Minnesota Legislature of 1909, especially pp. 18-27. The conservative viewpoint is to be found in the St. Paul Pioneer-Press and the Minneapolis Journal.

conservatism. John Johnson was dead and the state administration was once again in Republican hands. William Howard Taft and the "stand-pat" Republicans held forth nationally. In the fall of 1910, eighty-nine Republicans, twenty-six Democrats, four Prohibitionists and a Socialist were elected to the House of Representatives. Of the members of the G. O. P., Haines[11] classified fifty-two as "stand-pat or reactionary" and thirty-seven as progressive.

"So far as party influence was concerned the democrats [sic] were decidedly reactionary."[12] Twenty of them were conservative, four were middle-roaders and two were progressive. With one exception, the main body of Democrats "maintained their alliance with the reactionary republican [sic] organization on all vital questions. . . ."[13] The minor party members were considered to be progressive.

The organization of the House was particularly interesting in light of the fact that it was controlled by twelve persons, including two Democrats -- Albert Pfaender of New Ulm and Leonard Virtue of Blooming Prairie. Bi-partisan leadership of this type probably had an effect upon thinking in the next session when parties were abolished in the lawmaking branch.

In consideration of subsequent charges that the minority is more discriminated against under nonpartisanship than it is under the traditional system, it is interesting to examine the way in which the Twelve divided up the committee assignments in 1911.

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11 Lynn Haines, Minnesota Legislature of 1911, pp. 100-101.

12 Ibid., p. 100.

13 Ibid., p. 101.

All ten of the most important committees were in the hands of a majority of conservatives, with the leaders keeping six of the chairmanships for themselves.[14] An average of five of the Twelve were to be found on each of the ten major committees. Of the progressives, twenty-five were not given a single seat on the principal committees and the other nineteen were given a total of twenty-eight among them.

An example of the way in which assignments were distributed is to be found in the case of two freshmen. One, Alva Henion, a conservative Republican, was assigned to committees considering 205 bills while F. L. Klemer, a progressive, was a member of five committees which altogether considered but five bills during the entire session. A dramatic incident occurred during the session when Klemer was accused of improper conduct for making the following statement from the floor of the House:[15]

> This house as at present organized with its sixty-two standing committees is a farce and a burlesque on the rights of the people of this great state of Minnesota. . . . Half of the membership are on committees that amount to nothing at all. . . . The committees are packed in the interest of the special interests and with the intent and purpose to defeat good and wholesome legislation.

The sixty-two committees did indeed give the Twelve ample opportunity to shunt unwanted members onto a siding. There were no less than eight committees that received no business at all during the session. Three received but one bill each, five only two each, two considered three measures apiece and two more were

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14 See Haines, op. cit., pp. 27-29. He regarded the ten important committees as being: rules, general legislation, taxes, appropriations, temperance, elections, public health, reapportionment, railroads and legislative expenses.

15 Ibid., p. 27.

assigned but five bills. Furthermore, most of the committees received no business at all if one were to consider only the important bills of the session. It seems unlikely that state-shaking matters would be referred to the committee on Immigration, or the committee on Skeeping Cars, or the committee on Binding Twine.

Despite the breakdown of party lines evident in the 1911 session, the vote for the speakership was strictly on a party basis. The big battle, of course, was between the progressive Republicans and the conservatives. The leading progressive candidate was J. A. A. Burnquist of St. Paul[16] who announced his availability as early as September 3, 1910. The conservatives were united behind "Ed" Smith's choice -- H. H. Dunn of Albert Lea. Dunn did not announce his candidacy until other progressives had been mentioned for the job. When the Republican caucus met the night before the session opened, members who were anxious to guess correctly as to the winner concluded that the progressives were too divided to elect a man. The meeting turned into a stampede for Dunn who received fifty-five votes to twenty-nine for Burnquist.[17] In the formal voting Dunn received the whole of the Republican vote present; Albert Pfaender of New Ulm, conservative Democrat, was supported by

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16 Like Rockne, Burnquist was regarded as a progressive in his early career. By the time he became governor, and especially during the mass hysteria of 1918-19, he was viewed by Progressive Republicans and especially by Non-Partisan Leaguers as an extreme conservative.

17 See Haines, op. cit., pp. 43-46.

his party; the four Prohibitionists put forth C. L. Sulerud; while the lone Socialist, N. S. Hillman of Lake county, voted with the majority party.

In the Senate, a peculiar situation arose. To placate progressive Republicans, that party had nominated and elected Samuel Y. Gordon of Brown's Valley to the lieutenant-governorship. When he made the 1911 committee appointments, despite the majority of conservative Republicans in the body, he placed the progressives in charge of most of the important committees of the Senate and this action was not successfully challenged. For the first time in more than a decade, the Senate was more progressive than the House.[18]

The 1912 Extra Session. The special meeting of the legislature in June 1912 has already been discussed.[19] It was during this session that H. H. Dunn lost de facto control of the House. Although he enjoyed the support of most of the Democrats, his actual authority was gradually lost through opposition first from progressive Republicans and then from the drys within his party. Even though he was the "governor's man", by the end of the session he reigned but did not rule over the House.

The 1913 Session. The thirty-eighth legislature, which provided for nonpartisanship, has already been discussed in part.[20]

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[18] Ibid., p. 48.

[19] Supra, pp. 7-9.

[20] Supra, pp. 9-11.

The 1912 election had been a great victory for progressivism, with Theodore Roosevelt carrying the state and a large number of his followers being sent to the capitol. The House was under control of the progressives and, while the Senate remained basically con-conservative, one progressive lieutenant-governor, J. A. A. Burnquist, succeeded another, A. Y. Gordon. The session, in addition to passing the comprehensive amendments to the primary election act, also approved a workman's compensation act, provided for mother's pensions, and launched an investigation into the activities of the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce.

Remembering that the divisive tactics used in the 1911 session had been successful, the progressives, close to a majority in the House, were careful to hold a special caucus in order to have but one candidate for speaker. Although six persons were mentioned from time to time as possible presiding officers, the number had been narrowed to two, with Rines winning over Nolan in the balloting.

Some of the newcomers among the insurgents, led by Ernest Lundeen who was later to become an important figure in the Non-Partisan League, sought to break away from traditional rules that had hampered progressives in the past. Lundeen offered a bill that would have taken away the powers of committee appointment from both the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House.[21] The measure was rejected by the elections committee

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21 Red Wing Republican, January 6, 1913, p. 1; Ibid., January 23, 1913, p. 7; Willmar Tribune, January 8, 1913, p. 4.

and its recommendation was accepted by the House. The vote was 70-41

Hines, who did not belong to the aggressively insurgent group but was more of a middle-roader, put progressives in charge of most committees. He named his closest rival for the chair, W. I. Nolan, to be head of the rules committee.

In the conservative Senate, there was dissatisfaction over the possibility that the new presiding officer, a progressive, would follow the precedent of S. Y. Gordon and discriminate in favor of the progressive minority in making committee assignments. Senators George H. Sullivan of Stillwater and F. A. Duxbury of Caledonia, both very conservative ("reactionary" in this case might be a more accurate word), proposed to remove the appointment powers of the president and vest them in a committee on committees. They argued that it was a move toward "progressive Republicanism". "Ed" Smith, who had fostered the plan, had hoped to include the Democrats in the move, but on the show down vote more than half of the Democratic senators remained away. The resolution was defeated 45-16, with ten Republicans and six Democrats favoring it. A return to the precedent of 1891 was thus avoided.[22]

In both houses, and especially in the Senate, the 1913 session continued to reflect the cross-party similarities and differences. There were many progressive-conservative votes

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22 St. Cloud Daily Times, January 2, 1913, p. 2; Red Wing Republican, January 2, 1913, p. 2; Ibid., January 6, 1913, p. 1; Fergus Falls Daily Journal, January 6, 1913, p. 2.

without regard to party labels and on liquor bills the wet-dry forces did not observe party lines. In fact there were no strictly Democratic-Republican votes, except on matters of organization.

The Years 1915 - 1929

The 1915 Session. Many things had occurred in the two-year period between opening days of the 1913 and 1915 legislatures. The increasingly serious wet-dry division had replaced the "Bull Moose"-"stand-pat" feud as the chief attraction of the political arena; a Democrat who had refused to commit himself on county option, Winfield Scott Hammond of St. James, had become the state's chief executive by defeating William Lee after the latter had been deserted by many Republican "wets"; and the first state reapportionment in sixteen years combined with the abolition of party labels had produced the greatest turnover in the legislature since the 1906 election.[23]

There were many matters to be considered by the legislators as they assembled in St. Paul. The workman's compensation act of the previous session had not been satisfactory to organized labor, the initiative and referendum was still being debated

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[23] See Table XIII for turnover in the Minnesota legislature. The Reapportionment Act of 1913, still in effect at the present writing (1950), increased the Senate membership from sixty-three to sixty-seven to make it the largest state senate in the nation. The House membership was increased from 119 to 130 after bitter opposition from the southern part of the state had blocked the change through several sessions. In 1917, one representative was added to the 65th (Clearwater-Pennington-Red Lake) District, giving the House 131 members.

pro and con, and there was even some demand for a constitutional amendment to make it possible to tax dogs upon some other basis than the value of the dog. But every member knew that the really important matter that would come before the law-makers was the question of county option. It was this issue, not parties or progressivism, that divided men into groups of friends and opponents and it was upon this issue that candidates were either gratified or broken in their efforts to be sent to St. Paul. As the Red Wing newspaper put it immediately after election day: "County option . . . will be the real issue in the organization of the Minnesota House of Representatives;"[24]

The battle for the House speakership began at once. H. H. Flowers of LeSeur county, a Republican, was the wet candidate.[25] He began his campaign early and, by claiming more pledges than he had, attempted to cause a stampede. Edward Claggett, distribution agent for a St. Paul brewery, set up an office in a capital city hotel as campaign headquarters. As a counter-move, the drys caucused on November 17 and united behind former Lieutenant-Governor S. Y. Gordon of Brown's Valley, a progressive Republican. Forty-two pledges were immediately procured, twenty others were gradually rounded up and three more men were secretly pledged.

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24 Red Wing Republican, November 14, 1914, p. 4.

25 On the 1915 speakership see: Theodore Christianson, Minnesota; The Land of Sky-Tinted Waters (1935), Vol. II, pp. 342-344; O. J. Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1915, pp. 6 ff.; Charles B. Cheney, Minnesota Politics; Highlights of Half a Century of Political Reporting (1947), pp. 35-36; Red Wing Republican, January 15, 1915, p. 1; and the metropolitan dailies.

This gave the drys sixty-five votes, one less than was needed.

The prohibition issue was nearing a climax and the contest in the House was probably the bitterest and most ruthless in the history of the state. At least one man admitted that he had been approached with an offer of a direct bribe,[26] and others were lured away with offers of attractive committee assignments. No less than three men, elected as drys, were brought into the Flowers column by this method. L. C. Spooner of Stevens county, who personally disliked Gordon, was made chairman of both the appropriations and the efficiency and economy committees. C. L. Sawyer, of Hennepin county, who also had private differences with the dry candidate, was given his committee choices, while J. H. Erickson of Big Stone county, who had not even been a member of the previous session, was put at the head of banks and banking.

For the first and only time in Minnesota history, the speaker was not chosen on the initial ballot. With all 130 members present, the wets could garner only sixty-five of the needed sixty-six, while the drys, who had expected to have sixty-five votes, had suffered a net loss of two votes in the bargaining, and the two men who had campaigned on a Socialist platform, Revold and Woodfield, voted for one another.

Since no one had received a majority of the votes, a second ballot became necessary. Before it was taken the two Socialists,

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26 Buell, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 8.

to whom the prohibition question was a secondary matter, left the chamber. The vote for the two major candidates was exactly the same as on the last ballot -- 65-63. In response to a question, the presiding officer, Secretary of State Julius A. Schmahl, ruled that only a majority of those present and voting need be secured in order to choose officers. Since only 128 persons had voted on the second ballot, he then declared Flowers to have been elected Speaker.[27]

This first speakership campaign under the nonpartisan system, although harder fought than those that followed, set up a procedural precedent that remained fairly common. There were two major candidates (both Republicans, but this did not enter into the matter), and all members voted for one man or the other regardless of personal party affiliation, except for the two Socialists. The Democrats made no attempt to isolate themselves. Each group held advance caucuses, by invitation, and pledges were secured before the first of the year. That the two groups were more in the nature of personal organizations than ideological associations is shown in the fact that the marginal votes that secured the election of Flowers were given him for personal reasons (and committee assignment promises) by drys who did not agree with him on his major campaign plank. The wet organization had control of the

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[27] Buell, op. cit., reports a shift of one vote on the second ballot, but the House Journal shows this to be an error.

The Minnesota constitution requires an absolute majority for either house to pass a bill or resolution. Schmahl ruled that this did not apply to election of officers, perhaps because the rule requiring all to be present and voting unless excused at a roll call is not applied at such a time.

House, but the House lacked a majority of wets.

In making committee assignments, Flowers did not betray his supporters: nine dependable wets were named to the temperance committee with James Dwyer of Minneapolis (a Democrat) designated chairman. In other appointments, the new speaker tried to smooth over some of the hard feelings developed in the opening days of the session. The defeated candidate, Samuel Gordon, was allowed to choose a committee chairmanship. (He chose the census committee.) Gunnar Bjornson, chairman of the Republican state central committee and a Gordon supporter, was named to head the elections committee. In general, most Gordon backers felt that they were not unfairly treated. The floor leader in the 1915 House was Rep. L. C. Spooner, one of the drys who was a friend of the speaker and a personal enemy of the dry leader. Although a progressive Republican, he was not active in the party's state or national activities.

After Flowers' election, the Anti-Saloon League and other supporters of county option began a renewed propaganda and lobbying drive. Efforts were aimed particularly at those men who had been elected as drys but who had voted for Flowers. Furthermore, some drys had not received what they considered to be adequate committee posts and they devoted considerable time to working for the county option measure and to finding ways in which to embarrass the House organization.

Despite the unfavorable view adopted by the temperance committee, the House took up the matter of county option. With the dry members of the Flowers organization under considerable

pressure from home, they stood by their election promises. The House passed the bill by a vote of 66-62. After this defeat, and with nothing to hold it together, the House organization began to fall to pieces. A few weeks later, C. J. Buell heard Floor Leader L. C. Spooner say to Job Lloyd, the private secretary to the Speaker: "By God, we have got to find out who is running this House. We must know whether we have got any organization or not."[28]

Evidently there was no organization, for before the session adjourned, no less than six important Gordon-sponsored bills were passed, most of them by large majorities (at least on final passage).

The 1915 Senate organization was along different lines. That body had an undisputed majority of drys, so the county option factor did not enter into the organization voting. Instead the old progressive-conservative line-up remained alive. In the voting for President pro tempore, progressive Republican H. N. Benson of Nicollet county was defeated by reactionary Republican George H. Sullivan of Washington county, 36-28. The organizational fight centered around the question of whether or not the number of patronage positions in the Senate should be reduced, as Benson wanted. The Sullivan organization remained in quite effective control of the Senate throughout the session.

When the county-option bill came up in the Senate it passed, as was expected, by a vote of 36-31. Governor W. S. Hammond, who

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28 Buell, op. cit., p. 12. See also Christianson, op. cit., p. 344 and Cheney, op. cit., pp. 35-36.

had received the support of the wets in the election, but who had remained silent on county-option throughout the campaign, told the legislature that he would abide by their decision. When the bill was presented to him, he promptly signed it. The wets, who had supported a nonpartisan legislature because they thought it would aid their cause, who had succeeded in electing a wet speaker, and who had put into office a supposedly wet governor, found that all of their plans had boomeranged. The very first legislature elected without party designation put into effect a law that foreshadowed eventual state-wide prohibition.

It is rather difficult to estimate the effect of the nonpartisan law upon the balance of the parties in the two houses. Theodore Christianson, a member of the House and an opponent of nonpartisanship, had this to say:[29]

> The 1915 Legislature was a nonpartisan body; but it was a Republican Legislature nevertheless, for it contained 132 members who acknowledged themselves to be members of the Republican party.

Another veteran observer of the legislature, O. J. Buell, arrived at quite another figure. He found the following party alignment:[30]

Table I

1915 Legislature

Party	House	Senate	Total
Republican	96	48	144
Democrat	30	16	46
Prohibition	2	1	3
Socialist	2	1	3
Populist	-	1	1
Total	130	67	197

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29 Christianson, op. cit., p. 342.

30 Buell, op. cit., p. 78.

The difference between 132 and 144 Republicans cannot be explained with certainty. Surely Christianson was as good a Republican as Buell! The difference probably lies in the fact that Buell wanted to account for every member of the legislature, while Christianson included only those who were reasonably clearly associated with the party. Buell admitted that many persons had very loose party connections. In this matter, too, the 1915 session presaged the future legislative trend when increasing numbers of candidates with little or no active party participation entered the lists.

It is interesting to note that by Buell's figures, the Democrats who, like the wets, had expected to gain by nonpartisanship, suffered an absolute loss in membership in both houses despite the increased size of the legislature. The minor parties, on the other hand, more than doubled their membership, going from three to seven legislators. (Only one, however, was a holdover from the 1913 legislature.) In this manner, another prediction of the proponents of nonpartisanship proved to be incorrect. It had been expected that minor party candidates would be eliminated in the primary and thus not draw away votes from "serious" office seekers in the fall.

Opinion of newspapers and observers concerning the 1915 session varied considerably. It was generally felt that the House had been constituted of below average material, that it had wasted a lot of time and that little legislation was enacted beyond the county option bill and an anti-roadhouse bill (designed to limit drinking places to incorporated areas). Some blamed the nonpartisan character of the legislature for the

ineptitude, while others, anxious to defend the change, sought other reasons.

The Minneapolis Journal, which had earlier given tentative approval to the new plan,[31] changed its mind after election day:[32]

> It is the unvarying experience of parliamentary governments that parties are essential to the carrying on of their legislative business. When a number of men who have been selected as representatives of other men come together to transact business, parties are quickly formed if they have not already existed. Men of the same temperament and mind naturally work together in effecting the policies they deem wise. As time goes on and new law making bodies succeed the old ones, these parties take more or less permanent organization.
>
> It has remained for Minnesota to indulge in the paradoxical and self-contradictory scheme of a nonpartisan legislature. What is the result? Even before the new device was put to test, weeks before the legislature was called to meet, parties began to form. This is natural and inevitable.
>
> When the law was first being tested it needed only the question of the Speakership instantly to divide these nonpartisans into bitter "partisans". This today is one of our best evidences of our nonpartisan legislative fallacy. In the upper House we find the nonpartisan myth being exploded when they choose their President Pro Tempore. The Senate also becomes partisan when they divide to grab off the patronage. This it must be remembered all takes place before the legislature actually begins its real business of making laws.
>
> The nonpartisan legislature, in short, must be numbered among the things that are not. To use a slang phrase, "There ain't no such animal."

The general view continued to be the opinion of the Journal and, in fact, of all the metropolitan dailies from that time forward.

A conference of Republican leaders, meeting in St. Paul a few days after the Journal article, voiced much the same opinion.[33]

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31 Supra, p. 25.

32 Minneapolis Journal, December 25, 1914, p. 5. The editorial appears to have been written by Cheney.

33 St. Cloud Daily Times, December 30, 1914, p. 2. The conference took place the preceding day.

Several speakers agreed that the state should return to the partisan ballot. Frank B. Kellogg gave his reasons for believing that the republic could not be run without "well defined" party organizations. He thought it impossible to legislate parties out of existence. J. Adam Bede, congressman and professional humorist, stated that he believed in two strong parties, "the one leading in government and the other watching how the work is done."

Editorial opposition to the new election method was not limited to the metropolitan dailies. The St. Peter Free Press remained steadfastly opposed to the plan. In summarizing its view of the election, it said:[34]

> The nonpartisan election is an ideal instrument through which private interest is given an immense advantage over public needs.

At the end of the session, it added:[35]

> A republican form of government implies the existence of popular parties, through which the public at large gives force and effect to its views and its wants. A nonpartisan election, on the other hand, eliminates party organization, leaving everything up to the initiative of individuals. . . . There is no such thing as real nonpartisanship in a form of government whose very existence is based upon party principles.

The Red Wing newspaper, which had originally been rather uninterested in the changed election law, was somewhat carried away after the first nonpartisan election when it announced that "here in Minnesota non-partisan candidates have eliminated party lines and party strife which added much to the noise and enthusiasm of the campaigns years ago."[36] At the end of the session, the

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34 St. Peter Free Press, November 18, 1914, p. 2.

35 Ibid., April 18, 1915, p. 2.

36 Red Wing Republican, November 11, 1914, p. 4.

editor noted that the sitting had had "few distinguishing marks". He thought the lack of leadership was probably the result of the unduly individualistic inclinations of the membership. He admitted that public pressure and not good legislators had forced through the county option and anti-roadhouse bills. He was firm, however, in stressing that the blame for the poor showing was not to be found in any change in legislative structure:[37]

> Some lay the blame for the lack of leadership at this session to the nonpartisan character of the legislature and say that party is necessary to bring the best results. This is simply a subterfuge. The legislature of Minnesota has been so strongly Republican for a generation or more that the party lines rarely ever have been drawn. . . . Party control of the Minnesota legislature was never a factor in its success.

While this statement was not without a degree of truth, it is particularly interesting in that it represented something that was to become typical of staunchly dry newspapers until prohibition was achieved: a loyal, unvarying defense of the nonpartisanship that had so surprisingly and so happily come to the aid of the "temperance" movement.

Rep. A. V. Anderson of Goodhue county told the Republican that he thought much of the lack of accomplishment could be blamed on the ineffectiveness of H. H. Flowers as speaker, although he, too, found an unusual amount of independence among members. He thought the Senate had been "a more progressive body," that its session was less "boisterous," and that it had been able to keep up with its calendar.[38]

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[37] Ibid., April 24, 1915, p. 4.

[38] Ibid., April 23, 1915, p. 4.

Another sturdy defense of the legislature came from another dry -- the free-lance journalist C. J. Buell. He thought that the success of the drys in the 1915 session was "largely due to the nonpartisan legislature."[39] In order to fit this idea to the facts, he resorted to some rather doubtful arguments. Concerning the speakership election, he said:[40]

> One thing is quite certain. If the party system had been in force, Mr. Flowers would not have been Speaker and the whole organization of that body would have been different. What the final result would have been no one can tell.

While the last statement is an obvious fact, a fairly sound estimation can be made judging from the sessions preceding. It seems likely that a dry Republican would have been selected in the party caucus (they were a clear majority) and, barring an unprecedented defection of wet Republicans to the Democratic candidate, would have been elected. A majority of drys appears to have been almost inevitable in 1915 no matter how the legislature was selected. Had a dry presided over the House from the beginning of the session, the causes for the confusion and ineffectiveness that followed the defeat of the Flowers organization on the county option measure would not have existed. Buell's argument that nonpartisanship was a great boon to the "temperance" movement does not appear to be well founded and may even be contrary to the facts.

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39 See Buell, op. cit., especially pp. 78-79 and his report in the Willmar Tribune, April 28, 1915, p. 4.

40 Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1915, p. 79.

Nevertheless, he felt called upon to defend the new arrangement. Granting that the legislature accomplished little beyond the "temperance" measures, he argued:[41]

> Some city papers are laying all the sins of the legislature to the fact that it is non-partisan, but I can't see it that way. * * *
>
> The time has passed when the crack of the party lash can make the members jump. * * *
>
> It is a nice thing that some of the very best and ablest men in both House and Senate could not have been here under the partisan system.

Buell felt that the democratic election machinery had a bright future before it since "the people will learn and they will reflect that knowledge in the character of their representatives." He thought that nonpartisanship had helped them since now "each candidate had to make his canvass for votes on his personal character and fitness and upon the things he stood for."[42]

It was the Socialists who bothered Buell most in the 1915 session. He complained that they voted for one another on the speakership ballot instead of choosing between the major candidates, as had all the other members. Throughout the session, he pointed out, they kept voting and thinking as Socialists when they had been elected as nonpartisans. Hence, they were not honestly playing the game.[42a] Perhaps his annoyance could be traced in part to the fact that the Socialists insisted upon viewing

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41 Buell in the Willmar Tribune, loc cit.

42 Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1915, pp. 78-79.

42a Ibid., p. 8.

"temperance" as a question strictly secondary to the problems of the workingman.

The Willmar Tribune, with its views possibly colored by the letters from its St. Paul correspondent, defended the legislature in an end-of-session editorial:[43]

> Likewise the non-partisan law is a step forward for which Minnesota people have reason to feel satisfied. To repeal that would have been a crime against political progress and would have deprived our state of being first to work out such a plan.

The Fergus Falls newspaper, which had greeted the new system placidly in 1913, remained on the fence. It noted that under the old system there had been a semblance of party activity, at least until the session had been organized. The paper wondered what would happen when there was no common effort directed toward making a good record that might be used to aid future party success. Noting that "already there is much talk against this system", it thought that "whether it remains or not will depend somewhat on the result achieved by this session."[44]

As a matter of fact, the record of achievement of the session was so poor that nonpartisanship might well have been abandoned by the next legislature but for the fact that the prohibition question, which had cleft both parties, had not yet been settled.

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43 Willmar Tribune, May 5, 1915, p. 4.

44 Fergus Falls Daily Journal, January 9, 1915, p. 2.

The state-wide dissatisfaction is well summarized in an editorial in the St. Cloud Daily Times, which had hailed the nonpartisan principle two years earlier:[45]

> The general impression is that it has been the greatest failure as a legislative body ever assembled in the state. This is certainly true of the House. The Senate, on the other hand, has been a fairly respectable and dignified body. Its business was conducted with decorum and it ended its final session with its calendar cleaned up. But the House -- Oh, Lord, deliver us from such another!

The 1917 Session.[46] When the second nonpartisan meeting of the legislature was convened, J. A. A. Burnquist of St. Paul, an increasingly conservative Republican, was governor, having succeeded to the office upon the death of Winfield Scott Hammond on December 30, 1915.[47] In Washington, Woodrow Wilson was failing in his effort to "keep America out of the war" and prohibition was still the vogue among the nation's indefatigable reformers.

The leading issues expected to come before the session were a compulsory industrial insurance plan with the state serving as custodian of the funds, a proposal to limit the injunctive powers of the courts in industrial disputes, a series of less important labor bills, a "criminal syndicalist" bill aimed at the highly distrusted International Workers of the World, a two percent tonnage tax on iron ore and, of course, state-wide prohibition. Most legislative candidates were sent to the capital committed

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45 St. Cloud Daily Times, April 22, 1915, p. 4.

46 There was a one-day extra session held on October 28, 1916 which is not discussed. Its purpose was merely to extend the absentee voter law to allow soldiers on the Mexican border to vote.

47 Both John A. Johnson and W. S. Hammond, Democrats, were succeeded by Republican lieutenant-governors when they died in office. The constitutional officers below the governor were invariably Republican during this period.

on only one of these important questions: that of prohibition. In fact, except for persons in a few urban working-class districts, the voters were uninterested in the views of a candidate on any other issue.

While the election of 1914 had produced a majority of drys in both houses, the lower house division had been so close as to allow the wets to organize the body. Due to the general nation-wide trend and the renewed efforts of the drys, the House of Representatives selected in 1916 was unquestionably dry. The organization of the House again was upon the basis of the liquor question. Since the drys expected to win, no less than nine of their number announced for the speakership after election.[48] All were associated with the Republican party, at least nominally, and some were active in state party activities. The wets united, as they had two years before, on a single candidate and, after all of the drys had announced themselves, put forth O. H. Warner of Aikin, a veteran member of the House who had earlier been elected as a Republican.

In order to avoid a defeat through lack of unity, the leading drys informally got together and chose a caucus steering committee of ten, one from each congressional district. They were assigned the task of choosing the official dry candidate.

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48 O. M. Bendixon, Theodore Christianson, John B. Hompe, Magnus Johnson, Knute Knutson, W. I. Nolan, Ralph J. Parker, Oscar Swenson, Claude Southwick. On non-liquor issues they ranged from Hompe, a civil war veteran, who was practically a charter member of the Republican party to leading conservatives like Christianson and Nolan on to Johnson, who represented the agrarian insurgents.

Of the nine men considered, three were thought not strong enough. Of the remainder, Ralph J. Parker of Fillmore county in the conservative, dry southern part of the state, emerged as the mutual choice.[49]

Parker and Warner engaged in a lively pre-session contest seeking the votes of the non-pledged representatives-elect. There were the usual charges and counter-charges of vote buying and "skullduggery", but there was never any real doubt as to the eventual winner. The week before the formal meeting of the legislature, the wets gave up and agreed to cast their ballots for Parker in hopes of securing desirable committee assignments. Here again a precedent was established that is not customary in conventional legislatures.[49a] On three occasions since, the minority has refrained from presenting a candidate against hopeless odds. The practice is not a standard one, however, and the matter is discretionary with the minority caucus.

In the formal balloting, Parker received 127 votes. The Socialists continued their policy of partisan activity and presented the name of A. O. Devold of Minneapolis as their candidate.

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49 Concerning the organization of the 1917 legislature, see: "The County Chairman," in The Willmar Tribune; the Fergus Falls Daily Journal; the St. Paul Pioneer-Press; and the Minneapolis Journal for the period. In addition, see O. J. Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1917, 112 pp.

49a It is not unknown elsewhere, however. Iowa Democrats in the House, for example, have not always presented an opposition candidate. See Carl B. Upham, Some Aspects of the Legislature in Iowa (1916), 72 pp.

Since Strand was the only other representative who had been chosen as an avowed Socialist, Devold received two votes.

In making committee assignments, Speaker Parker attempted to maintain the harmony that had been shown in the formal speakership vote. Every candidate for the speakership, weak or strong, received a chairmanship. To the head of the important committee on temperance, he named George A. Sutherland together with nine "safe" drys on the committee of fifteen. Although not all chairmen were rated as dry, the "soft drink crowd" had a majority on each committee.

Not everyone was happy with the committee assignments, however. Agrarian radicalism was once more beginning to make itself felt in Minnesota politics and a few events in the 1917 session presaged the events that were to follow in the bitter campaigns of 1918 and 1920. The Non-Partisan League was moving into the state from North Dakota and, in its usual blunt manner, objected to the makeup of the grain and warehouse committee, suggesting that it seemed to have been chosen by the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce itself.[50]

In keeping with the spirit of reform that was felt in state government during the second decade of the twentieth century, the House was concerned with its patronage appointments. Speaker Parker thought that the number of House employees should be reduced and that a fair means of distribution would be to have four

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50 Fergus Falls Daily Journal, January 10, 1917, p. 2; Willmar Tribune, January 10, 1917, p. 7.

persons named at a conference of each of the ten congressional districts. Rep. Ralph Crane of Mower county introduced a bill to provide for the direct, at large, election of the Speaker. He argued that since there is no party responsibility and since the Speaker has very great power in his authority to make committee assignments, the position ought to be filled by the direct choice of the electors of the state.[51] Neither proposal was adopted.

The first chance to test the strength and internal discipline of the new House organization came on a move to deny a seat to E. E. Orr of Wadena for alleged violations of the Corrupt Practices Act of 1912. Orr, the wets claimed, had been guilty of giving away cigars and soft drinks in his efforts to convince his constituents to send him to the capital. The House elections committee supported Orr and on a move to substitute the minority report, which called for denial of the seat, the vote was as follows:[52]

To unseat Orr:
12 drys
24 wets

To accept Orr:
65 drys
16 wets

Clearly, on this vote the strong discipline often found in state legislatures or in the United States Congress on political questions was not present. While most wets voted against Orr

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51 Willmar Tribune, January 31, 1917, p. 9.

52 Buell, op. cit., p. 13.

and most drys for him, a considerable number of men appear to have determined their ballots by what they deemed to be the merits of the question -- that is, whether or not Orr violated the letter and spirit of the Corrupt Practices Act. The vote indicates that, although the question was regarded as a wet-dry political issue, there was no impelling reason for any man to be obliged to cast his vote in a certain way.

There were no absolutely solid voting blocs in the 1917 legislature. While the drys agreed upon prohibition, they disagreed as to whether it should be adopted by statute or constitutional amendment and they could not readily agree upon the scope of the proposal. The biggest difference concerned the inclusion of the term "transportation of liquor". It was finally included in the proposed amendment after much debate.

Sectionalism was not a factor in making up general voting blocs, although it did appear on a few issues, particularly that of the tonnage tax which found the south and west favoring the proposal and the north opposed. Voting on the bill, which passed the House but was later buried in the upper chamber, was largely on sectional lines.

Even the farmers, who are generally interested in the same things, were not unanimous during the session. Led by men such as A. F. Teigen of Montevideo and Magnus Johnson, representatives who had been listening to the arguments of the Non-Partisan League debated with more conservative farmers concerning such matters as the necessity for investigation of the Minneapolis chamber of commerce and more restrictive laws concerning dockage

practices by grain elevators.[53]

The best organized group within the House, however, were the drys. They caucused several times during the session, sometimes secretly. At these meetings, the various differences were worked out so that the group could go before the House with a fairly united front. The actual floor discussion of the prohibition amendment was routine and proceeded according to schedule. In fact, the bill was adopted so smoothly that the Fergus Falls editor was moved, intentionally or otherwise, to make use of an ill-chosen metaphor when he suggested that the dry machine was "well oiled".[54]

In light of the fact that the one overwhelming issue in 1916 had been the question of prohibition, it is not surprising that there were few significant correlations in the voting of House members outside of the liquor question. Very few persons were elected who did not commit themselves to one side or the other of the "temperance" question, but on the other hand, few candidates were expected seriously to discuss other issues.

Table II shows the voting record of ten House leaders on final roll calls. Despite the many short-comings of determining opinions by the final roll call, which is often taken after the issue has actually been settled in the fight over amendments or

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53 "Dockage" was the term applied to the practice of making a certain percentage deduction from the weight of small grains sold to an elevator in order to allow for weed seeds, broken stems and other refuse. Farmers had long complained that the amount of dockage was in excess of actual waste.

54 Fergus Falls Daily Journal, January 29, 1917, p. 2

Table II [55]

VOTING RECORD ON IMPORTANT BILLS

1917 House of Representatives

Name	Measure Number (A for Aye, N for Nay)												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. T. Christianson	A	A	N	A	A	N	A	A	N	A	A	A	-
2. A. O. Devold	A	A	A	N	A	A	A	A	-	A	N	-	-
3. O. E. Hammer	A	N	A	A	N	A	A	-	A	N	N	N	N
4. A. Howard	-	A	-	A	N	N	N	N	N	A	N	A	-
5. E. Indrehus	A	A	A	N	A	N	A	N	N	A	N	A	A
6. M. Johnson	A	A	N	A	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
7. A. S. Larson	A	-	A	A	N	N	A	N	A	N	A	A	A
8. W. I. Nolan	A	A	A	A	N	N	N	N	N	A	A	A	A
9. R. J. Parker	-	A	A	A	A	-	N	-	-	A	A	A	A
10. O. H. Warner	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	N	-

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[55] The measures selected are:

1. The Public Domain Bill.
2. Edland's Party Convention Bill.
3. Equal suffrage bill.
4. Bill to curb use of injunction in labor disputes.
5. Tonnage tax bill, 2% on iron ore.
6. Bill to repeal Minneapolis civil service law.
7. Bill to prohibit futures sales on grain exchange.
8. Bill to tax futures sales on grain exchange.
9. Welch oleomargarine bill -- discriminatory tax.
10. Prohibition by statute.
11. Cummings bill to stiffen penalty for operating a "blind pig."
13. Bill to require captions for constitutional amendments. This was desired so as to mark plainly the prohibition amendment. Since failure to vote would be the equivalent of a "no", this was important to prohibitionists.

The members of the legislature selected:

1. Christianson. Republican, Chairman of Appropriations. Dry.
2. Devold. An avowed Socialist.
3. Hammer. A leading Wet.
4. Howard. Republican. A director of Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce. Grain buyer.
5. Indrehus. Democrat. A dry.
6. Johnson. Dry. Leader of agrarian insurgents in Republican party.
7. Larson. Republican. Leading dry.
8. Nolan. Conservative Republican. Chairman of Rules and House floor leader.
9. Parker. Republican. Speaker of the House.
10. Warner. Conservative Republican. Wet floor leader.

in the "smoke filled room," it appears to have some validity, especially since most of these ballots were far from unanimous. The thirteen most important bills of the 1917 session, as selected by C. J. Buell, have been used.[56]

The percentages of correlation for all bills are shown in Table III, while correlations for other than "temperance" measures are to be found in Table IV. Percentages include only such bills as were voted on by both members being compared.

Table III

CORRELATIONS ON THIRTEEN IMPORTANT BILLS

1917 House of Representatives

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. T. Christianson	--	60	38	60	67	92	64	67	75	59
2. A. O. Devold	60	--	50	38	80	60	44	40	57	90
3. O. E. Hammer	38	50	--	33	42	31	60	33	22	73
4. A. Howard	60	38	33	--	70	45	67	90	71	40
5. E. Indrehus	67	80	42	70	--	62	75	69	67	59
6. M. Johnson	92	60	31	45	62	--	75	62	78	67
7. A. S. Larson	64	44	60	67	75	75	--	83	75	55
8. W. I. Nolan	67	40	33	90	69	62	83	--	89	42
9. R. J. Parker	75	57	22	71	67	78	75	89	--	63
10. C. H. Warner	59	90	73	40	59	67	55	42	63	--

(Numbers across top and down left side compare.)

On the prohibition issue, the best measure of members' views is to be found in the vote on the Cummings bill to discourage illegal distillation of liquor. Drys differed in their views toward statutory prohibition, some believing that it was not a sufficient safeguard. Wets, on the other hand, were divided on the question of constitutional prohibition. Some believed it

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56 C. J. Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1917, appendix.

would be wise to vote for it, thinking that a sufficient number of votes could not be secured at an election anyway, while others remained uncompromising. Other than in such differences, the wets and drys remained each in their own camps.

The more important correlations are shown in Table IV, where the nine non-prohibition questions are considered. Warner and Hammer, two of the leaders in the wet organization, disagreed with one another on three of the session's important measures. While W. I. Nolan, chairman of the rules committee, agreed perfectly with Asher Howard of the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, he was on opposite sides of important issues from Theodore Christianson, chairman of the appropriations committee, nearly half of the time.

While Nolan agreed least often with Hammer and Warner on Table IV as well as on liquor questions, Warner agreed with three drys, A. O. Devold, Magnus Johnson and the speaker, more often than he did with O. E. Hammer on outside issues. Hammer, similarly, agreed most often with Adolph S. Larson, a leader of

Table IV

CORRELATIONS ON NON-PROHIBITION BILLS

1917 House of Representatives

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	T. Christianson	--	63	38	50	67	89	50	56	60	67
2.	A. O. Devold	63	--	57	17	75	63	43	38	60	78
3.	O. E. Hammer	38	57	--	33	38	50	86	57	40	75
4.	A. Howard	50	17	33	--	57	43	67	100	60	29
5.	E. Indrebus	67	75	38	57	--	56	63	67	60	56
6.	M. Johnson	89	63	50	43	56	--	63	78	60	78
7.	A. S. Larson	50	43	86	67	63	63	--	75	50	63
8.	W. I. Nolan	56	38	57	100	67	78	75	--	80	44
9.	R. J. Parker	60	60	40	60	60	60	50	80	--	80
10.	C. H. Warner	67	78	75	29	56	78	63	44	80	--

(Numbers across top and down left side compare.)

the drys, on general issues.

While this may appear to be documenting the obvious, it does serve to emphasize the very great lack of organizational unity outside of the liquor question. Even the leadership of the drys was not necessarily simultaneously conservative leadership, as is indicated by the high position occupied by Theodore Christianson who, although later very conservative as governor, was considered to be one of the agrarian insurgents and a close co-worker with Magnus Johnson in the 1917 session. Organization beyond the liquor question must be classified as ephemeral, if not haphazard, during this period of legislative history.

Despite this, the House operated in a much more smooth manner and accomplished a good deal more than it had in the preceding session. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the wet-dry balance of power was not quite so close and the speakership went to the group that actually had a majority on that question. Rep. J. B. Hompe of Fergus Falls summarized the general view in a letter to the editor: "There is a much better feeling among the members than there was last session, and the House is much more orderly than it was then."[57]

In the Senate, which did not have to go before the voters in 1916, the session was harmonious. The dry majority held sway on liquor questions and on other issues the senators exercised the same type of independence as was found in the House. The new lieutenant-governor, Thomas Frankson of St. Paul, named

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57 Fergus Falls Daily Journal, January 30, 1917, p. 2.

committee slates that were predominantly dry, and George Sullivan of Stillwater was re-elected president pro tem. Sullivan, together with two veteran, ultra-conservative Republican party regulars, F. E. Putnam of Faribault and O. L. Wallace of Minneapolis, held the major committee assignments and guided the Senate calendar in the interests of conservatism.

Sullivan and his group met some opposition at the beginning of the session concerning the distribution of patronage, but they were successful and controlled this important political function "with no attempt to conceal their activities."[58]

Even in the Senate with its effective personal machine to which the lieutenant-governor acquiesced, conservatism was not completely dominant. The chairmanship of the important grain and warehouse committee went to the veteran O. C. Gagong of Fergus Falls who liked to describe himself as "the last surviving Populist." The Senate committee was thus more sympathetic to the demands of rising rural discontent than was the comparable committee in the House, even though the House itself was, as a whole, less conservatively dominated.

"Temperance" questions offered no problem in the Senate and were handled in a rather routine fashion by the group controlling the calendar. The proposal to submit a constitutional amendment to the people calling for state-wide prohibition was adopted with less than half a minute of debate devoted to it on final passage.

Opinions of the session after it adjourned were quite

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58 Hillmar Tribune, January 10, 1917, p. 7.

different from those expressed in 1915. Whereas at that time the general lack of accomplishment and poor organization of the House was laid to the nonpartisan device, in 1917 the fact that the legislature spent far more money than any other legislature in the history of the state was said to have stemmed from the same cause. This phenomenon, which had been anticipated by the editor of the Caledonia Journal[59] in 1913, was said by highly competent observers to be attributable to the lack of a party answerable for the spending of the legislature and to the fact that individuals could easily "pass the buck" to other members for a high budget while at the same time taking full credit for such pork barrel items as might come into their own bailiwicks. Legislators, as individuals, could thus vote with impunity for expenditures that they could not possibly have approved without sabotaging their own party in the conventional system.[60]

The Willmar Tribune[61] continued to support the argument for an entirely nonpartisan state ballot, while a large number of country weeklies simply began to accept the nonpartisan principle without comment. It is very probable that the rather considerable amount of legislation that was adopted at the session was responsible for stilling most of the demands for a return to

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59 Supra, p. 27.

60 See comment of William Anderson of May, 1917, quoted in Robert Luce, Legislative Procedure (1922), pp. 498-499. Also, Fergus Falls Daily Journal, April 19, 1917, p. 2; and C. J. Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1923, p. 95.

61 Willmar Tribune, May 17, 1916, p. 4.

the old system that had been heard two years earlier. Another do-nothing session, coupled with a determination of the prohibition issue (except for national prohibition), might well have meant the end of the experiment.

The fact that the fight to save Minnesota youth from the ravishes of drink had supposedly been successfully consumated by the submission of the prohibition amendment to state voters was reflected in the report of the railroad brotherhoods, which began to turn its thoughts to other things. Noting that "In Minnesota we have a nonpartisan law but organized labor has never taken advantage of this," the lobbyists suggested that the workingman should stop dividing his strength by voting for representatives of other interests (presumably wets or drys) who claimed to be "friends of labor." The lobbyists urged organized labor to draw up a definite program, seek out candidates who would pledge themselves to such a program, and even suggested a possible tie-up with the Non-Partisan League farmers.[62] The suggestion proved to be fruitful.

While the conservative metropolitan dailies, including the Minneapolis Tribune and Journal and the St. Paul Pioneer-Press, remained opposed to the practice of nonpartisan elections, C. J. Buell continued to find it a real step forward in state government. He was forced to recognize the tendency toward independence on the part of the members, but he interpreted this as being desirable

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[62] Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1917, p. 45.

and argued that members felt an increased individual responsibility. In 1917 he wrote:[63]

> . . . . when the legislature was made non-partizan, a greater degree of independence began to show itself. Many members, who voted wet because it was the wish of their districts, manifested much independence on other questions, and showed themselves to be very free from any kind of special interest domination.

It was perhaps a mark of the times that Buell should have equated anti-prohibition sentiment with "wrong thinking" in other areas and have been surprised at the absence of a correlation. In another passage, he wrote:[64]

> There has certainly been a great gain in the direction of independence, not only in the men who have been sent to the legislature, but also among the voters themselves. . . . .
>
> Independence in politics is a mighty good thing for all except would-be leaders and party bosses; and even they will finally cease to let out their lamentations.

All of this, Buell thought "stimulates the people to study public questions, to take an interest, heretofore unknown, in the affairs of state and in the acts of their public servants." In the light of this increased surveillance, Buell found that "each member feels a greater degree of personal responsibility."[65] He did find, however, that there was still considerable "horse trading" which "could not be defended", but he thought it not in greater amounts than it had been before the 1913 change.[66]

The two Socialists in the legislature continued to displease

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63 O. J. Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1917, p. 107.

64 Ibid., p. 31.

65 Ibid, p. 30

66 Ibid., p. 9.

Buell. He insisted that they were elected as nonpartisans and should not have nominated their own candidate for speaker. He pointed out that the twenty-five to thirty Democrats in the body did not have, and should not have had, their own candidate.[67]

In suggesting that the members of the legislature were "chosen for their personal character and for the policies they stand for,"[68] Buell was probably guilty of judging responsibility to the voter merely upon the one issue in which he was most interested -- prohibition. He was also partially in error when he suggested that:[69]

> . . . . the Old Guard, reactionary politicians are weeping floods of tears over the loss of party control and predicting the ruin of the state unless we restore to them -- the said politicians -- the direction of our public affairs.

While many party regulars were, and have always remained, opposed to a system which, among other things, reduces the importance and strength of the party, by no means all of them felt this way. Men such as Senator Rockne soon supported the plan.

Rep. J. B. Hompe of Fergus Falls, one-time Populist but later an increasingly conservative Republican, wrote the following letter to his home town editor during the 1917 session:[70]

> One of the large questions to come before the legislature is an attempt to repeal our present non-partisan law, so far as the members of the legislature are concerned. It is claimed that the present law tends to disorganize our system of government by parties. It is true that parties do not bind the voters as was the case a few years ago, but

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67 Ibid., p. 9.

68 Ibid., p. 30.

69 Ibid., p. 29.

70 Fergus Falls Daily Journal, February 14, 1917, p. 3. Printed

is this not owing to the fact that there is so little difference in the principles and policies of at least the two leading parties, and will the election of a partisan legislature help to restore the old order of things? If so, better repeal the entire law, and let all county officers be placed on a party ticket; as far as I can see, party questions do not come up here any more than in county offices, and we hardly know who are Republicans or Democrats.

Two years ago we were charged with being a leaderless and disorderly house. That cannot be said of this house. The great trouble is that the old party boss is out of a job and he doesn't like it, and the members keep in closer touch with the people of their home districts. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. For many years the people of the state have demanded to be allowed to vote on the great reform questions that have agitated the conscience of the American people, but the boss said no, it may hurt my party. While the non-partisan legislators, obedient to the will of the people to whom they owed their election, have fulfilled and are fulfilling the duties impressed upon them. I mistake the sentiment of our people if they want this law repealed.

The 1919 Session. The forty-first legislature of the state met a scarce two months after an armistice had ended the first World War and at a time when the nation was suffering from a peculiar mass hysteria that manifested itself in many ways. High employment and a high cost-of-living had brought strikes and labor discontent; many people were urging the speedy ratification of the national prohibition amendment; women were insisting upon their emancipation and especially the right to vote since they would then be able to see to it that no mother's son need ever go to war again; and super-patriots were seeking out Bolsheviks, and labor groups that were dominated by "foreign ideologies", in order to destroy them.

In Minnesota, it was expected that the legislature would approve the Eighteenth Amendment, a bill to forbid the flying

of a red flag as a symbol of opposition to the American system of government, a proposal to continue the public safety commission of wartime, another to eliminate or reduce the importance of the primary election, another to extend and expand industrial accident insurance, and another to levy a severance tax upon iron ore, in addition to other measures.

In order to vote upon such issues as these, the people of the state went to the polls in November. In most parts of the state, the election was essentially a referendum on the question of the ratification by the state of the Eighteenth Amendment: it was still a wet-dry issue. In a considerable number of urban districts, war-strengthened labor unions put forth candidates of their own instead of relying on backing the most favorable aspirant and in these areas the campaign was almost equally one sided, the question asked of the voter being approximately: are you pro-labor or not? In a goodly and increasing number of rural constituencies, particularly in the Red River valley, the contest was between the status quo and the state socialism offered by the Non-Partisan League, which advocated state flour mills and elevators and state loans to farmers, among other things.

For the first time since 1912, the election involved more than a simple referendum on county option or prohibition. When the ballots were counted, organized labor had elected five Senators and eleven Representatives; the Non-Partisan League had succeeded in eight senatorial and twenty-four lower house constituencies; and the indestructible A. O. Devold, Socialist, had been returned to the House. Of the remainder, which included an overwhelming

majority of both houses, some had been elected on platforms of opposition either to the League or to organized labor, but most of them had been chosen because of their stand on prohibition. The principal line of cleavage in the 1919 legislature was still the wet-dry issue.

The speakership did not appear as a particularly important problem after the election had produced a heavily disproportionate dry majority in the House. Instead of several persons offering their services immediately after election, as had been the case ever since the nonpartisan principle had been adopted, it was generally expected that W. I. Nolan of Minneapolis would become speaker. He was a veteran legislator, had been chairman of the important rules committee, was a conservative Republican without being classed as a reactionary, had long been a dry, and was probably the best parliamentarian in the House. A group of veteran representatives, lead by Elmer E. Adams of Fergus Falls, called a meeting of all members of the House for early December. At this session, which the Non-Partisan League decided to boycott, Nolan received ninety-four votes -- more than two-thirds of the number possible.[71]

The 1918 election had been a bitter one in the areas where the Non-Partisan League was active. Despite violence and bloodshed, and the uncompromising opposition of vested wealth, which

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[71] On the organization of the 1919 legislature, see: "Observations by a Cornfield Philosopher," in the Willmar Tribune; the Minneapolis Journal; the St. Paul Pioneer-Press; Theodore Christianson, Minnesota; Land of Sky-Tinted Waters, Vol. II, p. 372; C. J. Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1919, 112 pp.

hated and feared the radical threats to the established order, the League had a close-knit group of twenty-four representatives. This clique had good reasons for refusing to amalgamate with the rest of the House and in reply to the suggestion that to nominate a separate candidate for speaker would not only be hopeless but would only continue afresh the hostilities of the bitter campaign, League leaders pointed out that Governor Burnquist, who epitomized all they opposed, had personally favored W. I. Nolan and he was therefore unacceptable to the League. The insurgents in caucus chose John A. Urness of Douglas county as their speaker "candidate". A. O. Welch of McLeod was the actual as well as formal leader for the group.

In the official balloting, Nolan as expected, was an easy winner. He secured the votes of both wets and drys, as well as most of the labor-sponsored members. Urness received twenty-three votes. Two of these were left-wing labor men, Strand of Lake county (a Socialist who generally joined with Devold in the speakership vote previously) and Miner of Minneapolis. The Leaguers became independents after securing their seats and refused to be bound by the League caucus (see Table V). These two, John N. Nett of Albany and F. A. Scherf of Red Wing, voted for Nolan.

With the candidates abstaining, the vote was 105-23.

Speaker Nolan was not a puppet, as speakers before and after him sometimes have been called, and he proved to be a fair and able presiding officer. In fact, he was so likeable that at the end of the session, all but two members joined in presenting a new automobile to him. He did, however, share actual control of the

House with three others: Theodore Christianson of Dawson, who remained at the head of the appropriations committee, C. M. Bendixon of Redwood, and Charles Warner of Aitkin, who was a wet leader, but who was a member of the inside group on economic matters. During this period Christianson developed a reputation as the legislative expert on state spending. He made a careful study of appropriation needs and dispositions and became the best informed man in the legislature on the subject. Possessing a near monopoly of information in this important area, he became a very powerful member of the House.

When Nolan and his advisors made up a slate of committee assignments, the bitterness and distrust that conservatives showed toward the Non-Partisan League became very evident. Although the League was represented by twenty-four members, or 18.4% of the membership, it had but one man on the tax committee. Proportionately, it would have been entitled to four of the twenty-one committeemen. The insurgents likewise controlled but one seat on the judiciary committee. But the worst discrimination was to be found on the five other principal committees. On rules, appropriations, elections, banks and banking, and military affairs, there was not one Leaguer.[72]

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[72] The military affairs committee was important in 1919 because of Governor Burnquist's request for a State Motor Corps as a continuation of the war-time motorized Home Guard, which had been made up almost completely of professional and business men (according to the governor's 1919 inaugural message) who furnished their own uniforms and automobiles. The Corps was to be a permanent organization that could move quickly to areas of fires, floods and storms and was to aid in the "protection of life and property." This last phrase caused the League and organized labor to view the plan with deep suspicion.

In answer to charges of discrimination, Nolan replied that he had sent a letter to each member of the House asking for committee preferences. Pursuing their policy of protest through non-cooperation, many Leaguers did not answer the letter. Of those who did, according to Nolan, none asked to be put on the appropriations committee and only one asked for the tax committee and he received the requested assignment.[73] Nolan thus followed the established practice of not distinguishing definite groups within the legislature, except to insure a majority of drys on the principal committees. The failure of the League to be better represented on committees appears, then, to be the fault not only of conservative hostility, but also of the failure of many on both sides of the issue to recognize the League as the *de facto* minority group in the House.

Despite its impotence in committee work, the League members were none-the-less effective for their numbers. This was chiefly because of two factors. In the first place, the group represented the first organized caucus in the "nonpartisan" legislature to take collective action in a broad field of economic problems. Secondly, on many issues the League had support from other sources. Organized labor claimed the allegiance of those who had been elected with the support of the Minnesota Federation of Labor and the railroad brotherhoods, and these men worked with the League on such questions as workman's compensation, compulsory insurance for bank deposits, the Motor Corps, city control of local

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73 O. J. Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1919, p. 17.

utilities, a "pay when due" law and a "one day's rest in seven" law. Furthermore, about thirteen additional members[74] acted independently of the House leadership and the governor, and backed many of the less radical League proposals.

The League members met in caucus from time to time during the session and, on questions in which the League as such had a direct interest, an effort was made to present a solid voting bloc. This was not quite achieved since Nett and Scherf disagreed on the speakership vote, and Nett opposed local control of public utilities. On the question of ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment and that of allowing women to vote for presidential electors, questions on which the League had no definite philosophy, the men were free to vote as they pleased. The high degree of organization achieved in a previously largely unorganized body is demonstrated in Table V. The Leaguers, elected on a definite platform, were held to that platform and, except for occasional defections by Nett and Scherf, recognized their repponsibility to their constituents.

A word should be said concerning the "labor representatives" in the 1919 legislature, the first session in which there was such an identifiable group. Organized labor, having become more powerful during the war, decided to abandon the policy of supporting the most favorable candidate and to follow the policy advocated by the railroad brotherhood lobbyists in their 1917 report and by

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74 The group was ephemeral and unorganized. The number is an average estimates by the "Cornfield Philosopher" in the Willmer Tribune, April 16, 1919, p. 4.

others.[75] In their infancy politically and philosophically, labor groups were wont to take a rather narrow view of their own interests. Concerning the 1919 legislature, Buell was moved to comment:[76]

> Then came the professional labor men who had so narrow a conception of their duties to the public that they were willing to trade away even the most important measures for votes in favor of some petty bill, right enough itself, but of infinitely small consequence when compared with measures they were willing to sacrifice.

The labor men were particularly criticized by progressives for having voted against the iron ore tonnage tax in return for support of their revisions of the industrial insurance code. The labor representatives broke with the League on this issue but otherwise generally supported the organized farmers. Labor lacked the cohesiveness and formal organization of the League, but it was a definite group elected upon a definite platform and each member was held responsible to his district through the publicity given to his voting record by organized labor.

The Senate remained under the domination of George Sullivan of Stillwater, J. D. Sullivan of St. Cloud, and A. J. Rockne of Zumbrota, but there was less bitterness concerning committee assignments than had been the case in the lower house. The eight League members and five labor Senators were all given

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75 Supra, pp. 70-71. For a report of labor activities in the session see: Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1919, 32 pp.

76 C. J. Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1919, pp. 8-9.

Table V

VOTING RECORD OF NON-PARTISAN LEAGUE

1919 House of Representatives

Member	Measure Number (A for Aye, N for Nay)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Anderson	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	100
Arens	A	N	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	87
Arneson	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	100
Berve	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	100
Burdorf	A	N	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	87
Day	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	100
Enstrom	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	100
Flaheven	A	N	N	A	A	A	N	A	100	75
C. M. Gislason	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	100
Holmquist	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	100
Iverson	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	100
Johnson	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	100
J. M. Nelson	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	100
Nett	N	N	N	-	A	A	N	N	60	43
Olson	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	100
Scherf	N	N	N	A	A	A	N	A	83	63
Skaiem	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	100
Sluke	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	100
Spelbrink	A	N	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	87
Stahlke	A	N	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	87
Thorkelson	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	100	100
Urness	P	A	A	A	A	-	N	A	100	100
Welch	A	N	N	A	A	A	N	A	100	75
Wicklund	A	A	N	A	A	A	N	A	100	87
Percentage of Agreement	91	67	79	100	100	100	100	96		
SPEAKER W. I. NOLAN	P	A	A	N	A	-	A	A	40	57

Measures:

1. Vote on Speaker. A, Urness; N, Nolan; P, present.
2. Ratification of the eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. Passed. House vote 192-36.
3. To allow women to vote for presidential electors. Passed House 123-24.
4. Two percent tonnage tax on iron ore. Failed, 64-61.
5. Liberalization of workman's compensation act. Passed House 78-48 but so changed in Senate it was killed by request.
6. Compulsory insurance for bank deposits. Passed House 79-30 but pigeon-holed in Senate.
7. Motor Corps bill. Passed House 85-43, no vote in Senate.
8. To allow cities of third and fourth class to regulate public utilities by city council. Passed House 77-41.
9. Percentage of agreement with caucus view on essential League questions, numbers 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
10. Percentage of agreement on all eight questions, assuming League view to be generally in favor of numbers 2 and 3.

assignments which they considered to be fair.[77] The lieutenant-governor, Thomas Frankson, sought to preside in an impartial manner that pleased the insurgents without causing displeasure to the conservative leadership.

Press comments after the 1919 session dealt more with what was or was not accomplished than they did with the nature of legislative organization. The editors and the people at large were becoming accustomed to nonpartisanship. Criticism was directed toward issues. Reactionaries were displeased because the session failed to restore party conventions and because measures were not taken to stamp out "radicalism". Other citizens were unhappy because of the attempt to put through a military program and because the legislature failed to adopt the iron ore tonnage tax.

The 1921 Session.[78] In the election of 1920, the wet-dry issue, which had been the meal ticket for so many members of both houses, had been resolved at last. In many constituencies, newspaper advertising stressed the incumbency of the candidate, or the fact that he was a veteran and was prepared to support the veteran, or that he favored vigorous enforcement of the prohibition laws. Real issues did exist, however, in those areas where a Non-Partisan League or labor candidate ran on a definite program. These two groups had joined forces in the election of 1918. Since state law required a party label in order to petition onto the

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77 Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1919, p. 5; Willmer Tribune, January 22, 1919, p. 4. The Tribune at this time closely reflected League views.

78 There was an extra session in September, 1919 called to consider a soldiers' bonus bill and to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

final ballot for partisan offices, the combination had designated itself the "Farmer-Labor party". Through publicized endorsements, this group elected a few legislators in the House (the Senate was not up for election). Just how many were chosen is difficult to estimate. The League had continued its policy of holding a convention in each district and endorsing a legislative candidate, whether or not he was active in the League -- in fact the endorsement was sometimes against the will of the candidate. Thirty-four League and labor endorsed candidates achieved election, but seven of this number did not choose to regard themselves as belonging to the group and did not join the Farmer-Labor caucus.

As was the case two years earlier, a caucus was called informally by veteran House members for November, 1920, after the election.[79] Invitations, however, were not extended to farmer and labor members. The League members had not attended the caucus two years previously (though some of the labor members had) and many of them had not replied to the letter asking for committee preferences. This caucus of conservatives was beginning to be referred to by newspapers as "the Republican majority,"[80] even though it actually included all of the Democrats in the House.

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79 On the organization of the 1921 legislature, see: Red Wing Republican for a middle-of-road view; the Minneapolis Journal and St. Paul Pioneer Press for conservative attitude; the Minnesota Leader for the views of the League; Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1921, 38 pp.; C. J. Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1921, 112 pp.; Robert E. Cushman, "Non-Partisan Nominations and Elections," The Annals, Vol. CVI, No. 193 (March, 1923) pp. 91-94.

80 Red Wing Republican, January 4, 1921, p. 1.

The conservative caucus broke from the tradition of the partisan legislature by endorsing W. I. Nolan for another term as speaker. Not since the 1890's had a man presided over two regular sessions of the law-making body, but Nolan had displeased no conservatives and even the League members considered him reasonably fair; furthermore, he was the best parliamentarian in the House, and it was decided to retain him.[80a] This was the only caucus of the conservatives for the session.

The League and labor members met in caucus just before the legislature convened. There was a lengthy discussion as to whether a candidate should be put forth, just as there had been two years earlier.[80b] H. C. Welch, League floor leader in 1919, and George Nadlin opposed the hopeless gesture and favored cooperation with the conservatives, but the League leaders outside of the legislature insisted that the group act as a separate party. It was finally decided to place in nomination the name of Erling Swenson of Minneapolis. Unlike the conservatives, the Farmer-Laborites held more or less regular caucuses throughout the session, seeking to determine policy and to bind the members. The League members had done this in 1919, but they had not been joined by the group from organized labor.

The formal vote gave Nolan 102 and Swenson 26 (the candidates abstaining.) In making committee assignments, Nolan

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80a Although Nolan was an able legislator, his private life was lacking in accomplishments. In the Legislative Manual, 1905, p. 676, he listed his profession as that of a "humoristic lecturer". He never achieved a more substantial occupation.

80b St. Paul Pioneer-Press, January 4, 1921, p. 1.

followed much the same policy as he had in the previous session. Conservatives were given all of the chairmanships and few Farmer-Labor members were assigned to the important committees, none at all to the highly important rules committee. The League complained of "steam roller" tactics, pointing out that, by the rule of seniority, Rep. H. O. Welch was entitled to head the grain and warehouse committee and that he was passed by.[81] As a matter of fact, on no important committee did the Farmer-Labor group receive very much representation nor were they accepted as the official opposition.

Organization in the Senate was harmonious once more in 1921. The new lieutenant-governor, Louis L. Collins of Minneapolis, worked closely with the conservative leadership. The Farmer-Laborites were weak in the upper house and the traditional greater independence of Senators made for less organizational friction. There were powerful men in the body, however, and they were able to exert considerable influence even though the conservatives caucused but once, just before the beginning of the session. The reactionary Senator George H. Sullivan of Stillwater, for example, was not pleased with the actions of Senator Adolph S. Larson of Sandstone as chairman of the rules committee in the previous session. Sullivan had himself returned to his old position at the head of rules, and Larson was not even retained on the committee. Another very powerful Senator was the veteran

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81 Minnesota Leader, January 15, 1921, p. 3. The seniority rule has never been generally applied under nonpartisanship insofar as chairmanships are concerned.

Republican leader, Anton J. Rockne. He was not only returned to his long-time chairmanship of the finance committee, but he was also placed (or had himself placed) on five more of the most influential committees in the chamber -- rules, agriculture, elections, judiciary, and workman's compensation. It was men like these in both houses, acting through their control of important chairmanships and especially through the control of the rules committee (made especially important in Minnesota because of the constitutional ninety-day session limit), who guided the activities of the legislature and determined which measures were to be voted upon (and hence, frequently, which measures should be passed).

Opinion on the desirability of nonpartisanship continued to be divided. The Non-Partisan League, despite its harsh treatment by legislative leaders, continued to support the principle and dubbed efforts to return to a party basis "reactionary". The League, which was itself working within the Republican party for state and national offices and which was willing to support a member of any party for office if he wuld subscribe to the principles of the League, regarded itself as being "nonpartisan" and it saw an identity in its own crossing of party lines with that which took place within the legislature. Furthermore, a return to partisanship was often associated with advocacy of a return to the convention system of nominations -- and abandonment of the primary election system might well have meant a death sentence for the League.

C. J. Buell continued his enthusiastic support of nonpartisanship.

His own report of the session included the following:[82]

> For honesty, earnestness and general intelligence, the house of 1921 will probably take as high a rank as any of its predecessors of recent years. . . . This is due to a number of causes:
>
> First, the liquor question is out of the way. . . .
>
> Second, . . . a wider diffusion of general intelligence on industrial and economic questions. . . .
>
> Third. The labor movement of the cities has reached out and taken in a far broader field of study than of old. . .
>
> Fourth. . . . equal suffrage has injected an element of sincerity and enthusiasm.
>
> And last, but not least, the fact that the members are not elected as party men, has probably been as great a factor as any. The old custom of throwing legislative nomination to some party hack who had been disappointed in securing a more lucrative office is now unknown
>
> It has been freely charged that the men who get into the legislature under this system are mostly not responsible to any party or any principles, -- mere self-seekers who put themselves forward, blow their own horns and thus succeed in getting themselves elected. While this is probably true in a few cases, it is very far from the truth in most cases. Most men who come to the legislature are widely known and highly respected in their own communities. Most of them are earnest, sincere, rather modest men, who have made a fair success in their occupations, professions or business enterprises.

It seems likely that Buell's enthusiastic view of the improved quality of legislators was probably true, but his assumption that the principal reason for the change was the nonpartisan system may be viewed skeptically. American legislatures, generally, improved in quality, integrity and intelligence during the second and third decades of the twentieth century. The blatant venality so commonplace at and before the turn of the century was becoming a thing of the past almost everywhere.

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82 C. J. Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1921, pp. 7-8.

Senator J. D. Sullivan of Stearns county, a very conservative Democrat, defended nonpartisanship (during the consideration of a proposal to allow party endorsements to be marked after candidates' names on the nonpartisan ballot) in what was becoming the traditional defense: (1) if it works well for local offices (as was generally conceded), it should also work for the legislature and (2) the legislature is, or should be, a business, not a political, body. The latter argument, very popular at the time, appears to have been a result of the "efficiency and economy" movement of this period in governmental history. Sullivan's actual argument was as follows:[83]

> I believe in party government, but I don't approve of a law that will build political machines for either Republican, Democrat, or any other party. Have you got poorer township officers because they have been elected without party designation? The same of county, city and village? It is better for the judiciary to be non-partisan, so with the legislature. Could you improve the legislature by electing us as party men? The legislature should be a business body. All who are now elected on a non-partisan basis should stay that way.

While Sullivan's views may have been sincere enough, perhaps it should be pointed out that he came from a traditionally (German Catholic) Democratic constituency and that the nonpartisan principle had allowed him to take a place as one of the conservative leaders in the Senate. In a partisan legislature he would have been forced to retire to a comparatively obscure position in the minority organization (assuming that the Republicans or the Farmer-Laborites would have organized the legislature during this period).

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83 Cited in Buell, op. cit., p. 82.

Another letter of recommendation for nonpartisanship was written by a prominent lobbyist, George B. Safford, superintendent of the Minnesota Anti-Saloon League. His group had at first viewed the 1913 law as a victory for the opposition, but events soon made the drys among the most ardent supporters of the system. In 1921, Safford wrote:[84]

> In connection with the current discussion of the merits and demerits of the non-partisan method of electing a state Legislature, which now prevails in Minnesota, there has been much loose talk about the inferiority in character and ability of men elected by the present system as compared with men elected by the partisan system. I leave the general,discussion of the subject to others, but on this particular matter of the personnel of the legislators past and present I have had exceptional opportunity to observe and upon the basis of such observation I can say unhesitatingly that the above claim is exactly contrary to the fact.

Not all close observers approved of the system and many, with no particular axes to grind, insisted upon charging the nonpartisan arrangement with a lack of responsibility. Among those who took this view was Professor Robert E. Cushman of the University of Minnesota.[85] He found this to be a definite weakness in the system, and conducted a poll of legislators to determine their views of the matter. Those who returned his questionnaire were divided half and half as to whether nonpartisanship was a better system for the legislature and he found no difference between those who had served in pre-1913 sessions and those who had not.

On at least one matter, both Cushman and Buell were in

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84 Cited in Buell, op. cit., p. 9.

85 Cushman, op. cit., pp. 83-96.

agreement. Buell wrote that "men take sides according to their knowledge, their principles (their ignorance or prejudices sometimes), but seldom according to their party affiliations in national politics."[86] Cushman noted that "no open efforts seem to have been made to encourage the recognition of party lines. Individual members seem to be governed in voting largely by their own personal judgments and no stigma attaches to the Republican or Democrat who votes against the majority of his fellow partisans."[87]

The 1923 Session. Quite a different attitude was to be found in the 1923 session of the legislature in comparison with previous meetings. Whereas Governor J. A. C. Preus, succeeding the retiring Burnquist (from his position as state auditor), had won the 1920 election with a clear majority over his combined opponents[88] and the legislature had been overwhelmingly conservative, a great change had taken place before the next election. The farmers, hard hit by the post-war agricultural depression, were demanding aid from the state. They were particularly interested in a "rural credits" system in the state government to help them in avoiding mortgage foreclosures on farms that had been purchased at fantastic prices during the wave of war-time prosperity. They also wanted the state to help the farmer reduce his overhead and cost of marketing. In North Dakota, the Non-Partisan League had interested itself in state-owned elevators, flour mills, cement plants, and the like. The Republican leadership

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86 Buell, op. cit., p. 9.

87 Cushman, op. cit., p. 94.

88 The vote was: J. A. C. Preus (Republican), 415,805; Henrik Shipstead (Farmer-Labor), 281,402; L. C. Hodgson (Democrat), 81,[illegible]; [illegible]

and legislative candidates, listening to these protests, and fearful of losing control of the state, offered a program of compromise with the radical propositions of state socialism advanced by the League and its political organ, the Farmer-Labor party. Even so, Preus, with the incumbent's advantage, barely squeezed out a plurality over dirt farmer Magnus Johnson, the Farmer-Labor candidate, and long-time state senator, Edward Indrehus, Democrat.[89] In the legislature, the Farmer-Laborites made strong gains in both houses and many conservatives were replaced by middle-of-the-roaders. It was no longer possible to treat the League and labor members casually.

For the first time since 1915 there loomed the genuine possibility of a contest for the speakership in the House. While only thirty-seven Farmer-Laborites, per se, had been elected, more than one-half of the House consisted of new members (55.7%), many of them middle-of-the-road candidates anxious to help the farmer, and it was believed that a compromise speaker choice might be elected.

Under these circumstances, the conservatives decided to back the strongest man for the position. They broke all precedent in Minnesota legislative history and agreed to support W. I. Nolan for a third term as speaker. The conservative leaders called for a meeting late in December to consider strategy. The invitation, signed by Rep. F. E. Nimocks of Hennepin county, was to about fifty members of the House. This group, which came to

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89 The vote was: J. A. O. Preus (Republican,) 309,756; Magnus Johnson (Farmer-Labor), 295,479; Edward Indrehus (Democrat), 79,903. Preus was 32,813 votes short of a clear majority.

be known as the "Pre-Session Committee," met ostensibly to consider farm legislation, but actually to work for a majority for Nolan. Nearly one-third of the House was considered to be middle-of-the-road and the conservatives needed quite a number of pledges.[90]

The less experienced Farmer-Laborites waited until December 29 to hold a caucus, at which they chose youthful Carl Iverson of Ashby as their candidate for speaker. The candidate was already a veteran of the League and the cooperative movement, and was regarded as sufficiently moderate to attract votes from outside the League and organized labor. The day before the opening of the session, the Farmer-Labor leaders called a meeting of all progressive members of the legislature in order to propose a compromise program. A fifteen point statement of policy was prepared, calling for, among other things, an increased tonnage tax on ore, a tax on ore royalties, a rural credits system, state-owned grain storage facilities, repeal of the 1921 Brooks-Coleman Act (which transferred control of local public utilities to the state Railroad and Warehouse Commission), a state public works program, a state-owned cement plant, and state hail insurance. Unfortunately for the hopes of the Farmer-Labor members, it became known that the governor was preparing to recommend a more conservative program, but one which promised to offer some relief to the farmers.

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90 On the organization of the 1925 legislature, see: Minneapolis Journal and St. Paul Pioneer-Press for conservative view; Minnesota Leader for League view; Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 31 pp.; O. J. Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1925, 112 pp.; Arthur Naftalin, A History of the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota (1948), pp. 87-88.

A rural credits system was high on his list of priorities.

The end result was that the Farmer-Labor group, having started too slowly and having been out-maneuvered by their more experienced opponents, lost the speakership by a decisive margin, 90-37.[91] Actually the support given to the conservative leadership was never that great during the rest of the session. The moderate group had simply done that which later was done on several occasions to the advantage of members anxious for good committee assignments-- they had guessed that Nolan would be the eventual winner and had supported him, even though they expected to vote quite independently on later issues. The assumed closeness of the contest followed by an almost two to one victory for one side in 1923, served to emphasize an important aspect of non-partisanship: most House members are quite free to join any caucus or to support any organizational slate that they may please. Excepting in the areas dominated by the League and in the cities where organized labor was active, it was not necessary for a candidate to commit himself as to which group, if any, he would support for organizational purposes.

In making committee assignments, Nolan followed the policy of compromise that he and the governor thought was necessary in order to ensure the impossibility of a Farmer-Labor victory in the state. The insurgent members were taken into the committees, except the rules committee, on a fairly equal basis and Farmer-

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91 Two middle-of-the-roaders, L. A. Barnes and Andrew Finstuen, unwilling to support either candidate, voted for Barnes and C. M. Bendixon, respectively.

Laborites were given no less than five chairmanships. (The important agriculture committee chair went to Iverson.) This was a distinct departure from custom and served to make the session more harmonious than the preceding ones had been. In order to help heal up wounds (and take away from the Farmer-Labor members ammunition for the next campaign), Nolan made the somewhat unusual move of inviting the defeated speaker candidate to take the chair at the session's first meeting of the committee of the whole.

One of the most interesting questions of caucus discipline to arise during the 1923 session involved the so-called "Pre-Session Committee" which had been formed in order to bring a majority of members into the Nolan camp, but which ostensibly spent its time studying "farm legislation". This extra-legal, unauthorized group later presented an expense account of $2,930.11 to the House for payment. The group, under Willis I. Norton, who had begun his long stay as chairman of the rules committee, claimed the money had been legally spent by an investigating committee. The Farmer-Laborites claimed the group was asking the House to pay part of the majority members' campaign expenses. On a clearly political question, the vote to pay the bill was 68-43, and was divided as follows:

To pay the expenses:	
Nolan supporters	66
Iverson supporters	2
	68
Against paying the expenses:	
Nolan supporters	10
Iverson supporters	31
Independents	2
	43
Not voting:	
Nolan supporters	16
Iverson supporters	4
	20

This vote is indicative of the strictness of caucus divisions possible on certain issues. On the other hand, it also shows the peculiar independence that any member of the legislature can insist upon whenever he wishes to do so, regardless of how partisan the question might be. The Nolan supporters voting "nay" and those absenting themselves were from the moderate group that had voted for Nolan without committing themselves to his policies. But the two Iverson supporters voting to pay the bill represented quite something else. They consisted of August Smith and Iverson himself!

Such a defection by the man who had been the caucus candidate for speaker would have been almost unknown in a partisan legislature. While Iverson had always been independent in his actions and was a Leaguer who never became active in the Farmer-Labor party as such, his vote caused considerable comment and was brought to the attention of his constituents. The railroad brotherhoods' lobbyists were bitter: "There has been indications for some time of the slipperiness [sic] of this individual. Hobnobbing around with the Old Guard: Christianson, Col. Wilkerson, and others, does not look good. Men are known by the company they keep."[92] Rep. Stockwell made a public apology to the House for having seconded Iverson's nomination for speaker. Iverson defended his prerogative to vote upon the merits of any issue as he saw those merits. He was returned to the legislature at the next election.

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92 Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1923, p. 11.

(Ironically, the ungrateful conservatives then promptly deprived him of his agriculture committee chairmanship.)

In the Senate, an organizational caucus was held the night before the convening of the legislature at the call of Sen. F. E. R. Putnam with forty-six "regular" Senators present. They sought to distribute the Senate's patronage and to agree upon officer and committee assignments. While the conference was in session, the Farmer-Labor members were meeting elsewhere in a combined caucus with their House colleagues.

The next day, for the office of president pro tempore, Putnam nominated A. J. Rockne for the "Old Guard"; A. S. Larson nominated Charles Orr of St. Paul, who was regarded as a progressive but was not connected with the League or with organized labor; and A. O. Devold, now in the Senate, nominated Nordlin for the Farmer-Labor group. Nordlin, evidently by pre-arrangement, then declined and announced his support of Orr. This gave Orr a clear majority, whereupon John D. Sullivan withdrew Rockne's name, thus making it unnecessary for the members publicly to record their choices. In the selection of other officers, the League and labor members dissented from the majority choice for chaplain in order to emphasize their independence, although the gesture was without avail. For the first time in many years, the G. H. Sullivan-Rockne-J. D. Sullivan-Putnam group did not dominate the Senate, although it remained influential.

Since the Senate was not under control of the "Old Guard", it decided to pursue an investigation of the often heard charges that the Republican party had spent unprecedented amounts and

violated the corrupt practices act in its campaigns to prevent the Non-Partisan League from taking over the party. The investigating committee, under the leadership of Senator James A. Carley, a conservative Democrat, found the charges to be generally well-founded, but decided not to prosecute.

The investigation served to show that in the very independent Senate, even the labor members (who ordinarily were held relatively responsible through compilation of voting records and the practice of endorsing candidates in certain constituencies) could not always be kept in line. After the committee's report, labor lobbyists complained that Senator Furlow, "a weak sister elected by labor of Rochester, double-crossed his constituency" and supported the Rockne-led "Old Guard" in the investigation.[93]

Summaries of the legislature, after a decade of nonpartisanship, reflected a general acceptance of the system. Criticism of the session was generally aimed at what had or had not been accomplished. The conservative press thought it had been a do-nothing session, while labor considered it the most progressive meeting in history. Both opinions probably had their sources in the make-up of the body -- it was not dominated by conservatives.

Professor Cushman, observing the 1923 session specifically, and recent sessions in general, commented that the law-making body appeared to be genuinely nonpartisan in that members knew the party affiliation of their colleagues without this affecting organization. He noted that a voting analysis failed to show any

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93 Loc. cit., p. 3.

marked alignment of Republicans and Democrats. While this was true, it did not tell the whole story. After 1918, the Democratic party in Minnesota went into a long eclipse, playing a sort of "third fiddle" to the Republican and Farmer-Labor organizations. Progressive Democrats abandoned the party in favor of the much more alive, more effective Farmer-Labor group and gradually the only Democrats left in the state were persons as conservative as the most conservative Republicans, though they remained Democrats for personal, probably chiefly traditional, reasons.[94] The real division in the state in the early 'twenties was between the Republicans and the Farmer-Laborites -- and this split was definitely reflected in both houses.

Commenting on legislative organization, Cushman said:[95]

> In the absence of well-organized party groups, leadership in the Minnesota legislature has been greatly weakened and during substantial periods seems to have disappeared altogether. What leadership there is seems to rest largely upon the basis of personality and legislative experience. It tends to fluctuate and is frequently purely temporary.
>
> . . . . the effective enforcement of responsibility for legislation in Minnesota has been virtually destroyed by the non-partisan system. . . .

He went on to point out that, while it was not good enough in any state, responsibility in Minnesota was almost non-existent: policies were not campaign matters, party discipline was weak, permanent leadership was lacking. He thought that members were quite aware of the situation and that they therefore concerned

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94 Liberal Democrats reappeared in the cities, particularly St. Paul, after the beginning of the depression.

95 Cushman, op. cit., pp. 94-95. See also, p. 96.

themselves with effects upon their constituents and not the party. This had resulted in greater pork barreling as one of the best ways of catching the constituent's eye (and vote) without having to consider its effect upon his party. Cushman thought that local interest overshadowed state-wide interest among legislators even more than was customary in other states. He suggested that improvement in the system could be made by adding party endorsements after the name of candidates in the primary and final elections. (This plan had been defeated in the 1921 Senate.)

While Professor Cushman's criticism was probably valid generally, it applied in much less degree to the League and labor candidates. This group was endorsed by district meetings, was aided in election, caucused from time to time during the session, kept largely to itself and was recognized as a separate group by other legislators, its voting records were given publicity by sponsoring organizations, and an unsatisfactory voting record might well lead to a withdrawal of endorsement and an active effort to unseat the individual. None-the-less, in several instances cited above, accountability to the degree customary in Congress or in two-party states, was definitely not present, even among these groups.

<u>The 1925 Session</u>. As a reaction to improved economic conditions throughout the state, part of which could perhaps be credited to the compromise aids to agriculture extended by Governor Preus, the incipient stampede to radicalism was effectively checked in the election of 1924, and the Farmer-Labor party

suffered a partial eclipse that was to last until the advent of the great depression of the 'thirties. The young party, having lost the governorship in three consecutive elections with a League standard bearer and not holding out much hope for a victory in the current campaign, nominated an aspiring young Minneapolis attorney who was as yet a virtual unknown -- Floyd B. Olson. Despite these handicaps, the personable, brilliant campaigner came within forty thousand votes of defeating Theodore Christianson, long-time chairman of the House committee on appropriations and the state's leading advocate of retrenchment in government spending, who had to settle for a mere plurality of the votes cast.[96] For the other state offices and the legislature, the vote was not close -- conservatism had returned to Minnesota.

With the selection of W. I. Nolan to the lieutenant-governorship in 1924, the most powerful individual in the House vacated a position he had held for several sessions. There was, however, a man ready to replace him and to become at least as powerful -- W. I. Norton of Minneapolis, chairman of the rules committee in the previous House, conservative Republican and close colleague of the new governor.

At the December caucus of the "regulars" (as the newspapers generally termed them), there was considerable support among rural representatives for Oscar Swenson, Nicollet county farmer, to fill the vacated speakership. Rep. Norton, however, had his

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96 The vote was: Theodore Christianson (Republican), 436,892; Floyd B. Olson (Farmer-Labor), 366,029; Carlos Avery (Democrat), 49,353; Michael Ferch (Independent Progressive), 9,052; Oscar Anderson (Socialist), 3,876.

own candidate (preferring to remain personally in the background) in the form of John A. Johnson, Preston hardware dealer, a mediocre, inexperienced member who had in no way distinguished himself in the preceding session, but who had the merit of having no enemies. He was the choice of the caucus.[97]

As had become the established custom, the avowed Farmer-Labor representatives did not attend the December conference. They held their own meeting, customarily the night before the opening of the session, to adopt policies and to choose candidates for offices. At the 1925 meeting, there was considerable discussion as to the advisability of putting up a candidate for speaker. Evidently, some members hoped to secure more favorable committee assignments by not trying to have a separate organization. When no promises along this line were forthcoming, and in consideration of the tradition of naming a candidate no matter how hopeless the cause, the Farmer-Laborites decided to place a man in nomination. With Iverson in disfavor with many members of his caucus and with no possibility of winning, the group nominated Louis Enstrom. Johnson of course, was elected Speaker, 94-34 (one vote was cast for O. C. Neuman).

In the naming of committees, Norton, acting through his speaker, named himself to head the rules committee once more. Oscar Swenson, Johnson's defeated opponent for the speakership

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97 On the organization of the 1925 legislature, see the metropolitan newspapers, especially the St. Paul Pioneer-Press. Also, A. W. Rankin, Minnesota Legislature of 1925, 39 pp.; Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1925, 32 pp.

Johnson should not be confused with Governor John A. Johnson who bore the same name.

was allowed to retain his post as chairman of the highways committee. Norton effectively neutralized the minority members in making committee assignments, taking away chairmanships that had been granted to placate discontent two years earlier. Because Governor Christianson's inaugural message stressed reduction of expenditures to come first and all other considerations to be definitely secondary, the session was a fairly quiet one, with little about which to debate, except for the question of the size of the budget. The charge that the House was leaderless did, however revive itself and it was heard in much the same way as it had been heard ten years before. The cause of the charges was to be found in the fact that the leader of the body, Rep. Norton, was necessarily absent for most of the session due to illness and there was no immediate replacement for him.

In the Senate, which had not been before the voters in 1924, there was more progressive sentiment than could be found in the House. A change in attitude, commensurate with the change of the times was to be noted, however. The middle-of-the-road group supported the conservative candidate for President pro tempore, rather than having a man of its own as it had had two years before. (Charles Orr did, however, attempt to start such a movement in order to retain the office.) The deserted Farmer-Labor group then named one of its own men, Senator Arens, as its choice. He was defeated by Senator Rockne, 48-14. Thus, with no change in personnel, the Senate leadership changed from moderate to something that could perhaps most accurately be described as reactionary.

In making Senate committee assignments, some compromise was

made with the moderate group since it represented the balance of power. Chris Rosenmeier of Little Falls, one of the ablest men in the body, was named to head the rules committee although the Sullivan-Rockne group made up a majority of its members. Senator Charles Orr, who had been the middle-of-the-road president pro tempore in the previous session and who had tried to maintain moderate control in the 1925 body, was threatened with the loss of his chairmanship of the insurance committee for his insurgency, although the leaders finally allowed him to keep it.

Criticism in the 1925 legislature was directed in large measure against the lack of coordinated effort and leadership in the House of Representatives. The difficulty had arisen when W. I. Norton, the de facto leader of the House and the liaison man with the governor, was absent from most of the session. In answer to criticism, A. W. Rankin, who had succeeded Buell in writing up the sessions of the legislature, repeated the arguments of his predecessor:[98]

> This matter of leadership may easily be overdone. "Follow your leader" is a game for innocent children. What legislatures need is a man independent of party whip or of selfish interests.

This criticism, once again, reflected the turn of the century concept of the political party as a "kept woman" to be used in whatever manner those who paid her bills should see fit. While this view may have been real enough in 1900, and not wholly false in 1925, it totally ignored the function of the party as a

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98 A. W. Rankin, Minnesota Legislature of 1925, p. 8.

coordinating device for purposes of establishing responsibility. Rankin himself described the law-makers in the following manner:[99]

> In the legislature of 1925 there were many who exercised individual judgment. . . . There were others who voted on party lines, if they knew the partisan mind. . . . There were traders who had no general interest but who had privileged bills to put through. . . . Others simply tried to gain popularity by climbing on the bandwagon. Others were too indolent to study bills and voted in a hit or miss sort of fashion. Others were pledged by constituents to vote as required on certain bills.

Rankin also brought in another familiar argument and sought to drive home the point through reference to the intention of the non-partisan act:[100]

> Matters of state legislative concern have little to do with partisan politics. Members of the 1913 legislature had this in mind in enacting the law. It was an attempt to provide a situation where bills could be tried on their merits.

As was shown in Chapter I, the adoption of nonpartisanship in 1913, so far as the legislature was concerned, was more a comedy of errors than it was rational law-making; and of the rationale used by the various groups for supporting the proposal, the thought least in their minds was the one cited above. Furthermore, all through the 'twenties, it was impossible to say that state legislative matters had "little to do with partisan politics." The incongruously named Non-Partisan League had a complete program requiring action on the part of the legislature -- a program calling for increased state ownership and control of agriculatural financing and marketing facilities. This platform elicited

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99 Ibid., p. 19.

100 Ibid., p. 8.

Republican proposals that were either in direct contradiction or served as alternative solutions to the problems under consideration. Organized labor, similarly, presented a comprehensive program for reform of labor law and the wages, hours and work conditions of the hourly-rated employes. On these matters, too, the Republican party offered its own solutions. When the farmers and organized labor combined their political efforts in the Farmer-Labor party and became the principal group opposing the Republicans, it was impossible to gainsay the proposition that the projected solutions to the various state problems in these areas were presented in the form of partisan politics.

The 1927 Session. The shining light of "Coolidge prosperity" penetrated every corner of the legislative halls in 1927. Governor Christianson continued to view "economy" as the principal raison d'etre of his administration and W. I. Norton remained his chief lieutenant in the legislature. Many Minnesotans found themselves to be very prosperous in relation to their accustomed standards, and even those who were not (including most of the farmers), were subjected to the prevailing mass hypnosis and appeared to believe themselves prosperous. The radical agrarian movement had lost much of its impetus and organized labor was not producing its accustomed number of votes. Theodore Christianson had decisively foiled Magnus Johnson's second attempt to capture the governorship in 1926 and the Farmer-Labor party elected the smallest number of endorsed candidates in its history. The people, generally, believed themselves well-off and turned their backs upon those who advocated change.

The organization of the House was the easiest it had been since 1917, a time when the wets' cause had been dying and the insurgent farmers' movement had not yet strongly affected the legislature. Norton was quite satisfied with "his" speaker, John A. Johnson, and the pre-session conservative caucus agreed to retain him. The minority caucus, which had presented a speakership candidate and had met more or less regularly throughout each session since 1919, was divided on the question of presenting a name in nomination -- a problem that had been argued at each session during the 'twenties. This time, although Frank T. Starkey's name was put before the House formally, the once strong discipline of the Farmer-Laborites was so weakened that several members elected by its endorsement voted for Johnson, who won reelection, 106-21. The minority group felt so out of place with the times, so confused as to the role it should pursue, and so impotent, that for the first time since 1917, it did not caucus during the session.[101] The Farmer-Laborites who supported the Norton candidate defended themselves on the ground that only by such action could they get anything at all for their constituents from the legislature.

The Senate elected in 1926 was actually less conservative than was the House. Twenty of the sixty-seven members had Farmer-Labor backing and, although the eleven nominal Democrats were

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101 On the organization of the 1927 legislature, see: the metropolitan daily newspapers, especially the St. Paul Pioneer-Press; and for labor's views, the Minnesota Union Advocate and the Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1927, 95 pp. In accord with the times, the Haines-Buell-Rankin series on the legislature disappeared with the 1925 session. Muckraking had become passe.

conservative, about a dozen of the Republicans belonged in a middle-of-the-road category.[102]

Senate committee assignments gave five of the Farmer-Labor members chairmanships of relatively unimportant committees and some of the minority members were named to the powerful committees. While virtually every senator was named to either seven or eight committees, the extent of party recognition in a "nonpartisan" legislature is indicated in the assignments to the ten major committees. While six Republican and one Democratic first-termers were assigned to three of the important committees, not one Farmer-Laborite, no matter how experienced, was assigned to more than two of the major committees. Senator Lee of Douglas county, a Farmer-Laborite serving in his eighth session was named to one of the top ten committees, while Senator E. E. Adams of Fergus Falls, a Republican leader and newspaperman, was named to four, although he was less experienced. The ratio of members to positions on the ten most important committees is shown in the following table:[103]

TABLE VI

RATIO OF MEMBERSHIP TO IMPORTANT COMMITTEES

1927 Senate

Party	Percentage of Senate Membership	Percentage of Important Committee Seats
Democratic	16.4	15.1
Farmer-Labor	29.9	13.0
Republican	53.7	71.9

102 A not-too-successful quantitative analysis of the 1927 Senate is attempted in Herman C. Beyle, Identification and Analysis of Attribute-Cluster Blocs (1931), Appendix A.

103 It must be borne in mind that many party affiliations were definitely nominal in nature. Only a small minority of the legislature was politically active.

The table indicates that while the Democrats received a proportionate share of the seats (with but eleven members, the 1.3% disproportion is not significant), the Farmer-Laborites were given but a small number of them. The percentage was too small to make the Farmer-Laborites effective in committee action.

Since the Democratic contingent was conservative, it might be expected that they would have shared the disproportionate seats with the Republicans, yet they did not. There does not appear to be a ready explanation of this. The Democratic members had the most experience, collectively, of the three (an average of 5.2 terms to 3.9 for the Republicans and 2.9 for the Farmer-Laborites), there were no mavericks, and they did not come disproportionately from urban areas. Except for two veteran conservatives, J. D. Sullivan of Stearns and James Carley of Wabasha, the Senate leadership appears to have discriminated, consciously or unconsciously, against Democratic members in dividing up the spoils that were kept from the Farmer-Labor members.[104]

Because it was very conservative, and because the House was largely under the control of a very conservative man who "ran the show" from his position at the head of the rules committee and

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[104] While the 1927 session is probably fairly typical of committee assignments in the Senate during the 'twenties, the breakdown given here was necessarily chosen because the party alignments were reported in Beyle, op. cit., Appendix. Beyond this source, detailed party allegiances are unavailable except for Farmer-Labor members.

It should be noted that the practice of keeping a disproportionately large number of majority members on the important committees to insure a working majority is in keeping with the policy followed in conventional legislatures.

through his control over the speaker, the 1927 legislature was criticized chiefly in the labor press. Perhaps because of the favorable viewpoint taken by the Non-Partisan League toward election without party designation, labor had been slow to denounce the system. In their 1917 report, the Brotherhoods' lobbyists had spoken of nonpartisanship as a device useful to organized labor,[105] but ten years later they had completely abandoned that position. The 1927 report commented that:[106]

> The House as a whole was subservient, menial and abject. When Rep. Norton cracked the party whip his followers, one hundred strong, ceased to think and did his bidding. Many legislators served him for the reason of petty jobs given through the Rules Committee to their wives, sons, daughters, relatives and friends.

The report correctly noted what many critics in commenting on the situation had overlooked, namely, that this type of domination over the House was not the same as strong party discipline designed to carry out a platform of policy that had been promised to the voter in return for his support. The report asserted that nonpartisanship had been in effect long enough to train a majority of the members in the art of "fence straddling".[107] It went on to say that such "abominable traits are a practical prerequisite to nomination and election to the Legislature as now constituted." A firm Republican or Farmer-Laborite, it was claimed, could not express opinions too strongly or he would offend enough voters

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105 Supra, p. 71.

106 Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1927, p. 6.

107 Ibid., pp. 6-7.

to give his seat away to a fence straddler. The electorate should know the calibre of the men it elects, the report continued. Parties were organized to overcome whims of individuals and to substitute a definite program. "Eliminate the party and you leave the individual voter without a standard to measure a candidate. . . " When the legislature adjourns, individual voters know very little of a specific legislator's activities and they cannot find out except by an exhaustive study of the voting record -- something that is done by an insignificant number of persons.

The Brotherhoods' report concluded that returning to a partisan legislature would change nothing except to "give the voter a little better idea of who he is electing."

The Union Advocate also was displeased with the session and especially with the breakdown of minority caucus discipline and the willingness of some members to compromise with the conservative leadership:[108]

> Since 1919 the progressive block held conferences and acted on an agreed course of action. This practice has been declining for the past few sessions until the last one when it expired and the members became "statesman" of outstanding personality. . . .

The 1929 Session. There was little in the 1929 Minnesota legislature to distinguish it from the preceding one. In the nation as a whole, "Coolidge prosperity" was expected to turn shortly into "Hoover prosperity", and in Minnesota, Theodore Christianson compiled an easy majority of the vote over the

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[108] Minnesota Union Advocate, April 28, 1927, p. 1.

combined efforts of four opponents by promising a third term of "more Ted and less taxes". In the legislature, the influence of the Farmer-Labor party reached an all-time low. With only about twenty votes in the House, the minority group finally decided to vote with the conservatives and hope for the best. Rep. W. I. Norton, content with his undistinguished speaker, supported him for another term. John A. Johnson thus became the second speaker in history to serve three two-year terms, following in the footsteps of his more able predecessor, W. I. Nolan; and the second to be elected in the twentieth century without a dissenting vote.[109] With an unusually large number of abstentions, he was selected by a count of 117-0.[110]

The railroad brotherhoods' report summarized the session contemptuously:[111]

> The House was dominated by the Christianson machine manned by Representatives Norton, Swenson and Neuman followed by a great number of patronage beneficiary members of the ox kind, who know their master's crib. While this "gang" was a minority, by organization and team-work they succeeded in inducing adherents here and there to such an extent that they were able to control nearly every action taken in the House.

Even the conservative press could find little cause for approval in the way in which the legislature, especially the House was being operated. Although the law-makers had generally

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109 Frank Olague, Republican, was so elected in 1905 when Democratic fortunes were in poorer shape than were those of the minority in 1929.

110 On the 1929 session, see the metropolitan daily newspapers, the Minnesota Union Advocate and the Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1929, 34 pp.

111 Biennial Report, p. 6.

produced legislation acceptable to the large daily newspapers, they continued to remain skeptical of the now well-established principle of nonpartisanship.

Closing Statement. This chapter has sought to give a brief summary of the organization of the legislature, including the selection of officers, the choosing of committees, and caucus discipline, and publicly expressed opinion of such organization from the advent of statehood to the eve of the great economic depression which began in the fall of 1929 and which caused many changes in the Minnesota legislative picture. (Particular attention has been given to legislative sessions in the twentieth century before and after the adoption of the nonpartisan system in 1913.)

An interpretation of the developments described in this chapter, together with an evaluation of the comments and criticism cited, will be reserved for the last chapter where an interpretation and evaluation of the entire period of nonpartisanship, together with allusions to the pre-1915 period, is attempted.

CHAPTER III

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE NONPARTISAN LEGISLATURE: SINCE 1929

The Years of Farmer-Labor Ascendancy

The 1931 Session. In the fall of 1929, the world that had made political leaders of such men as Herbert Hoover, Theodore Christianson and W. I. Norton began to collapse. The Farmer-Labor party, finding the economic situation such that people were once more interested in change, made an all-out effort the next fall to capture congressional and state offices. Having struck bottom in 1928, the party began to make its rapid rise to the top. Ray P. Chase, a county seat newspaper man, together with two other candidates, was no match for the brilliant, ambitious Hennepin county attorney, Floyd Bjornsterne Olson, who received a large majority of the votes cast for governor. The Farmer-Laborites also elected the lieutenant-governor, the attorney general and a railroad and warehouse commissioner. In thus rallying its resources, the party all but forgot about the law-making branch. While it continued to endorse candidates in all possible constituencies, there was no concerted effort to win the legislature. The top leadership of the party apparently gave the matter little thought and left the problem to the individual districts. Forty endorsees were elected to the House and nearly thirty to the Senate, giving the party considerably more influence in the upper house, especially since Henry Arens of Jordan had been chosen lieutenant-governor on the Farmer-Labor ticket.

The Conservative caucus met before the session to choose a new speaker. Although the influence of W. I. Norton was still present, he had lost some ground, not only because he no longer spoke for the governor, but also because of the 1929 House investigation of certain activities of the Christianson administration, conducted by John Weeks, liberal Republican, at the instigation of aging "Ed" Smith, who had begun to disagree with Christianson and Norton. The investigation showed quite a number of irregularities in the administration, although the governor was not affected personally. Under the circumstances, the rural Conservatives, who had wanted to nominate Oscar A. Swenson, a farmer from Nicollet county, six years earlier, were able to assert themselves.[1]

The Liberals,[2] who had not had a candidate in 1929 and who were very little stronger in 1931, did not hold a pre-session caucus. Despite this, Rep. S. A. Stockwell, long-time liberal from Minneapolis, placed the name of Charles Munn of rural Hennepin county in nomination. Munn was a Liberal who had been

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1 On the organization of the 1931 legislature, see: the metropolitan dailies, especially the St. Paul Pioneer-Press; the Askov American; the Farmer-Labor Leader; Arthur Naftalin, A History of the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota (1948), pp. 181-185; Theodore Christianson, Minnesota: The Land of Sky-Tinted Waters, Vol. II, pp. 492-493; Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' Legislative Board, 1931, 65 pp.

2 Terms such as "progressive," "insurgent," and "radical" were variously applied to the minority at particular times. The words "Liberal" and "Conservative" gradually evolved as fairly standard, though unofficial, terminology.. When capitalized, they refer to the appropriate caucuses and imply no value judgment. They are used throughout the remaining chapters for the sake of uniformity.

elected with Farmer-Labor endorsement, although he professed to be a Republican. Nearly all of the Liberals had planned to vote for the Conservative candidate, hoping to receive better committee assignments thereby and to avoid strife at the beginning of the session. Besides Stockwell, only two persons, Dewey W. Johnson and Emil S. Youngdahl, both of Minneapolis, voted for Munn. Munn himself supported Swenson, the latter winning 126-3. (The three dissenters had personal reasons for bitterness toward the Conservative leaders.)

In assigning committee posts Swenson, in conference with Conservative leaders, put the Farmer-Labor members in positions where they were made rather ineffective. Although this group totalled one-fourth of the House membership, it was as usual given no seats on the rules committee. Farmer-Laborites claimed that this was done so that the governor's supporters could not know what special orders were being discussed or planned at meetings of the committee that controlled the calendar.[3] This reason appears to be quite probable; certainly the committee was made up of eleven of the most conservative men in the House -- men who were unreservedly determined to fight the proposals of the new governor and to give ground only when necessary.

Despite the overwhelming Conservative predominance, a tightening of caucus organization became evident. The Liberals once more began to hold periodic conferences -- perhaps out of

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3 Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1931, p. 11. The rules committee as exclusive property of the majority caucus had long been standard practice.

necessity in order to plan a defense of the governor's proposals. Attendance at the meetings totaled about thirty-four, six short of the number of Farmer-Labor endorsees. The Conservatives, who had never held periodic conferences in plenum, continued their practice of coordination through the floor leader, but there was less of a feeling of independence. For but the second time since the legislature became nonpartisan (the first time was during the chaotic 1915 session), the conservative House leadership had to work with a governor who was not a Republican.

The 1930 election had caused unusual developments in the Senate, too. Since the advent of nonpartisanship, there had never been other than a Republican presiding officer in the upper house. Conferences were held between Henry Arens, the new presiding officer, and the Conservative leadership. Arens reportedly wanted to name a majority of Liberals to the important committees, especially the rules committee, although he was willing to let the Conservative chairmen retain their positions. The Conservatives insisted that committees should be made up in proportion to membership in the body. Having reached a deadlock, the Conservatives decided to remove the power of committee appointment from the presiding officer and vest it in a committee on organization.[4]

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[4] Similar developments took place in many other states during the 'thirties and 'forties. In 1948, twenty-seven senates had committees named by the president (not necessarily the lieutenant-governor) and in one state he named them with the approval of the Senate. In the remaining states, they were named either by the president pro tempore, by a committee made up of Senate leaders, or by the Senate itself (i. e., by the Senate leaders.) See, Council of State Governments, Our State Legislators (1948), p. 25.

At the formal opening of the session, Senator George H. Lommen of Eveleth, Farmer-Labor floor leader who had tried to bring middle-of-the-roaders to the support of his group, moved that the presiding officer be instructed to appoint a rules committee. The motion, of course, touched off debate on the vital issue. Some rather far-fetched reasoning was brought into the argument. Senator George Nordlin of St. Paul argued that the people had elected the lieutenant-governor expecting that he would appoint the committees -- to remove that power from him would be to violate the will of the electorate. Senator Lommen claimed, inaccurately, that the power had been held by the presiding officer from "time immemorial".[5] Besides, he said, the Farmer-Labor party had a mandate from the people that should be respected. Senator A. J. Rockne, somewhat too exuberantly, argued that the rules committee was not important anyway -- it merely formulated the rules by which the Senate was run! Aging Senator P. W. Morrison said that although he was a Republican, his party had brought on its own defeat and should bow to the will of the people. Senator Henry L. Morin hopefully suggested that the powers of the presiding officer should not be made the subject of partisan debate since the Senate was "a non-partisan body." But the realistic Conservatives remained adamant. The Lommen proposal was tabled 38-29 and a move by Chris Rosenmeier to appoint an organization committee carried, 40-27.[6]

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[5] In 1891 a coalition of Democrats and members of the Farmers Alliance took the power of appointment away from the Republican lieutenant-governor, G. S. Ives.

[6] For the debate, see: Biennial Report, pp. 7-10 and the St. Paul Pioneer-Press for the first week in January, 1931.

The committee was made up of one senator from each congressional district. This group of veteran Conservatives named the committees, distributed patronage jobs and selected a committee on committees, whose job it was to name conference committee managers during the course of the term. In naming the committees, the group gave three of the eleven seats on the vital rules committee to the Farmer-Labor members. While this left a very safe working majority for the Conservatives, it was precedent breaking in that the minority had not been represented on the Senate rules committee since the adoption of nonpartisanship. All of the important committees were controlled by the Conservatives.

Criticism continued to be levied against the nonpartisan aspect of the legislature. The Farmer-Labor party was irked to find that the legislature had not automatically accompanied its state landslide. It was noted that the governor had to depend upon compromises with people who were directly responsible to no one, and that under such conditions, party pledges could be "flouted with impunity."[7]

It was not only the Farmer-Laborites (who felt that they could have controlled the legislature had it been elected in the conventional manner) who complained of the legislative arrangement. During the preceding year, aging Edward E. Smith, at the end of his long reign as head of Republicanism in the state, had written a condemnation of the system that he had always opposed

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7 Farmer-Labor Leader, May 14, 1951, p. 4.

and believed detrimental, not only to his party, but to the people of the state. In some notes, he had written:[8]

> Political parties are a necessity under our form of government. To attempt to run a representative government without political parties is unthinkable. It never has been done and never will be done. . . .
>
> A candidate may be a Republican, but he does not run as a Republican. The law compels him to be nonpartisan. He simply goes after the votes wherever he can get them. . . . He cannot align himself with any political party or take part in the forming of any party policies. By necessity he becomes a mere log-roller whether he means to or not.
>
> This log-rolling begets carelessness in legislation and extravagance in appropriations because there is no party to be held responsible for legislative mistakes. If the Republicans are in a majority in the legislature, they should organize as the majority and stand responsible for the proper transaction of the state's business. There is no party responsibility in our legislature under the non-party law. The members duck, log roll and pass the buck from day to day as best they can; and when the session is closed, you cannot fix responsibility on any party at all. Let us restore party government in the State Legislature.

Smith, who loved to fabricate yarns and had a fine command of the language, enjoyed telling about Reuben Steadfast, who represented two of the old politician's pet peeves -- zealous reformers and irresponsible legislators. Reuben hated "machine politics" (his father had once been defeated for county treasurer by the "court house gang") and early in life vowed to clean up the state government. He ran for the legislature on the platform of "Down with the Gang and up with Reuben."[9]

Smith continued:

> The voters thought they would try Reuben once anyway.

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8 Rollin L. Smith, The Philosophy of a Politician: An Epistolary Biography of Edward E. Smith (1952), p. 65.

9 Ibid., p. 320.

> His general appearance of bovine stupidity seemed to qualify him for the legislature. After an acrimonious campaign he was elected and immediately started for St. Paul with fire in his eye and a rock-firm purpose to demolish the Gang which controlled the legislature.

But, of course, after he arrived and became accustomed to the place, he succeeded merely in making himself act like other members of the legislature.

While Smith may have been somewhat tart-tongued in his criticism, he none-the-less spoke as an experienced observer and, as such, his views are deserving of careful consideration.

The 1933 Session. In the election that brought Franklin Roosevelt to the national helm, the Farmer-Labor party, as expected, scored overwhelming victory. Olson ran up a majority over four opponents, although the margin of it was considerably smaller than it had been two years before. (This was perhaps due to the influence of a presidential election year, which caused him to lose votes to John E. Regan, rather than to a loss of popularity. Regan represented the conservative wing of the Democratic party.) In the legislature, the Senate was not before the voters, and in the House, Farmer-Labor endorsees increased by approximately twenty.[10]

The 1933 speakership campaign was especially interesting. Although the state Farmer-Labor organization did not concern

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[10] On the organization of the 1933 legislature, see: St. Paul Pioneer-Press; Minneapolis Journal; Askov American; Farmer-Labor Leader; Marvel D. Braley, The Influence of a Governor Upon Legislation in Minnesota (1940), pp. 65-67; Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1933, 48 pp. Much of the material presented is based in part upon personal interviews.

itself directly with the House seats, local organizations made intensive local efforts to elect third-party endorsees. After election day, it became evident that the House was made up of about fifty-three Farmer-Labor endorsees, forty-four of whom were dependable party associates.[11] Somewhat more than twenty members were regarded as reposing "on the fence", while the remainder were considered to be in the Conservative fold and were chiefly reelected incumbents. Sixty-six votes were needed to choose a speaker.

The Liberals resolved to begin active proselytizing immediately in an effort to elect their first speaker. The Farmer-Labor members were prepared to compromise, knowing that they lacked a genuine majority in the House. The general consensus favored Charles Munn of Osseo. Munn was a delegate to the Republican state convention in 1932, although he had nevertheless been elected to the House with Farmer-Labor endorsement. (He was in the process of conversion to the third party, however, and in the Farmer-Labor convention of 1934, he received the official party endorsement for railroad and warehouse commissioner.)

A "Munn Speakership Committee" was organized with E. J. Ohlgren of Littlefork, Farmer-Laborite, as chairman. The group included another regular third party member, Dewey Johnson of Minneapolis; a Republican, John Weeks, who had been carrying on a lengthy fight to break the power of W. I. Norton in the House; and three members of the liberal wing of the Democratic

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[11] According to the usually reliable Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods, p. 5.

party -- George L. Siegel, Joseph A. Kozlak and John J. McDonough, the Democratic leader in St. Paul. This group set up headquarters in a capital city hotel and talked with legislators arriving in the city. The committee was well prepared to do business: Chilgren talked with the Farmer-Laborites, McDonough with the Democrats (who had been accustomed through the years to vote with the Conservative caucus), and Weeks sought to draw moderate Republicans away from Norton.

The Conservatives had no intention of abandoning their long control of the House without a fight. Norton and the others recognized that an orthodox Republican had no chance for election, and it was known that a sizable segment of members with Republican allegiances were on the verge of revolt. The best possibility against Munn appeared to be Andrew Finstuen who, like his opponent, was a Republican who had been elected with the blessing of the Farmer-Labor organization. By the time the session met formally, it was evident that much of the middle group had been won over by the Liberals, making things clear for those who had not yet reached a decision. Munn defeated Finstuen 74-56. (The latter, actually a liberal, then proceeded to work with the Liberals and generally voted with them, indicating once again the transitory nature of caucus lines.)

Although the conservative press claimed the new House organization was "dominated wholly by the Farmer-Labor party",[12]

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[12] Minneapolis Journal, editorial, January 5, 1933, p. 16.

such was not the case, as could be surmised from the fact that it had been elected only with the help of a considerable number of persons who were not only not Farmer-Laborites, but who had not even had that organization's endorsement. The difficulty of holding together a majority under such conditions demonstrated itself immediately on the question of electing a chief clerk. The Liberal candidate for clerk was seconded by a Liberal, but the Conservative candidate's name was seconded by a man who voted for Munn for speaker. The Liberal candidate won easily enough, 90-26, with many Conservatives accepting what appeared to be the inevitable, yet five Munn supporters voted for the Conservative candidate. (The fourteen abstentions were chiefly Conservatives.) Organization lines had already begun to melt.

The Farmer-Labor group had also given up quite a bit of committee power in securing the speakership. To get votes, many a choice seat on the important committees had been bargained away. The most important seat next to that of the speaker (who was a Republican), the chairmanship of the rules committee, went to a Democrat, John J. McDonough. (Both of these men, however, enjoyed Farmer-Labor endorsement.)

Although the Liberal caucus lacked cohesiveness, the opponents, too, were somewhat demoralized. W. I. Norton, old and broken, seldom appeared on the floor of the House in 1933 (he was not a candidate for re-election the next year) and Conservative leadership gradually shifted toward Roy E. Dunn of Pelican Rapids.

In the light of the mongrel nature of the "majority" in the 1933 House of Representatives, a study of caucus discipline on

final roll calls on some of the session's most important measures is revealing.[13]

On liquor bills, there was no significant caucus alignment (even though the Olson administration favored repeal of prohibition). On H. F. 33, to repeal prohibition enforcement laws, the vote was favorable, 72-34. The line-up was as follows:

Aye: 42 Lib. 29 Con. 1 Ind. (Bennett)
Nay: 28 Lib. 26 Con.

On S. F. 880 involving questions of beer licensing methods (passed 99-29), the dissenting votes were:

Nay: 16 Lib. 13 Con.

Some bills were important, although not specifically administration measures. H. F. 722 provided for Congressional reapportionment of the state (after Olson had vetoed a badly gerrymandered 1931 bill). It passed 104-23, with opposition as follows:

Nay: 8 Lib. 15 Con.

The bill to create the Twin City Sanitary District (H. F. 1948) was considered a private matter between the cities involved and the state administration, with the law makers acting merely as ratifiers. The proposal was adopted 109-1 with one Conservative in opposition.

A conservative measure (S. F. 419) designed to provide a fifty-four hour work week for women in industry passed easily, 89-19. Although one might not expect to find any Liberal negative votes, there were four.

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[13] Information is taken from the House Journal, 1933. Liberal and Conservative membership is determined exclusively by the speakership roll call.

On administration bills, where the House organization could be expected to exert its best efforts to procure all the Liberal votes, the nature of the legislator as a free agent continued to be evident. Perhaps the very fact that these bills were those of the governor, and would tend to reflect credit upon him and his party, caused some defection among Liberals who were not Farmer-Laborites. Whatever the reason, the Liberals certainly did not vote en bloc.

The following were "administration bills". H. F. 1695 was the famous mortgage moratorium proposal. While the measure was urged by Olson, it was regarded as political suicide to oppose it, and the Conservatives did not attempt a show down with the administration on the bill. It passed 117-0.

The bill (S. F. 738) providing for postponement of sale of tax delinquent real estate was of a similar nature and was adopted 106-0, with the abstentions chiefly from among the Conservatives.

A bill (H. F. 210) calling for a comprehensive conservation program passed 85-22. Distribution was as follows:

Aye:	49 Lib.	36 Con.
Nay:	13 Lib.	9 Con.

On this bill, as large a percentage of Conservatives as Liberals supported the governor.

A bill providing for a consolidated (open) primary ballot (H. F. 66) represented a long standing promise of the Farmer-Labor party. It stemmed from the days when an Iron Range worker who asked for other than a Republican ballot risked his job. The

bill passed 105-10, with negatives as follows:

Nay: 4 Lib. 6 Con.

On important tax measures, the Liberals came very close to unanimity. The bill establishing a state income tax (H. F. 367) was adopted 104-11 with but one Liberal in the negative. Another (H. F. 816) setting up a chain store tax passed 121-5, with two Liberals dissenting. On both of these measures, however, a majority of Conservatives also supported the governor's requests.

Two of the most important and most bitterly contested administration measures involved social security. The first (S.F. 52) established a state old age pension system. After much debate and many amendments, it passed, 74-40. Voting was diffused:

Aye: 47 Lib. 26 Con. 1 Ind.
Nay: 17 Lib. 23 Con.

While the Liberals could not muster enough of their members to put the bill over without assistance, the opposition voting is even more interesting. Clearly, the Conservatives were unable to adopt a unified approach to the question. A majority of them actually supported the administration.

The administration was defeated in the house that it supposedly controlled on one very important measure: the bill providing for compulsory unemployment insurance (H. F. 973). This type of bill had long been opposed in all states, not only by businessmen, but also by others who feared that it would put the state in an unfavorable competitive position with other states in developing industries. No bill was more strenuously lobbied against. Despite the efforts of the governor and his lieutenants, the measure was defeated on final roll call, 54-68. The voting was:

Aye:	44 Lib.	9 Con.	1 Ind.
Nay:	26 Lib.	42 Con.	
Abstaining:	4 Lib.	5 Con.	

While the Liberals were able to muster fewer votes on this measure than on any other administration bill, the coup de grace was delivered in the form of virtual unanimity on the part of the Conservatives. Still, it is rather surprising to find that nine members of the opposition voted in support of a proposal that was imprecated by virtually every businessman in the state. On this measure, which the governor regarded as being of the utmost importance, it was once again demonstrated that the administration did not have a dependable, working majority in the House, even though it had been organized by the Liberals.

An analysis of these bills, especially the administration measures, demonstrates the abiding independence of the legislator chosen without party designation. On three of the six non-unanimous administration proposals, the Liberals could not muster enough votes to pass the governor's requests and they would have been defeated without Conservative support. (One of them, of course, did not receive that support and was lost.) The conservation program and the old age pension system were saved because the Conservatives favored the first and were badly split on the second. (A large number of Liberals were absent on both roll calls and it is possible that enough favorable members could have been brought to the floor to pass these measures, if necessary. This is but one of the many weaknesses found in trying to demonstrate something from the final roll calls.)

A glance at the voting of the Conservatives reveals a

rather surprising thing: no important measure in the session was passed without being amended so as to be acceptable to a substantial number of Conservatives. This group actually held the balance of power. Even if the Senate had not been in Conservative hands, the governor and his aides in the House would not have been able to prepare legislation and have it adopted which did not consider the demands of the minority caucus. The administration had no working majority in either house. Most legislators continued to feel reasonably free to make up their own minds on individual measures.

The Senate of 1933 was a carry-over from the previous session, which had been conservative with a fairly large moderate group. The lieutenant-governor, K. K. Solberg, Farmer-Labor, was once again deprived of the power to appoint committees, the motion to return the power to him being tabled 38-27, with the Liberals getting no more support than they had in the previous session. The new system, thus having been reaffirmed, was adopted as a standard practice of the Senate and was retained even after the return of Republican presiding officers in 1939. The only basis organizational change in the upper house took place when Charles N. Orr of St. Paul took over the chairmanship of the rules committee vacated by Chris Rosenmeier. (Liberals, except for H. A. Bridgeman, were retained on the committee.)

The 1933 session represented the first time in forty-two years that the two houses were organized by different political factions and it was a trying session. "From the first the House and Senate worked at cross-purposes. One house would pass a bill

and the other would amend it beyond recognition. Confusion and deadlocks and 'passing the buck' characterized most of the legislative session."[14]

The 1933-1934 Extra Session. For a number of reasons connected with the severity of the economic depression in the fall of 1933 and especially because of the extreme necessity for additional public welfare funds, Governor Olson called an extra session of the legislature to meet on December 5, 1933.

The meeting was interesting along organizational lines because of the threat to the speakership held by Munn. Since the office was technically vacant, a move was begun to present the name of Albert Pfaender of New Ulm to the House. Pfaender was a life-long active Democrat. He had been minority floor leader in the 1911 House and in 1934 he was to try for his party's nomination for governor. (Lacking the support of either the conservative wing under John E. Regan, which favored an independent course for the party, or of the left-wing, under Joseph Wolf, which favored closer collaboration with the Farmer-Laborites, he was not successful.)[15]

The group supporting Pfaender evidently hoped to have the assistance, not only of the Conservative caucus, but also of the moderates who had voted for Munn in the regular session. Since

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[14] Braley, op. cit., p. 67. A more extensive discussion of the difficulties experienced in the 1933 session is to be found in the chapter on executive-legislative relationships.

[15] The dilemma of the Democratic party during the 'twenties and 'thirties is discussed in various passages of Arthur Naftalin, A History of the Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota.

Munn's position was, at best, tenuous and since the earlier meeting had been a stormy one, the chances for such a coup seemed good. Before the extra session was called to order, however, the threatened opposition was somehow dissuaded. Munn (nominated by Harold Atwood and seconded by George N. Rodenberg) was reelected 112-1. (One vote was cast for the Conservative leader Roy E. Dunn.) Sixteen Conservatives, including their leader, abstained, as did Pfaender. The Liberal coalition, weak as it was in voting strength, thus continued to organize the House.

The 1935 Session. While the Farmer-Laborites remained in control of state offices after the 1934 election, they suffered severe losses in their margin of victory. With more people going to the polls than ever before in the state's history, Olson was reelected for a third term, although he lacked a majority of the vote. With both Martin Nelson, Republican, and John Regan, Democrat, cutting into his totals, Olson failed to carry the "out-state" areas and was returned only because of the faithfulness of organized labor in the three large counties. The campaign was one of great bitterness with the Republicans making a serious effort to win the election. They attacked Olson's program, charged corruption (there were evidences of it in small degree), played up the internal strife that had arisen in the Farmer-Labor party as a result of its preponderous victories and made excellent use, especially in the rural areas, of the state's handling of the famous Minneapolis teamsters' strike which had been led by the Trotskyist Dunne brothers and had required

the use of the national guard.[16]

In the light of the strong efforts made by Republicans in rural areas, it is not surprising that these candidates for the legislature who defended Olson or who overtly supported the Farmer-Labor party fared badly. In the areas outside the three large cities, Minnesota had once more become largely conservative, and those areas controlled the legislature.

The House speakership picture, which had not been too satisfactory in the preceding legislature, looked gloomy so far as the Farmer-Labor party was concerned. Its compromise speaker of the previous session, Charles Munn, had undergone a transmutation sufficient to secure for himself the nomination and election by the third party to the state railroad and warehouse commission. Without him in the House, the chances for retaining the volatile moderate vote behind the Liberal candidate seemed remote. Shortly after election Governor Olson took to the radio (one of his favorite techniques in rallying public opinion) to urge the election of a Liberal speaker. In blunt language reminiscent of Non-Partisan League days, he charged the "so-called independent progressive caucus"[17] with being the representatives, not of the

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16 See, Naftalin, op. cit., pp. 264-271. Olson was also criticized for making too many appointments from among Twin Citians. His running mate, Hjalman Petersen of Askov, fared much better in rural areas.

17 As the term "conservative" lost much of its former honorific connotation during the depression, that group sought to popularize "independent progressive". It was abandoned after the Olson administration. In 1935 the railroad brotherhoods' lobbyists first began to refer to the two caucuses as "Liberal" and "Conservative", terms that have been used throughout this chapter for the sake of simplicity. Excepting as occasional rallying slogans, the caucus leaders were not particularly interested in appellations.

people, but of railroad and big business lobbyists. He even named names in suggesting who was being backed directly by such interests.

The Liberals, however, not only could be sure of something less than fifty votes, but they did not even have a candidate. The heirs apparent appeared to be E. J. Chilgren of Littlefork and Harold H. Barker of Grant county. The former was a veteran who had made no effort to promote his own candidacy. The latter had somewhat of a following and was favored by Arthur Jacobs for the post. Jacobs, one of several political hangers-on and personal trouble-shooters for the governor, had been active in the legislative campaign, putting out a printed sheet called the "Harpoon" which sought to glorify the Farmer-Labor endorsee and defame his opponent. Although Barker thus carried the implicit support of the governor, Chilgren enjoyed considerable prestige as well as seniority. The question was settled simply -- with the two candidates present, Jacobs tossed a coin. Barker, correctly, chose heads.[18]

The Conservatives, dissatisfied in the unfamiliar role of the minority and possessing more political acumen and experience than their opponents, took full advantage of the weak position of the Barker-Jacobs group. In caucus meeting, they chose as

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[18] For the organization of the 1933 legislature, see: Minneapolis Journal and Tribune; St. Paul Pioneer-Press; Askov American; Farmer-Labor Leader; Naftalin, op. cit., pp. 276-279; Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1935, 48 pp. A breezy Farmer-Labor view is given in Rome Roberts, The Minnesota Merry-Go-Round (1935), 210 pp. Much of the material is based in part upon personal interviews.

their candidate George W. Johnson of Duluth, a liberal Republican elected with the support of the Farmer-Labor Association. Not only was Johnson a man about whom the moderates could gather, but he also served as a foil against anti-labor charges that might otherwise be a strong vote-getting indictment against the Conservative leadership. Johnson had been elected with the support of Duluth's organized labor.[19] In fact, labor rated Johnson a better friend than they did Barker, who was a product of rural Minnesota. In reporting on the 1933 session, the educational bureau of the Farmer-Labor Association had given Johnson a pro-labor rating of 63% while Barker scored only 57%.[20] Similarly, the railroad brotherhoods' lobbyists gave Johnson eighteen out of a possible twenty-two points, while Barker's total was but fourteen.[21]

With two middle-of-the-road candidates, the moderates, with no caucus commitments to their constituents, were free to choose for themselves. Some probably chose Johnson because his legislative record was more impressive than that of Barker, others believed that a Conservative vote would offer greater freedom of action (the Liberals had endeavored to keep Munn supporters "in line" in the 1933 session), while a not inconsiderable number were well aware of the desirability of "voting right" so far as committee assignments were concerned. In the formal balloting, Barker secured very few votes other than those considered to be

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[19] Johnson was later elected mayor of Duluth with the support of organized labor.

[20] Naftalin, op. cit., p. 278.

[21] Biennial Report, 1933, pp. 40-43.

definitely Farmer-Labor. Johnson was elected, 82-49.

There were some interesting examples of the independent position of legislators in the 1935 balloting. "Fainter" Wanvick of Duluth, labor supported and a liberal, cast his vote for his friend and fellow townsman, Johnson. Since that time, Wanvick has continued to show considerable independence. Andrew Finstuen, who had been regarded as an incorrigible independent during the 'twenties and who had been chosen by the 1933 Conservatives as a moderate speakership candidate, cast his vote for the Liberal candidate. (Unlike partisan legislatures where the losing candidate for presiding officer generally becomes minority leader, the Minnesota caucuses have frequently nominated men definitely not in the "inside" group in efforts to entice centrist independents. In 1933, Finstuen not only was not a part of the minority leadership, but he actually cast his vote with the Liberals on most of the important bills.) The large number of moderates who, without serious political retribution, did easily that which is very difficult in most legislatures in the middle-west by switching their support from the Liberal to the Conservative candidate, caused much bitterness among spokesmen for organized labor. There were protests that "Many legislators who claimed to be liberals during the 1933 session showed their true colors this year by climbing on the band-wagon and voting with reactionaries on all important bills."[22]

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22 Biennial Report, 1935, p. 4.

As a case study in the observance of caucus lines, it is interesting to observe the voting on a series of amendments proposed to the Omnibus Tax Bill. The Conservative leadership, in order to prevent the adoption of Governor Olson's various provisions for tax reform, had banded together a series of changes to existing tax law and made it known that this was the only tax bill that would receive the blessing of the rules committee. The Liberals believed that the governor's proposals would fare better if considered separately and they opposed the omnibus presentation. When the bill was brought up for discussion, Liberal leaders immediately offered a series of amendments designed to restore the requests of the governor. The amendments sought to eliminate sales, bank check, and admissions taxes from the bill and replace them with increased progressive taxes, especially on incomes and inheritances. They also proposed increased gross earnings taxes on telephone companies, a corporate excess tax, and an increase in the moneys and credits tax. All of the Liberal proposals were in the "soak-the-rich" tradition that typified Farmer-Labor tax theory at the time. The gross earnings and corporate excess taxes were very popular, perhaps partly because of the rather naive theory of shifting and incidence accepted by the Farmer-Laborites. The moneys and credits increase was urged, too, even though the tax had been most inequitably and haphazardly applied for many years. The Conservatives, in the meanwhile, strongly favored the regressive retail sales tax that was being adopted in many states about that time. The governor had,

however, threatened to veto any bill establishing such a tax.[23] The Conservative position was against every amendment suggested to the Omnibus Tax Bill and it eventually passed the House in the form suggested by the Conservative-dominated tax committee. Later the Senate Conservative leaders adopted the same approach and sent the bill on to the governor. Since Olson was unalterably opposed to a sales tax and was committed to veto such a bill, he did so. No attempt to override the veto or to pass any other tax bills was made by the Conservative leadership. Thus, the Farmer-Labor tax planks were not put into law, but the Conservatives did not get their sales tax either.

Table VII lists the voting on amendments proposed to the Omnibus Tax Bill. This table indicates the degree of caucus discipline on one of the most important, if not the most important, bill to come before the 1935 House. No attempt is made here to discover the correlations of members of each caucus on a general list of topics before the legislature; the object is to demonstrate the degree of adherence to caucus policy achieved on a clear-cut issue and where a definite attempt is made to secure adherence.

A break-down of the figures indicates that there was a very high degree of solidarity within each group. Of the forty-six Liberals voting on a majority of the roll calls, no less than twenty-nine (sixty-three per cent) agreed entirely with the caucus view, while over ninety-one per cent of them supported

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23 The Omnibus Tax Bill was H. F. 1564. See House Journal, 1935, especially pp. 1507-1509, 1530, 1541-1544, 1569, 1580-1585.

Table VII

HOUSE VOTING ON AMENDMENTS TO

THE OMNIBUS TAX BILL OF 1935

H. F. 1564

Representative		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Amundson	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100%
H. Andersen	C	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	53
R. Anderson	C	N	N	N	-	N	N	N	-	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	93
Barker	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Bellman	L	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	-	N	N	92
Bennett	L	Y	N	Y	-	Y	N	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	-	N	N	83
Biever	C	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	86
Boberg	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	N	N	100
Brophey	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	-	N	-	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
L. Campbell	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
W. Campbell	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Champlin	C	-	-	-	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Chilgren	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Coduti	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	86
Collins	L	-	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	N	85
Costello	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Covert	C	N	N	N	N	-	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	-	Y	Y	100
Cox	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Crissey	C	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	-	-	Y	-	Y	-	Y	N	-	100
C. A. Dahle	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
O. K. Dahle	C	-	-	-	N	N	N	N	N	N	-	Y	N	N	Y	Y	91
Dalen	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	93
Daly	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	-	100
Dammann	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	-	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Dawson	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Dixon	C	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	13
Dunn	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Eastvold	L	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
G. Erickson	L	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	-	N	N	92
L. Ericksson	L	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	71
Ettel	C	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	43
Fast	L	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	47
Finnegan	C	-	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	-	N	N	Y	Y	84
Finstuen	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Forsythe	C	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	93

Representative		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Frederickson	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100%
Friburg	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Friederichs	L	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	--
Gibbons	C	-	N	N	-	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	84
Green	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Gryte	C	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	-	N	N	N	N	N	-	Y	84
Hagen	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Hagland	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
L. M. Hall	C	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	-	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	86
W. H. Hall	C	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	93
Halverson	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Hart	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Hartkopf	C	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	-	N	Y	Y	93
Hartle	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Hastings	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	-	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Havemeier	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Hayford	C	N	N	N	-	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	43
Helgeson	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	-	N	N	Y	Y	Y	93
Herfindahl	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Hilton	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Hogan	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Horwitz	C	N	N	N	-	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Hove	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	80
Iverson	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Jebb	C	N	Y	N	Y	Y	-	Y	-	-	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y	45
Jesten	C	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	-	Y	N	N	73
G. Johnson	C	(Speaker)-			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	--
R. Johnson	C	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	93
Julkowski	C	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	20
Kempfer	C	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	93
Kettner	C	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	93
Kieffer	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	N	-	100
Kinzer	L	Y	Y	-	Y	-	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Kueffner	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Lager	C	-	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	50
Lee	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Lieske	L	Y	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N	Ex
Lockhart	C	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	14
Lockwood	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	N	100
Long	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Lowe	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Lux	L	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	92
MacKinnon	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	-	-	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
McIntosh	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	86
McNulty	L	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	N	92

Representative		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Madden	L	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	93%
Mann	C	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	67
Martz	C	-	N	N	-	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	77
Masek	C	N	N	N	N	N	-	N	N	-	N	N	N	N	N	N	84
Melby	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	N	N	100
Merrill	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Miller	C	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	53
Moore	C	N	N	N	-	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Nellermoe	L	-	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	-	Y	Y	-	Y	-	-	N	89
Nelson	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Nissen	C	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	-	71
Nolan	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	86
Nonnemacher	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	-	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Nordin	L	Y	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N	--
Nystrom	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
O'Rourke	C	N	N	N	-	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	-	N	Y	Y	100
Ost	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Paige	C	N	N	N	-	N	N	-	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
O. Paulsen	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
J. Paulson	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Powers	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	-	-	-	N	Y	Y	100
Prestegard	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Radde	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Roebke	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Rohne	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	-	N	Y	Y	100
Samek	L	(Died)-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	--
Schwartz	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	100
Severson	C	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	93
Severtson	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	93
Slen	C	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	-	-	-	N	N	50
Stockwell	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Sweitzer	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Syreen	C	N	N	N	N	N	-	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Terwilliger	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	N	N	100
Thielen	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Thompson	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Thorkelson	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Tighe	C	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	-	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	86
Trisch	L	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	-	N	N	100
Wahlstrand	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	93
Waldal	C	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	73
Wambach	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Wangensteen	L	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	-	Y	N	N	64
Wanvick	C	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	73
Weeks	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	93

Representative		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
F. W. White	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100%
J. J. White	L	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	N	N	93
Wier	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	100
Witt	C	N	Y	N	N	-	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	71
Youngquist	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	100
Zwach	C	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	N	N	23

#1. To eliminate sales tax, Barker, lost, 50-71.
#2. To eliminate check tax, Barker, lost, 57-70.
#3. To eliminate admissions tax, Barker, lost, 49-76.
#4. To increase gross earnings tax on telephone companies, Melby, lost, 43-71.
#5. To increase gross earnings tax on telephone companies, Wangensteen, lost, 56-67.
#6. To increase gross earnings tax on telephone companies, Wangensteen, lost, 49-69.
#7. To decrease sales tax, lost, 43-76.
#8. To decrease sales tax, lost, 38-73.
#9. To increase inheritance tax, Nolan, lost, 53-65.
#10. To increase higher brackets income tax, Herfindahl, lost, 49-69.
#11. To increase income tax, all brackets, H. C. Anderson, lost, 56-66.
#12. To establish a corporate excess tax, Nolan, lost, 39-73.
#13. To increase money and credits tax, Halverson, lost, 57-61.
#14. Final vote on bill, passed, 69-53.
#15. On repassage with conference changes, 71-54.
#16. Percentage of agreement, member with caucus.

Source: House Journal, 1935, pp. 1507-1509, 1530, 1541-1544, 1569, 1580-1581, 1583-1585.

the caucus strategy more than eighty per cent of the time. Among the Conservatives, with a large centrist bloc, one would expect somewhat lower percentages. Even so, more than fifty per cent of the group supported the caucus view all the way and more than eighty-five per cent of the majority group accepted the view of the leadership more than eighty per cent of the time, as is demonstrated in Table VIII.

Table VIII

PERCENTAGE OF AGREEMENT WITH CAUCUS

1935 House of Representatives

	Liberals		Conservatives	
Percentage of Proposals Supported	Number Supporting	Percentage Supporting	Number Supporting	Percentage Supporting
100%	29	63.0%	41	50.6%
90-99	6	13.0	14	17.3
80-89	7	15.2	8	9.9
70-79	1	2.2	6	7.4
50-69	1	2.2	5	6.2
Less than 50	2	4.4	7	8.6
Totals	46	100.0	81	100.0

As is indicated, but four of the Liberals (in 1935 the group was made up almost exclusively of Farmer-Laborites) strayed from the intentions of the caucus on this important matter. One of them (Fredericks) actually had a correlation of zero, going over to the Conservatives completely. There were eighteen moderates in the Conservative group who voted with a considerable degree of independence, four of them supporting the Liberals on more than three-fourths of the roll calls. It would appear then, that on a clearly political issue drawn between the governor and his legislative opponents, considerable caucus regularity -- perhaps as much as could be secured in any other legislature of

in Congress -- is possible with a nonpartisan legislature. Of course, it is quite possible that most of the apparent "regularity" would have been registered without any effort on the part of caucus or party leaders simply because an issue involving basic political philosophy was at stake. This factor cannot be measured statistically.

The Senate, already Conservative, had been before the voters in 1934. Following the out-state reaction to the first two Olson terms, the rural-dominated Senate included only twenty-four Farmer-Labor supported members. Once again a third party lieutenant-governor had been selected to preside over the body. This time it was Hjalmar Petersen of Askøy, a village newspaperman who had been rewarded with the chairmanship of the House ways and means committee during his second term in that body as a result of his efforts on behalf of Munn for speaker in 1933. He was Olson's personal choice for the promotion and he had actually won his office by a greater margin than that attained by the governor.

With the Farmer-Labor party in a definite minority in the upper house, Petersen decided personally to undertake the task of bringing approximately eighteen independents into supporting the Liberal caucus.[24] When he discussed the matter with Olson, the governor was skeptical and uncooperative. He suggested that a downtown St. Paul headquarters "would only bring the reporters" with questions that would stir up both the opposition and the

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[24] Interview, Hjalmar Petersen, August, 1949. See also, Naftalin, op. cit., pp. 276-279.

moderates who tended to favor the Liberals. He recommended that Petersen travel around to the various independents and talk with them personally. This he did.

Whether Petersen could have secured enough votes to organize the Senate even had he had the support of the governor is doubtful -- he would have needed more than half of the group on the fence and, with the Senate traditionally conservative, those members anxious to be on the "right side" would have tended strongly toward the Conservative group. On the other hand, implications of patronage support by the governor might have strengthened Petersen's hand enough to develop a snowballing effect toward the Liberal cause. Actually, political observers in and at the session seem to be quite generally agreed that Olson was not anxious to have a Farmer-Labor controlled Senate and hence withheld much-needed support from Petersen's venture. The governor, who had political ambitions transcending the boundaries of the state of Minnesota, had several reasons for being satisfied without a majority in the upper house: (1) there was a strong, well-organized and vociferous radical wing in the Farmer-Labor group that was demanding more than could be granted in consonance with Olson's political ambitions -- the Senate served as the best foil against such demands; (2) the Senate made an excellent villian to be attacked by the governor via the airwaves or in the press and offered an excellent source of publicity (Olson, a master at concentrating public attention upon truly urgent matters, was able to force essential matters through the legislature); (3) full nominal control of the legislature by the Farmer-Labor party

would have made "passing the buck" virtually impossible, giving the Republicans a chance to lay full blame for shortcomings, horse-tradings and pork barreling upon the governor's party when, as a matter of fact, its apparent majority would not have been a real one since the group that organized either house was forced to compromise with the moderates.[25]

The full extent of Petersen's failure was made evident when he held a dinner for those whose support he sought. Of the eighteen, only one showed up -- and he was thought to have been an observer for the opposition! Senator Charles Orr, who held a caucus immediately after election day and again just before the convening of the legislature, had things well in hand. By a vote of 43-23, the lieutenant-governor was once more deprived of his power to appoint committees, officers or employees. The motion produced very little debate.

During the session, the Conservatives, firmly entrenched in all important committees, continued their practice of not holding formal conferences. The Liberals, on the other hand, usually met once a week in the lieutenant-governor's office under the chairmanship of the minority leader, Senator Homer Carr of Proctor.

A correlation of members of the Senate on selected major

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[25] To be sure, the 1935 House was clearly in Conservative control, but Olson's technique had been successful in 1933, would presumably work in 1935 and, with the Senate elected quadrennially, a resurgence of the Farmer-Laborites in the next election would have put the organization of both Houses in their hands since the upper house balance of power would more than likely carry over.

issues of the 1935 session is shown in Table IX.[26] With three Senators absent most of the session, there were forty nominal Conservatives and twenty-four Liberals. Of these, nine of the former cast a conservative vote on each ballot while sixteen Liberals agreed with the caucus on each vote they cast.[27] The more homogeneous Liberals were thus considerably more clearly in agreement on a single policy, as might be expected.

It is interesting to note the positions of some of the Senators associated with the Democratic party. Lacking a unified state policy or organization, the party's legislators evidently felt no kinship at all. Some were very conservative (Cashman, Sullivan), others joined the Liberal caucus and were among its most loyal members (Kozlak, Siegel) while others balanced themselves on the fence while caucusing with the Conservatives (Carley, Mullin, Wolfe).

The tendency to "play both ends against the middle," long asserted to be a liability of a nonpartisan legislature, evidences itself rather well in the table. The voting of Carley, Dietz, Farnand, Loftsgaarden, Mullin, Richardson, and Ruotsinoja, among others, while perhaps in considerable part due to the freedom to vote as one believes in the Minnesota legislature, points

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26 Issues determined from the Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1935, appendix.

27 Perhaps the chart is somewhat unfair to the Conservatives since Rockne's motion to kill the old age pension bill by refusing to appoint a conference committee was so arbitrary that only twelve votes were cast for it (one by a Liberal). Even ignoring this roll call, however, there were only fourteen unanimously Conservative Senators.

Table IX

VOTING ON IMPORTANT BILLS

1935 Senate

Senator	Home		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Adams	Duluth	C	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	-	91%
Almen	Dalaton	C	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	75
Anderson	Mpls	C	Y	-	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	-	N	N	N	100
Berg	W. St.Paul	L	Y	N	-	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	82
Berglund	Albert Lea	C	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	92
Bonniwell	Hutchinson	C	Y	-	N	N	N	-	-	-	-	N	N	N	100
Bridgeman	Bemidji	L	N	N	Y	Y	Y	-	-	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	100
Carley	Plainview	C	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	58
Carr	Proctor	L	N	N	-	Y	Y	N	N	-	-	Y	Y	-	100
Cashman	Owatonna	C	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	100
Cravens	Milaca	L	-	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	100
Crowley	St. James	C	Y	-	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	100
Devold	Mpls	L	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Ex
Dietz	Montgomery	L	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	75
Fernand	Hibbing	L	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	N	N	36
Finstad	Windom	C	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	-	N	N	N	82
Foslien	Garfield	L	N	N	-	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	100
Galvin	Winona	C	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	-	N	N	N	73
Gardner	Staples	L	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	-	Y	Y	N	91
Hausler	St. Paul	L	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	100
Ives	Mankato	C	Y	-	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	91
C. Johnson	Almelund	L	N	-	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
T. Johnson	Fergus F.	L	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	100
Kingsley	Mpls	C	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	84
Koslak	Mpls	L	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	92
Larson	Preston	C	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	92
Lawson	Willmar	L	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	100
Lightner	St. Paul	C	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	100
Lodin	Isanti	L	N	-	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	100
Loftsgaarden	St. Paul	C	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	67
Lommen	Eveleth	L	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	100
MacKenzie	Gaylord	C	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	-	N	N	N	100
Marshall	Mpls	C	Y	N	N	N	N	-	-	N	Y	N	N	N	90
McLeod	Gr.Rapids	L	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	100
Mellon	Waverly	L	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	100

Senator	Home		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A. Miller	Hopkins	C	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	-	82%
F. Miller	Little F.	C	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	84
Morrison	Norwood	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Ex
Mullin	Mpls	C	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	-	36
Murphy	B. Earth	C	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	75
Neumeier	Stillwter	C	-	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	91
Novak	St. Paul	L	N	N-	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	100
Oliver	Graceville	C	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	84
Orr	St. Paul	C	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	-	N	N	N	91
Pederson	Milan	L	N	-	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	100
Ribenack	Duluth	C	Y	N	N	N	N	-	-	N	Y	N	N	N	90
Rice	Alvarado	L	N	N	-	-	-	N	N	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	100
Richardson	Rochester	C	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	N	N	Y	64
Rockne	Zumbrota	C	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	100
Roepke	Faribault	C	Y	-	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	91
Romberg	Sleepy Eye	L	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	92
Ruotsinoja	Kimball	C	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	58
Schmechel	Fairfax	L	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	84
Sell	Adrian	C	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	75
Siegel	St. Paul	L	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	100
Sletvold	Det.Lakes	C	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	100
Solstad	Fisher	C	Y	-	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	91
Sprung	Ada	L	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	100
Starks	Dexter	C	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	92
Stioning	Moorhead	C	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	-	Y	N	N	-	90
G. Sullivan	Stillwter	C	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-Died	
H. Sullivan	St. Cloud	C	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	92
Tungseth	T.River F.	C	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	75
Weber	Slayton	C	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	84
Wing	Carrolton	C	Y	-	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	-	-	Y	Y	67
Wolfe	Mpls	C	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	75
Woolsey	Melrose	C	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	84
Wright	Mpls	C	Y	-	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	-	N	N	N	100
YEAS		-	43	12	22	23	26	37	37	39	26	29	22	27	--
NAYS		-	23	42	39	41	38	24	24	23	25	35	43	33	--

#1. Resolution to deprive lieutenant governor of power to appoint committees, Orr.

#2. To refuse House request for a conference on the old age pension bill (a move to kill the measure), Rockne.

#3. To remove sales tax from Omnibus Tax Bill (H. F. 1564), Liberal amendment.

#4. To increase net income tax in higher brackets, Liberal amendment to H. F. 1564.

#5. To increase inheritance tax, Liberal amendment to H. F. 1564.

#6. Final vote on Omnibus Tax Bill.

#7. On repassage of Omnibus Tax Bill with conference changes.

#8. To permit municipalities to extend power lines to thirty miles beyond corporate limits (S. F. 179), Pederson. Liberal bill.

#9. To destroy effectiveness of forty-eight hour week for women bill (S. F. 103), Weber. Conservative bill.

#10. To confirm appointment of Florence Rood to State Board of Education.

#11. To confirm appointment of Marion Le Sueur to State Board of Education.

#12. To impose a chain store tax (S. F. 440), Lommen. Administration measure.

#13. Percentage of agreement, member with caucus.

Source: Senate Journal, 1935.

toward efforts to placate all (or most) of one's constituency in the same session, rather than being associated with a definite group.

The independence of action in the legislature is indicated by such voting as that of Senator Louis E. Berg of West St. Paul who, although a dependable member of the Liberal group, voted in favor of depriving the presiding officer of his appointive powers, Similarly, Senator Farnand of Hibbing joined the Liberals in opposing this move, but later left them to vote with the opposition on many matters, particularly those of a financial nature. Senator Mullin of Minneapolis was a leading Conservative, yet he actually voted with the Liberals on a majority of the important bills and served in some cases as a principal defender for the governor.

The 1935 session of the legislature accomplished very little. With the Conservatives in control while the gubernatorial office was in Farmer-Labor hands, stalemates occurred constantly on such things as taxation, appointments, and to a lesser extent, old age pensions and public relief. Many measures became law only under the press of economic circumstance and the peculiar ability of Floyd Olson to bring public pressure to bear upon the law-makers. The session, according to the aging Charles Cheney, began in political discord and ended on a sour note. The proceedings were surcharged with politics from beginning to end.[28]

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28 Minneapolis Journal, April 25, 1935, p. 1.

The 1935-1936 Extra Session. Partly because the regular
on had left so much undone, partly perhaps to focus atten-
upon the attitude of the Conservatives toward what the
er-Laborites called the "demands of the people" (the 1934
tion had left little ground for optimism and Olson intended
n for the Senate against Thomas Schall in 1936), the governor
ed an extra session of the legislature for December 2, 1935.
ked for action to preserve the benefits of the National
trial Recovery Act, recently voided by the supreme court;
traighten out the confusion in the old age pension act that
caused this poorly drawn bill to be declared unenforceable;
rovide for unemployment compensation; and to revise the state
laws, increasing moneys and credits, and income taxes. After
onths of debate the session adjourned, accomplishing little
t for a new old age pension act and general relief funds
were far below the gubernatorial request.[29]

As has generally been the case with extra sessions, no
was made by the minority to capture the speakership since
had been no appreciable change in House membership. With
Liberals abstaining and a few irreconcilables supporting
, the incumbent George W. Johnson won reelection to the
82-5.

The 1937 Session. The election held in the fall of 1936 was
-mortem tribute to a great leader of men, a brilliant, if
unistic and sometimes ruthless politician, and a man who

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[29] Taftalin, op. cit., p. 296.

could win the respect and friendship of almost any person, no matter how different the views of the two might be politically: Floyd B. Olson. Still a young man, the governor had died of cancer at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester in August, even as he attempted to carry on a campaign for the United States Senate. His successor to the governorship, Elmer A. Benson, the state banking commissioner (who had been named to fill the vacancy created in the United States Senate by the accidental death of Thomas Schall in December, 1935), had been virtually unknown in the state prior to his sponsorship by an active, ambitious Communist party-line clique in the Farmer-Labor party. The people voting in the election that fall were not voting for Benson primarily, or for the other Farmer-Labor candidates, or for that party's endorsees in the legislature; they were voting for the memory of Floyd B. Olson.

The sentimentality of the American masses, combined with political agreements between the Democratic national committee and the state Farmer-Labor party that finally resulted in the two groups dividing up the various offices that were to be contested for by each, produced a state landslide for the Farmer-Laborites (the Democrats carried the state for Franklin Roosevelt, the third party having agreed not to support a national third party movement).[30] The voters carried matters so far as to give enthusiastic support to Farmer-Labor endorsed candidates for the legislature. The Farmer-Labor majority that Olson had never had in the House of Representatives while he was governor finally came

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[30] On this general subject, see Naftalin, op. cit., pp. 330 ff.

about, at least in part, as a direct result of his dramatic, untimely death.

For the second time in the nonpartisan legislature the House had a Liberal majority and this time a majority that could be constituted of Farmer-Labor members alone. Actually, there were several professed Democrats who had been, and continued to be, regular members of the Liberal group. In addition, a substantial number of moderates chose to support the Liberal candidate for reasons of expediency, although most of them later voted their usual independent course. No avowed Republicans supported the Liberal candidate, except for Carl Eastvold, who voted for, and generally backed the views of, his fellow representative from the forty-eighth district, Harold Barker.

The Liberal caucus had little choice but to support Barker even though he was regarded as a weak man for the speaker's chair. He had had the implicit support of Governor Olson and had been minority leader in the preceding session. He had been a moderate candidate when it had been necessary to attempt to win the moderates, but with Arthur Jacobs working the puppet strings, he stayed on.

With little hope for winning, the Conservatives were able to return to a genuinely conservative candidate. The actual floor leader of the group, Roy E. Dunn of Pelican Rapids, a state Republican leader, preferred the position in the House to that on the rostrum, a precedent established by W. I. Norton.[31] The

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[31] Dunn has served in the House continuously since 1925 except for the 1931 session when he made an unsuccessful try for the Senate.

group chose as its speaker candidate, Lawrence M. Hall of St. Cloud. Hall, nominally a Democrat when he first entered the legislature, but later to be associated with the Republican party, represented Stearns county, an area of predominately German Catholic extraction and traditionally conservative and Democratic.

As was expected, Barker won 83-41. Carl Eastvold received one vote. (Three members later announced that they would have voted for Barker had they been present.) In making committee assignments, Arthur N. Jacobs, who had been named secretary to the speaker, urged that the Conservatives be "taught a lesson". This view prevailed, to the extent that the minority received no positions where they could exert any influence, they were given less than proportionate representation on the important committees and were eliminated from the important rules committee.

The Senate, again, did not have to stand for election at a high point in Farmer-Labor popularity and the group was basically the same as that in the preceding legislature. As a matter of fact, the Conservatives had things more to themselves than ever due to the fact that the lieutenant-governor, Gottfrid Lindsten of Minneapolis, was ill during the entire term and never presided. Lindsten, a life-long official in the railway brotherhoods, had succeeded Hjalmar Petersen who had been shunted to the railroad and warehouse commission in the reshuffling of offices after Olson's death.

A repetitive phenomenon in the nonpartisan legislature evidenced itself once more in the Senate when the Conservatives nominated William B. Richardson, Rochester attorney and ten year

veteran, for president pro tempore, an office of peculiar importance in the absence of Lindsten. Richardson, although regularly associated with the Conservatives, was an independent middle-of-the-roader who felt no compunction in voting against the Conservative consensus.[32] Useful as an instrument for drawing moderates toward the Conservative position, he defeated Harry A. Bridgeman of Bemidji, an avowed Farmer-Laborite, 39-23. Committees were strongly Conservative with Charles Orr of St. Paul once again chairing the rules committee.

The session itself was rather chaotic and not very productive of legislation. Not only was the House in the hands of Farmer-Laborites and the Senate under Republican-dominated Conservative control, but there was a serious split in the Farmer-Labor ranks. Governor Benson was supported in the legislature and in the administration by a faction of the party that was either quasi-Communistic or held to the older radicalism of the Non-Partisan League. The opposing wing of the party included such important legislative figures as the speaker, Rep. E. J. Chilgren and Senator Bridgeman. To avoid being associated with the "red-tinged" following of the governor, many moderates who had supported Barker drifted away. As a result, some gubernatorial proposals were rejected by fellow Farmer-Laborites, others were rejected due to a failure of the Liberals to muster a majority of the vote, while still others were killed in the Conservative Senate. (The Senate could no longer be whipped into line as it sometimes had been under Olson. Not only did the new governor lack his predecessor's persuasive

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[32] See, for example, his voting record in Table IX.

ability but economic circumstances were no longer so pressing.) The Liberals, weakened by all of the above, continued to be plagued with a long-standing shortcoming: the absence of effective leadership in either house.[33]

The 1937 session produced divergent comments regarding nonpartisanship on the part of members of the Farmer-Labor party. Speaker Barker argued that nonpartisanship had been a great aid to the Farmer-Labor party; that a partisan legislature would not have allowed the party to organize the House in 1937.[34] In reply to the long-standing question concerning responsibility under nonpartisanship, Barker answered that the legislators "are held responsible for their actions only by their own constituencies and not to any party organization."

Concerning the organization of the 1937 House, the speaker appears to have assumed that membership in the body would have been distributed as to party in the same manner as it actually was, under either partisanship or nonpartisanship. Judging from the results in other states[35], this conclusion appears to be utterly unjustified. With party designation, the Farmer-Laborites would have enjoyed the full benefits of the sentimentality that was the dominant factor in the election. The landslide would have been counterbalanced to some extent, perhaps, if the division

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[33] For sources on this section, see the Bibliography.

[34] In a letter to Malcolm C. Moos quoted in Nonpartisan Legislative and Judicial Elections in Minnesota (1938), pp. 65-66.

[35] See, Infra, Chapter IV.

of the field agreed upon between the Farmer-Labor and Democratic parties were not extended to legislative candidates. It appears most likely, however, that partisanship in 1937 would have produced a clear-cut working majority for the governor's party in the lower house.

Harold Barker's loyalty to choice without party designation is perhaps better traced to his personal success under the system. Never an orthodox Farmer-Laborite, he is reported to have given serious consideration to voting with the Conservatives as a freshman in 1933, since Andrew Finstuen, their candidate, was not a "Norton Republican".[36] His choice as Liberal leader in 1935 came about precisely because he was not a thorough-going Farmer-Laborite. A party regular then would have had little chance to attract middle-of-the-road members who existed in large numbers as a result of nonpartisan organization. Without nonpartisanship, so weak a member as Harold Barker would not have been speaker of the House during the trying decade of the 'thirties.

In direct contrast to the parental Non-Partisan League, the Farmer-Labor party took a definite stand in favor of a change in the method of choosing the Minnesota legislature. This attitude is understandable in the light of the fact that the party was able to capture a genuine majority but once in the House and never in the Senate. Just before the Farmer-Labor party underwent its final eclipse, P. A. Harris, chairman of the state central

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[36] According to reliable sources.

committee wrote:[37] "One of the most needed changes, in my opinion, is to have members of the legislature elected with partisan designation."

The 1937 Extra Session. The special meeting of the legislature in 1937 indicated the degree to which the governor and his advisors, together with the weak Liberal leadership, had lost the support of the moderates in the House. In the formal voting, Barker received seventy-three votes while John J. White of Ogilvie, the Conservative nominee, polled fifty-five.[38] White was actually a Farmer-Laborite. Along with many other representatives, he thoroughly disliked Arthur N. Jacobs and hoped to draw enough disgruntled Liberals into the Conservative camp to overthrow the speaker and his secretary. He did not succeed, but with virtually no change in House personnel, Barker sustained a loss of thirteen votes, and the de facto support of the Liberal caucus slipped even further.

The Return of the Republican Party

The 1939 Session. The trend that Minnesota had obviously been taking back toward its Republican normalcy had been interrupted by the wave of sentimentality following the death of Floyd B. Olson. After this largely non-rational and temporary set-back, the G. O. P., aided by Governor Benson's penchant for alienating most of his possible sources of support and the serious split in

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37 Quoted in Moos, op. cit., p. 93.

38 Castor voted for Costello, while Andrew Finstuen, no longer with the Liberals, but considered a deserter from the Conservative camp, voted for Eastvold, as he had done at the regular session.

the Farmer-Labor party, returned to power in all areas of the state government in the election of 1938.

The campaign was an unusually bitter one. The political complexion of some of Benson's advisors had encouraged the conservative press to become unusually careless in the use of the epithet "Red". Sensing victory, the Republicans made a no holds barred effort. Although Benson was a candidate for reelection, it was generally conceded that the Republican gubernatorial candidate would be the odds-on favorite for the first time since 1928. Under the circumstances, the fight for that party's nomination was a lively one. The regular Republican leadership had expected to proceed with "business as usual" now that the Farmer-Labor domination was thought to have been broken, but a Dakota county attorney barely out of his twenties, Harold E. Stassen of South St. Paul, leader of the state Young Republicans, conducted a shrewd campaign and won his party's nomination to the chagrin of many of the Old Guard.[39]

Stassen conducted a clever fight for the governorship by seeking to compare himself favorably with Olson and to contrast himself with Benson. By weaving references to the Olson legend into his speeches and by offering himself as the genuine liberal in the campaign as the representative of a "revitalized" party, he considerably reduced the effectiveness of Benson's strongest selling point: that he was the true successor to Floyd Olson.

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[39] For a comprehensive study of Harold E. Stassen, his election campaigns and his administration, see Ivan Hinderacker, Harold Stassen and Developments in the Republican Party in Minnesota, 1937-1943 (1949), 793 pp.

Stassen, more positively, also hammered away at Benson's supporters as quasi-Communists and attacked the patronage abuses and corruption of the administration, urging the necessity for a state-wide merit system.

The Republicans also made an effort to return to control in the House of Representatives. This was not too difficult, since known association with the Farmer-Labor party proved to be a liability to candidates in most parts of the state.

The speakership was no battle, for the Farmer-Labor members, combined with the liberal Democrats, totaled but thirty. From two years earlier, the Conservatives already had their candidate in Lawrence M. Hall of St. Cloud. He received ninety-four of ninety-six votes at the Conservative caucus. Hall was an experienced member, although only thirty years old, an able presiding officer, a man with considerable personal following in the House and one who was more than a mere front man for the majority leader. (Dunn and Hall had views sufficiently similar to avoid major conflicts, however.)

The Liberals, with little to look forward to, held a poorly attended caucus at which Edward Hagen of Milan edged out E. J. Chilgren of Littlefork. Although Hagen was an active member of the Farmer-Labor party, he was not accepted with enthusiasm by many liberals, especially those from the St. Paul delegation, because he was a farmer and a dry. Some of this group urged Chilgren to become a candidate despite his caucus defeat, not because either man could win, but rather to build a leadership for possible future victories. Since Chilgren had moved

unanimous adoption of the Hagen candidacy at the caucus, he could not do this. The dissidents then decided to place in nomination the name of Theodore Slen.

In the formal balloting, Hall was the choice of both conservatives and of moderates who had formerly voted with the Liberals, receiving one hundred votes. Hagen totaled nineteen ballots, Slen received ten and one vote was cast for John M. Zwach.[40] The break in Liberal ranks was healed for the most part during the session due to the emergence of George Hagen of Crookston as the de facto floor leader.

In committee assignments, the Liberals were removed from the rules committee and reduced to a position of impotence everywhere in retaliation for the harsh treatment accorded the Conservatives in the previous session. (More far-seeing Liberals had at that time urged a lenient policy, hoping to establish a system of "minority rights" more in accord with that found in most two-party bodies, but the "teach them a lesson" view of A. N. Jacobs had prevailed.)

The Senate was once again soundly conservative and was organized by the usual group headed by Charles Orr. The fact that nearly one-half of the members of the upper house (thirty-one of sixty-seven) were lawyers, many of whom, it was frequently alleged, were on retainer to various corporations when the legislature was not

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[40] The Slen group included four labor representatives from St. Paul, one from Minneapolis and five rural members. Other labor men supported the regular Liberal caucus.

meeting, was a source of unhappiness to organized labor.[41] It was noted, too, that the labor committee consisted of thirteen lawyers, a banker, a retired contractor and a newspaperman.

The Senate was faced with one important change: for the first time since the 1929 session the lieutenant-governor was a Republican, O. Elmer Anderson of Brainerd. The question arose as to whether to allow the new presiding officer to appoint the committees. A return to the old system would have required a rule change that might have provided embarrassing political ammunition. Furthermore, the new system had given the controlling group in the Senate even more power over the actions of the body. There was little enthusiasm for relinquishing this authority.

The system of appointing an organization committee consisting of one member (of the majority group) from each congressional district to name the committees and employees was thus continued as it has been since. The committee formally names a rules committee consisting of one majority caucus member from each congressional district and a committee on committees that appoints managers for the Senate in conferences with the House and the members of interim committees.

The Liberals were very weak in the 1939 Senate. Harry A. Bridgeman of Bemidji had vacated his post as minority leader

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41 Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1939, p. 5. For sources on the 1939 session, see the Bibliography.

in the preceding session after disagreeing strongly with Governor Benson's policies. In 1939, there was no formal Liberal organization and this situation has continued to the present (1950). In practice, the majority floor leader sends a letter to such members as he regards as Conservatives prior to the opening of the legislature inviting them to a "conference". It is at this caucus that matters of officers, and sometimes policy, are decided. An informal, unofficial "steering committee" of one member from each congressional district is selected to attend to the actual business of making committee assignments and distributing employee patronage. These decisions are later made official through the action of the committee on organization (similarly constituted and often containing the same personnel, but an official committee).

The caucus, usually held shortly after the November election, is generally attended by most of the invited members "in order to protect their districts", as one senator explained to the writer. Uninvited members must depend upon charity, taking whatever committee positions may be offered. There is no concept of a "just" proportion of assignments.

Criticism at the end of the Farmer-Labor regime continued to be unfavorable toward the nonpartisan principle. Aging Charles B. Cheney, a charter-member opponent of the system, remained unreconciled:[42]

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[42] Interview cited in Moos, op. cit., p. 85.

> We elect a governor on a party platform and if we hope to have the governor carry out the platform upon which he was elected, he must have the support of the legislature. The members of the Minnesota non-partisan legislature do not care about party platforms. People vote for them as individuals, and each member was elected on his own platform. He is responsible to no one except the voters back home. From the standpoint of responsible government, the non-partisan legislature has been a total loss.

Others raised the question as to whether the member was responsible even to the voters back home. Alvin W. Johnson, discussing the adoption in Nebraska of the nonpartisan principle and citing the Minnesota precedent, found that "The unavoidable conclusion is that the use of the nonpartisan ballot in Minnesota has only succeeded in destroying party responsibility."[43]

On the other hand, Malcolm Moos discovered[44] that some long-time members of the legislature had changed their attitude toward the principle after a number of years in office. Aging Anton J. Rockne, who had worked hard to kill county nonpartisanship by adding the legislative offices to the original bill and then had tried unsuccessfully to destroy the "Frankenstein" he had created, said that he thought the state had had better government as a result of nonpartisanship. A veteran Democrat, James A. Carley, suggested that the party does not enter into Senate voting. He thought legislators voted "in the interest of the state" and not of the party, and that better representation of one's constituents was possible if one did not think along party lines.

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[43] Alvin W. Johnson, The Unicameral Legislature (1938), p. 80.

[44] Moos, op. cit., p. 64.

The 1941 Session. There was little exciting in the campaign of 1940. Harold Stassen was reelected governor, attracting most moderates and many "left of center" persons who had formerly supported the now badly split Farmer-Labor party. Efforts of the authoritarian left-wing of that once powerful organization to unseat the more moderate followers of Hjalmar Petersen in the legislative primary did not help the task of the Liberals in their efforts to multiply in numbers.[45] In fact, they lost a few seats.

The Conservatives were fully satisfied with L. M. Hall as speaker and he received ninety-eight votes. George Hagen became formal, as well as actual, minority leader, polling twenty-five ballots. Three moderates (Daun and W. N. Nelson from the small group supporting Theodore Slen two years earlier, and Birlam) could not bring themselves to vote for either regular candidate and cast their ballots for John M. Zwach. One vote (presumably that of Zwach) was cast for Joseph J. Daun. The practice of the moderates of floating from one caucus to another depending upon the political trend -- a tendency that had been very common during the confused 'thirties -- slowed down greatly after 1939. In the 1941 organization only one representative deserted the minority to vote for Hall. The old-time independent Liberal, Carl Iverson of Ashby, who had been in the Slen group at the previous session and had always been one of the most

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[45] Hjalmar Petersen himself, with an unblemished political record, totalled a not inconsiderable 459,609 votes against Stassen's 654,686 but his personal standing was scarcely representative of his party's strength.

individualistic members of the House, voted with the majority.[46]

A rather unexpected charge was levied against the House organization when it was reported in the railroad brotherhoods' publication that "Some observers stress the point that the House, notably, was without leadership. . . . "[47] Evidently the "observers" were the brotherhoods' lobbyists themselves. They were considerably irked that, although the majority leader listened to their side of arguments "willingly", the speaker was felt to be uncooperative.[48] Actually, Hall was an able presiding officer. The majority leader, Roy E. Dunn, was a firm, decisive person who exercised considerable power from his position at the head of the rules committee. It is true that his leadership was, and has remained, divided with that of the speaker and of such independent loci of power as that of Claude Allen of St. Paul who, as chairman of the appropriations committee, has made himself almost indispensable. Allen, by acquainting himself with the needs of each state department and by knowing just how funds are being spent, has come to know more about state finances than perhaps any other member of the legislature. As such, he occupies a position similar to that held by Theodore Christianson prior to his elevation to the governorship and one that places him in a position of great influence. Since he is not responsible to any party organization and since his acts are dependent upon his own volition (his

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46 For sources on this and the following sections in this chapter, see the Bibliography.

47 Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1941, p. 4.

48 Ibid., p. 5.

reelection being almost automatic), he is not subordinate to any House organization, but is virtually a coordinate, independent power.

Such independent centers of strength, while perhaps not unknown in partisan two-party legislatures, appear to be particularly prevalent in the Minnesota arrangement and especially in the Senate. In the upper house, with its uninterrupted Conservative reign, men such as George Sullivan, J. D. Sullivan, A. J. Rockne and Charles Orr become veritable institutions, being reelected almost automatically (there were a few close decisions), "owning" their own committees and responding to Senate "leadership" as they saw fit or as pressure was brought to bear by another powerful committee chairman. (Since their views and interests were often very similar, cooperation rather than discord was characteristic of their dealings with one another.) Perhaps the outstanding example of this type of legislator was Anton J. Rockne, who for decades sat at the head of the finance committee as if it were his personal property, responsible virtually to no one except his own conscience.

The 1943 Session. The war-time session of 1943 met in a period of Republican domination and with little in the way of unusual political events. The preceding election had seen Edward J. Thye, Northfield farmer, win the important Republican nomination for the lieutenant-governorship; a post made unusually attractive by Harold Stassen's campaign promise to join the United States Navy at the end of the legislative session. There was a very high percentage of holdovers in both houses of the legislature from the last session, and both House and Senate were very heavily Conservative.

Lawrence M. Hall of St. Cloud was given the nod by the Conservatives for his third term as speaker. The opposition was very weak, most Liberals felt that there could be little advantage in making a nomination and since "coalitions are popular in war-time anyway" (in the words of one Liberal leader), it was decided to vote for Hall.

Departing from the practice of abstaining when they had no candidate, most Liberals, including their leaders, voted in the formal roll call. Hall received 121 ballots, C. C. Peterson, who had hoped to be the Liberal nominee, voted for John J. McNulty; Peterson received one vote. This unanimity had little effect upon committee assignments.

The Senate majority caucus witnessed a spirited campaign for the usually quite honorary position of president pro tempore, since the individual holding that position would automatically become lieutenant-governor upon Governor Stassen's resignation. Archie H. Miller of Hopkins won the prize. He was a conservative and a Republican. Senator Charles Orr once more became majority leader and chairman of the rules committee, a position he had held since the 'twenties except for the few years that Chris Rosenmeier, as a sop to the moderates, headed the committee.

The 1945 Session.[49] In a mutual search for survival, the gerontic Farmer-Labor party and the vacillating and infirm Democrats, both badly split internally, joined forces for the election of 1944, after years of effort on the part of factions

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[49] At the extra session of 1943, Hall was chosen speaker, 113-0.

in both parties to accomplish the merger.[50] The combined strength of the two groups did not have much to show in immediate results. The number of holdovers in the House was the highest in history, seventy-eight per cent, and Governor Thye was reelected.

The Conservatives broke all precedent by nominating L. M. Hall for a fourth term as speaker. The minority caucus, now a Democratic-Farmer-Labor (henceforth D.F.L.) organization with a few members who claimed allegiance to no party, decided to offer a candidate in nomination. (A few conservative Democrats still caucused with the majority but there were no longer any Republicans in the minority group.) Some ranking Liberal members were unwilling to assume positions of leadership in the group because it meant cooperating with the authoritarian left-wing, but Charles L. Halsted of Aitkin county was eventually selected as formal and actual floor leader. He was defeated by Hall, 105-23. The Liberals also selected Joseph Prifel of St. Paul as chairman of the Liberal caucus. This office was created to help divide up the work of the leadership. The minority leader no longer had to attend caucus meetings (which continued to be held fairly regularly, even in 1943 when there was no formal organization) and, of course, it provided another honor to be passed around.

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[50] There was actually a three-way split in the Farmer-Labor group. Conservative members, including United States Senator Henrik Shipstead (in 1940), Congressman Harold C. Hagen, and others, joined Republican ranks. The strife between the moderates and the Communist-line left-wing group was not finally resolved (in favor of the moderates) until 1948.

The minority saw somewhat of a revival in the political mettle that had been largely absent for several sessions. Halsted in an interview,[51] announced that the Liberals were organized for "strong opposition" to the majority and would seek "proportionate representation" on committees. He demanded, on the part of the Liberals, the same room allocation and stenographer service as was accorded the Conservatives. The latter point had been, and remained, a sore spot for the minority group. With no official recognition of caucuses, the Liberals (who meet in plenum during a session while the larger group does not) have been given neither recesses nor a room in the capitol for meetings. Likewise, the minority leader must depend upon the stenographic pool for secretarial assistance, although the majority leader is given special consideration on this matter.

The Senate Conservatives met on New Year's Day and, with a large number of members absent, chose Vin Weber of Slayton for president pro tempore over Ole G. Finstad of Windom by a vote of 30-8. The ten Liberal members were unorganized and Weber was unanimously elected. Charles Orr retained his position as head of the rules committee and, hence, as the majority leader. C. Elmer Anderson of Brainerd returned to the presiding officer's chair that he had lost to Edward J. Thye two years earlier.

The 1947 Session. The post-war election of 1946 produced a conservative reaction throughout most of the United States. In Minnesota, conservatism had been bullish since 1937 (in fact, since

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51 Minneapolis Tribune, January 3, 1945, p. 5.

1933) and the upward trend continued. Three-fourths of the House of Representatives was reelected while sixty-nine per cent of the Senate was held over, relative strength in each body remaining approximately equal. The governorship was vacated by Edward J. Thye who moved on to the United States Senate. His place was taken by another member of the "Stassen wing" of the Republican party, the Minneapolis lawyer and state supreme court justice, Luther W. Youngdahl, who proved to be the most popular and most controversial governor since Floyd B. Olson.

The December caucus of Conservatives continued to break precedent by extending to Lawrence M. Hall a fifth term as presiding officer of the House. Personable, a confident man behind the gavel and acceptable to other leaders of the caucus, he was given an honor never before accorded to a member of the House.

The Liberal conference was not well attended and was not unanimous in its views. Rural members, perturbed by the post-war aggressivenoss of organized labor, were anxious to have as a leader one of their own men and favored E. J. Chilgren of Littlefork, veteran in the Liberal leadership group. Joseph Prifel of St. Paul, caucus chairman in the preceding session and a C. I. O. business agent, was an active candidate for the post of floor leader. Despite lack of enthusiasm on the part of some rural Liberals, they were prevailed upon to give unified support to Prifel for the position of formal leader of the group. He was defeated by Hall, 104-24.

The Senate, with Charles Orr still the most influential member of the body, continued to pass around the honor of

president pro tempore. The Conservative group, meeting just before the opening day of the legislature, was torn between choosing still another rural member or giving the position to a "city" Senator. Oscar Swenson of Nicollet county, former speaker of the House was the rural candidate, with Milton C. Lightner of St. Paul, long-time member of the upper house, the urban choice. The latter was selected by the caucus by the narrow vote of 28-24 and was subsequently elected without opposition from the unorganized Liberals.

The 1949 Session. The surprising election of November, 1948 brought an end to the swing of the political pendulum toward Republicanism in Minnesota. The Democratic presidential candidate carried the state for the fifth straight time, the D. F. L. elected its first United States senatorplus four congressmen and, through endorsements and local activity, a considerably enlarged membership in the Liberal contingent of the state House of Representatives. Against the firmly entrenched incumbent state administrative officials, the D. F. L. made little progress, electing only a member of the railroad and warehouse commission. They made no serious attempt to capture the governorship from Luther W. Youngdahl, whose first-term record had enabled him to make deep inroads into the independent liberal vote.[52]

In the House of Representatives, where the Liberalmembership had remained virtually constant (hovering around twenty-five) from

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[52] In spite of the apparent acceptance of defeat before the election, however, the D. F. L. candidate, Charles L. Halsted, polled an impressive vote of 543,766 to Youngdahl's 643,972.

1939 through 1947, there was an emphatic increase of twenty members, making the minority once again of weighty proportions. The Senate, as had been the case several times previously, avoided standing for election at a time of high turnover.

The customary pre-session caucuses were held in St. Paul, both of them on the same day, November 12, 1948. Because many counties that had turned in majorities for President Truman and Senator-elect Humphrey were represented by incumbents who had been meeting with the Conservatives, there was considerable doubt about the size of each caucus. The Conservative meeting was actually attended by eighty-one members and five additional proxies were sent in. Their principal task was to find a successor for Lawrence M. Hall who, after a record-breaking tenure as speaker, had retired from the legislature to become a liquor lobbyist. The potent farm-bloc favored John A. Hartle of Owatonna. Hartle, a veteran of seven terms (ranking second only to Majority Leader Dunn among Conservatives), was a quiet, even-tempered, well-liked man, with a firm belief in supporting the most democratic rules of procedure for the House even though they might aid ideas counter to his own very conservative position. He was a Republican, although never an active party regular.[53] His name was placed in nomination by Leonard Dickinson of Bemidji. The principal opposition came from those members who rallied around the ultra-conservative Lawrence

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53 In its pamphlet, Facts for Farmers, December 6, 1948, the Minnesota Federation of Labor claimed that Hartle was a Democrat and at one time he appeared to have considered himself a follower of that party. He now calls himself a Republican, however. The M. F. L. was using the pamphlet in an attempt to increase Liberal support in the coming speakership vote.

F. Haeg of Robbinsdale, whose name was presented by John J. Kinzer of Cold Spring, a man who was once an active Farmer-Laborite. The first ballot gave Hartle forty-three votes to thirty-one for Haeg with scattered ballots going to A. F. Oberg of Lindstrom and Aubrey Dirlam of Redwood Falls. (Fred Memmer of St. Paul had earlier been considered as a possible compromise candidate.) The second ballot gave Hartle four more votes, and when Haeg's total remained unchanged, he withdrew, whereupon Hartle's nomination was made unanimous.

The Liberals, who had picked up enough new seats in the fall election to make their voice once more a considerable factor, added two members from incumbents formerly of Conservative allegiance. Michael R. Moriarty of Jordan reported that "The people of my district told me to come down here with the Liberals or else stay away from Scott county."[54] Robert Sheran of Mankato, a member of the D. F. L. party, had joined with the Conservatives in his one previous term. The Liberal meeting was attended by forty-three lawmakers with one additional member sending in a proxy. Joseph Prifel of St. Paul, not anxious to head the minority again, supported Edwin J. Chilgren of Littlefork. Curtiss Olson of Roseau, who was favored by many, did not allow his name to be put before the group, but Thomas Letness of Nielsville, a newcomer in comparison with Chilgren's twelve previous terms, was given considerable support. The name of the convert Robert Sheran was

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[54] St. Paul Dispatch, November 12, 1948, p. 1; Minneapolis Star, November 12, 1948, p. 1.

placed in nomination by Otto Clark of Osakis, one of the most independent of the Liberals, evidently with the hope that he might be able to draw moderates away from the Conservatives, especially from those districts that had been Democratic in national and state voting. (The practice of using a person outside of the "inner circle" to fill a compromise role had been, of course, common during the 'thirties.)

Before voting, the Liberal group recessed for over an hour at the suggestion of Charles Halsted, former minority leader and gubernatorial candidate. The leaders were hopeful that L. F. Haeg might be nominated by the Conservatives for speaker, in which case there might have been some members who would have abandoned that group in favor of the Liberals. When the opposition chose Hartle, the Liberals proceeded to ballot. The first vote gave Chilgren twenty-eight tallies to thirteen for Letnes who then made the move to make the nomination of the Littlefork representative unanimous. The nomination of Sheran was withdrawn prior to the balloting when it appeared that his candidacy was not advancing.

The Conservatives, having successfully settled the organization of the House, proceeded to dispense with patronage questions. They selected a chief clerk and, as had been customary for many years, distributed the nine next most important positions one to each congressional district. For the 1949 session, the jobs of the House were given out as follows, with each district's caucus making its own selection:

First District --- Postmaster
Second District -- Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Third District --- Index Clerk
Fourth District -- Chaplain
Fifth District --- Assistant Postmaster
Sixth District --- Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Seventh District - Assistant Sergeant-at- Arms
Eighth District -- Second Assistant Chief Clerk
Ninth District --- First Assistant Chief Clerk

As is customary, matters of a platform or program were not discussed at the Conservative conference, but the Liberals, as has usually been the case since 1919, agreed upon a generalized legislative program.

Between the caucusing date and January fourth when the legislature met formally, Liberal leaders together with organized labor made an effort to bring public pressure to bear against forty legislators who joined the Conservative group even though their districts had supported Harry Truman for president or Hubert Humphrey for senator. Ten of these men were freshmen with no prior caucus membership. With more than twenty changes of mind necessary and more than one-half of that number needed from veteran House members, the cause seemed hopeless.

The effort was, in fact, a total failure. In the formal balloting, Hartle received eighty-five votes while Chilgren scored forty-four (one Conservative was absent and one freshman member professed independence.[55]).

House committee assignments were carried out in the customary manner, being based upon a questionnaire sent out to

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55 William P. Tucker, Macalester College professor, announced that he would vote "entirely on the merits of each bill." St. Paul Pioneer-Press, January 6, 1949, p. 1. Actually, he was one of the most consistent members in supporting the views of the Liberal caucus and may properly be included in that group.

all members by the speaker-elect. Hartle made what was generally deemed an honest effort to distribute committee positions fairly; always making sure that each committee contained a sufficient number of "safe" Conservatives. Not being vindictive by nature and favoring unity, he did not demote those who opposed him for the speakership, a group that included L. F. Haeg, his nominator at the caucus, John Kinzer, and Claude Allen, chairman of the important appropriations committee. There was some complaint among Liberals, made known to the writer in interviews, to the effect that veteran minority members who might exercise considerable influence were given minor jobs with newcomers being placed upon important committees as Liberal representatives since they could be of much less influence in the tradition-minded legislature which tends to take lightly the views of inexperienced members. (This practice is not uncommon in American legislatures.) All committee chairmanships were in the hands of Conservatives and a majority of Conservatives constituted each committee, except for aircraft and airways and engrossment and enrollment. (The former has few referrals and was 10-9 in Liberal hands. The latter committee oversees a routine task. The members other than the chairman on this four-member committee were Liberals.)

Roy E. Dunn of Pelican Rapids once again headed the powerful rules committee -- his only committee assignment, but one sufficiently potent to exercise great force in guiding the nature of bills to be considered and approved in a legislature with a constitutional ninety-day session limit and where a special order is almost imperative to consideration by the House itself.

Although the Liberal caucus has met fairly regularly since 1931, it was the rejuvenating influence of a score of added members in 1949 that helped set-up a system of regularly scheduled conferences. A policy committee (one member from each of the nine congressional districts) met each morning to discuss strategy. This group provided the actual leadership. The caucus itself was scheduled to meet in plenum once a week (and sometimes held extra sessions) "to let individuals blow off steam" (in the words of one member). The caucus again had a chairman other than the floor leader. A. I. Johnson of Appleton was selected for this role. Senate Liberals, who had no caucus of their own, frequently sat in with their fellow-members of the House. Attendance at conferences was good, generally around thirty-five or more members being present. There was somewhat of a drop-off as the session advanced, probably to be attributed more to the press of frequent important committee meetings than to diminishing interest. The Conservative group, on the other hand, met as a whole but once prior to the session. After that there were a few dinner meetings of important committees, with the speaker, the floor leader and other leaders attending. This method made it possible to discuss strategy and policy and to harmonize divergent viewpoints. Presumably, such additional discipline and coordination as was needed was achieved over a drink or a cup of coffee.

The Senate group, long under the domination of Senator Charles Orr and a few close co-workers and with a well-established status quo since the body had not been up for election, did not meet until the day before the beginning of the session. The

Conservative caucus experienced a gain of two seats from the previous session when Grover C. George of Goodhue and John M. Zwach of Milroy, both elected with liberal support, were invited into the group and accepted. This brought the total in the Conservative group to fifty-seven of the sixty-seven senators. There was a rather unspirited contest for the honorary position of president pro tempore between Democrat Gerald T. Mullin of Minneapolis and Republican Oscar A. Swenson of Nicollet, former speaker of the House. The contest was not, of course, on a party basis, but rather on the urban-rural question, the fact that Mullin was more of a middle-of-the-roader and, as a dominant factor, the matter of individual popularity. Under normal conditions, the spot of president pro tem is given to someone with long service in the Senate, who has rendered good service while not antagonizing Senate leaders, and who is a "good Joe". Swenson had a solid reputation as a rural conservative leader while Mullin's candidacy was aided by the fact that letters had been circulated prior to the session in his behalf by Gordon Rosenmeier of Little Falls, rural middle-of-the-roader, and C. A. Dahle of Duluth, urban conservative. The fact that Mullin was a Democrat was not entirely overlooked by Charles Orr and other leaders. Mullin himself doubted if he would have been allowed to have the position if there were any evident possibility of the incapacitation of the

governor or the lieutenant governor.[56] The caucus vote gave the position to the Minneapolis Senator by a vote of 32-21. Swenson then made the routine motion for unanimity. The Conservatives made selections for several patronage jobs and adjourned. The selection of committees and their chairmen was left to the nine men on the informal steering committee.

The ten liberals in the Senate once more made no effort to form an organization or go through the motions of nominating a president pro-tem candidate. (Mullin was elected 65-0.) These men were without a voice in the organization of the Senate or even in the assignment of committees. They served on whatever committees might be given to them by the steering committee, which ordinarily does not consult the outsiders. Unlike the House, where there are two organizations and where one is relatively free to join either without specifically asking permission, the Senate Conservative caucus has always acted as a "closed corporation" whose membership is on invitation only. Senator Homer Carr of Proctor, a Farmer-Labor leader in the Senate of the 'thirties, recommended in 1947 and again in 1949 that all Senators be invited to the annual conference, thus giving the individual a choice in the matter.[57] It has been pointed out that men like Harry Bridgeman

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[56] Interview, Gerald T. Mullin, December, 1949. Mullin avoided the Liberal caucus in the days when the Farmer-Laborites tended toward radicalism since his is a middle-of-the-road district. He headed the Minnesota delegation to the 1936 Democratic national convention and always supported F. D. Roosevelt. James Farley once urged him to run for the United States senate, but he was never active in either Minneapolis or county politics. He has always enjoyed labor support.

[57] Minneapolis Star, February 15, 1949, p. 1.

of Bemidji, a former leader of the Liberals in the days when they were influential in the upper house, have never been invited into caucus deliberations or informal policy discussions largely because of the personal animosity of the long-time Senate leader, Orr. (Some senators, of course, have been invited into the group but have refused for personal or political reasons.)

Shortly after the Senate had accomplished the task of organizing itself, a considerable amount of the work had to be redone due to the sudden death of Senator Orr, for decades a Conservative leader (usually as majority leader and chairman of the rules committee) and easily the most powerful and influential single individual in the upper house. The caucus, meeting on January thirteenth, produced a definite reaction to Orr's long, rather arbitrary rule. A sizable number of senators announced that they would no longer put up with autocracy and urged the selection of someone not so apt to dominate the upper house.[58] The choice eventually devolved upon Republican Archie R. Miller of Hopkins, former president pro tem and acting lieutenant-governor.

The passing of Orr is likely to make some changes in future sessions of the Senate. Although there are many veteran conservatives available for leadership, none stands out from the general group in the same way that Orr, with his long service on important committees, his decades as a Senate leader and his autocratic, possessive attide, did. (The new leadership was dispersed among eleven men who held controlling positions on nine of the most

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[58] St. Paul Dispatch, January 13, 1949, p. 1.

Table X
COMMITTEE POSITIONS
LEADERSHIP GROUP
1949 Senate

Committee	Members	Dahle	Goodhue	Johanson	Lightner	Miller	Mullin	Nelsen	Neumeier	Sletvold	Sullivan	Swenson
Agriculture	19		X					X				X
Com. on Com.	5	X				X			X		X	X
Finance	21			X	X		X	X			X	X
Judiciary	23	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Labor	15	X	X		X		X		X	X		
Motor Vehicles & Motor Tax Laws	15	X	X			X			X		X	
Public Highways	23			X						X		X
Rules and Leg. Expenses	9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Taxes and Tax Laws	25	X	X			X	X		X	X		

C. A. Dahle, Duluth, 57th District
R. B. Goodhue, Dennison, Rice Co., 18th Dist.
A. R. Johanson, Wheaton, Grant Co., 48th Dist.
M. C. Lightner, St. Paul, 40th District
A. H. Miller, Hopkins, Hennepin Co., 36th Dist.
G. T. Mullin, Minneapolis, 35th District
Ancher Nelsen, Hutchinson, McLeod Co., 22nd Dist.
K. G. Neumeier, Stillwater, Washington Co., 43rd Dist.
A. O. Sletvold, Detroit Lakes, Becker Co., 63rd Dist.
H. H. Sullivan, St. Cloud, 45th District
O. A. Swenson, Nicollet, Nicollet Co., 15th District

important committees. Each held seats on up to six of these vital committees. The group completely controlled the committee on rules and legislative expense and the committee on committees. (See Table X.) In the future, it seems likely that the leadership group will be expanded somewhat in size, and perhaps committees will be more democratically determined, particularly if the 1950 election produces a sizable turnover in Senate personnel. It is also probable that the system of taking members into the Conservative caucus only on invitation will be supplanted by a more democratic system. Several Senate leaders have long regarded the present arrangement as unfair; it has been maintained largely because of the attitude and influence of Senator Orr.

Closing Statement. This chapter has continued the exposition begun in the preceding chapter, bringing the organization of the legislature up through the 1949 session. A summary and interpretation of this material will be reserved for the last chapter.

CHAPTER IV

THE NONPARTISAN ELECTION

Earlier Partisan Campaigns

The Absence of Chauvinism. While Minnesota from its earliest days has been regarded basically as a Republican state, the people have always responded to the magnetism of a colorful campaigner, have ignored the party label in the event of particular causes (e. g., the "local boy makes good" as presidential timber factor in John Johnson's last campaign, "temperance", or farm price supports), and have otherwise been somewhat unpredictable. Generally speaking, the philosophy of most of the people so far as the state offices (including the legislature) were concerned was -- and there is no assurance that the principle has changed -- "if in doubt, vote Republican".

Prior to 1913, the legislative campaign was integrated with that of the national, state and county campaigns of each party. The legislative candidates (and county candidates) were expected to give support to the state and national ticket in their own constituencies in return for which they benefited from being carried along with more widely known names on the party ballot and from occasional pats on the back from visiting candidates. In a majority of the state's constituencies, the man who could secure the Republican nomination had little to worry about in the fall. The "if in doubt" rule usually would elect him, even though

the governorship might go to an occasional Democrat on a question of the relative merits of the two personalities concerned or because of a split in Republican party ranks on the state level. Because of this factor and the convention system of nomination, the legislature tended to be representative of the state Republican organization (allowing for factional differences by regions) and generally worked in harmony with the governor.[1] Likewise, because of this rule, Democratic governors had to put up with Republican legislatures. In this connection, it should be noted that even when the Farmer-Labor party ruled supreme in the 1930's it had to cope with a conservative legislature and that this was not a unique situation to be ascribed exclusively to the nonpartisan system.

The fact that colorful John Lind won the governorship in 1898 as the champion of "free silver" Republicans, Democrats, Populists and Spanish-American war veterans (he had spent a few months in the Quartermaster Corps) did not keep the people from choosing once again a Republican legislature.[2] Lind's victory was a personal victory.

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1 The legislature, gerrymandered to favor the southern part of the state, did not always reflect various factions of the party in the same proportion as they were represented in the state Republican organization. Similarly, the legislature was often so overwhelmingly Republican that it could afford the luxury of internal dissension.

2 The campaign confusion was aided by an increasing Republican split, but the marginal factor in favor of Lind, who nearly had made it in 1896, appears to have been veteran support. Neither of these factors importantly affected the legislative campaign.

McKinley, a "gold" Republican, carried the state over fusion opposition in the presidential contest.

After the "free silver" issue had passed from the political scene, differences between the two major parties in Minnesota became academic. Under the circumstances the "if in doubt" rule governed state politics, and the legislature in particular. The Republican party had the field so much to itself that serious rifts continued to disrupt its higher echelons of leadership. In 1904 the G. O. P. was split so badly between the followers of Loren W. Collins and Robert C. Dunn that the resultant bitterness caused the losing Collins followers to desert in large numbers to the personable and able Democratic candidate, John A. Johnson, whose political views actually were very similar to those of Theodore Roosevelt. In the campaign, Dunn's followers decided to attack where the defense was the strongest: they tried to make the fight one of personalities. A whispering campaign that Johnson's "father was a drunkard and his mother took in washing" boomeranged when Johnson's able oratory turned it into an asset.[3] Johnson was almost the only Democrat elected. Theodore Roosevelt carried the state, the Republican incumbent lieutenant-governor was reelected, together with the rest of his party's state ticket and all congressional seats. The Democrats had so few men elected to the House of Representatives -- eleven -- that they did not even organize for the session. Here, certainly, was an instance to

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[3] Theodore Christianson, Minnesota; The Land of Sky-Tinted Waters (1935), Vol. II, pp. 287-291. There are two biographies of Johnson: Frank A. Day and Theodore N. Knappen, The Life of John Albert Johnson, Three Times Governor of Minnesota (1910), 429 pp., adulatory and written in stilted Victorian language; Winifred G. Helmes, John A. Johnson, The Peoples' Governor (1949), 324 pp. is more objective and much more readable.

demonstrate that elections by party can cause personal campaigns and anamalous alignments of the various branches of government to rival any that have been produced by nonpartisanship. This irrational result of the vagaries of the voting masses indicates how much more important personality rather an program can sometimes be. The whimsicality of the voter is further indicated in the fact that while a Roosevelt-like Democrat was chosen for governor, Republican candidates for the legislature (most of whom were, of course, successful), were in overwhelming numbers, conservatives.

John a Johnson was elected twice more while the rest of the state offices were held by Republicans. He was reelected in 1906 by the largest margin yet accorded a Minnesota governor. He was so popular that the Republicans made no serious attempt to oppose him, running an inexperienced, almost unknown man who was in ill health throughout the campaign: Albert L. Cole, Walker retailer.[4] Other state offices went to the G. O. P., as did eight of the nine congressional seats. Both the Senate and House elections produced overwhelming victories for the reactionary wing of the Republican party, the "corporation candidates" organized both houses. In the speakership contest, the Democrats managed to muster ten votes -- one less than they had had the preceding session and a pitiful handful when considering that their gubernatorial candidate had just rolled up a record-breaking vote total. Clearly the voters were not voting for Johnson as a Democrat, but rather

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4 Christianson, op. cit., pp. 310-311.

as a man -- a great personality and a great speaker.[5] His influence upon the vote total for the rest of the Democratic ticket was negligible.

In 1908, Taft swept the state, taking the congressional offices and state officials other than governor with him. Johnson did not want to run again, but his party knew that they could not win without him. The Republicans this time attempted a "me, too" campaign, nominating a farmers' candidate in Jacob F. Jacobson, who was not the choice of the reactionary segment of the party. Jacobson nearly defeated the incumbent, whose newness had by now worn off. Only state pride in the fact that Johnson was being groomed for the next presidential campaign enabled him to come away with a small majority.[6] Paradoxically, as Johnson's following was decreasing in the state, he finally made some impression upon the legislative contests; in the House, the number of Democrats increased from ten to twenty-one. This is probably explainable, at least in part, by the attempt of Democratic candidates to associate themselves with the governor's name and the fact that the governor lost most of the marginal voters by 1908; those who liked him began to listen to Democratic pleas to support him in the legislature.

With the above exceptions (together with that of the state's first governor, Henry H. Sibley), the state had Republican

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5 Among the more discriminating observers of politics, Johnson was developing a reputation as an outstanding administrator. It was in this role that he became nationally known and attracted the attention of Grover Cleveland who favored him for the presidential nomination in 1912 -- but by then Johnson was dead.

6 In the view of Christianson, op. cit., pp. 312-315.

governors during the period prior to the adopting of nonpartisanship. There was one election, that of 1890, when the incumbent Republican governor was reelected although voters were less satisfied with the legislature. Under the whip of the militant Farmers' Alliance combined with the Democratic party, agrarian radicals took over both the House and Senate. Gerrymandering, which made the Republican urban vote less effective, was an important factor in the election which produced a result far from normal in Minnesota. Governor William R. Merriam was returned because of the city vote and the tendency to accept the incumbent under most circumstances.

There have been many instances since 1913 to indicate that the Minnesota voter thinks of individuals more than parties in many instances, always casting the doubtful vote for the Republican.[7] That the voter is likely to look at many other things before he considers a party label or a political platform as a basis for selecting his choice in the polling place has been indicated many times. In 1914 W. S. Hammond was elected governor, largely because of his stand (or rather lack of stand) on the county option question that enabled him to draw away many wet Republican votes. The state was otherwise wholeheartedly Republican in the 1914 election.

While Floyd B. Olson tended to have the support of most of the elective state partisan officers, the return of the Republican

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[7] Voter is here used in a generic sense. Individual voters varied, of course, so that many persons could have been found who normally voted Democratic, but they were small in number, percentage-wise.

party to power in state government in 1939 has seen some badly split ballots once again. In 1940, Franklin Roosevelt carried the state by about the same margin as did Harold Stassen in their campaigns for reelection. The state was generally Republican in voting for other offices. In 1944, F. D. R. once more carried the state on his personal reputation while Thye, a Republican, was returned to the gubernatorial chair. The 1948 campaign saw the Democrats elect their first United States Senator in Minnesota, split the congressional ticket with their opponents and win the presidential electorial vote for Harry Truman, while they were able to do no better than one position on the railroad and warehouse commission in state office races. While numerous factors were involved in the 1944, 1946 and 1948 campaigns, it would appear that the voter was endorsing a personality less and a program more in the 1948 contest (especially on the matters of national labor law and farm price supports).[8] A distinction between state and national policies could be made in the election and the voter was fairly consistent in making such a distinction. On the whole, he preferred Democratic proposals for the United States and Republican views for Minnesota.

Nonpartisan Elections

The 1914 Transition. Even though the 1914 campaign would

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8 Since Truman carried counties that Humphrey did not and vice versa, the personality factor was evidently none-the-less important. No effort is being made here to analyze these elections intensively, nor are these comments intended to be oversimplifications of very complex situations.

have been fought out over the question of county option whether the legislature had been elected on a partisan or a nonpartisan basis, there were many changes and adjustments made during the campaign that set up standards of procedure that have been followed in general ever since. The first factor, a state-wide situation that became immediately a regular and almost universal practice, was noted by one editor as follows:[9]

> The new law which requires county officers and members of the legislature to be elected as non-partisans takes all of the vitality out of a party campaign. Heretofore it has been the county officers and the legislative candidates who have paid most of the expenses and harrowed up the country for the benefit of state candidates. This year it is all different. Only two of the county offices have contests and as they are non-partisan they are taking no part in the state campaign nor are they paving the way for the state contestants.

Here was a basic alteration in traditional campaign techniques. The local organization had been the very heart of the political party. It now became necessary for the party to establish regional campaign personnel separate from politicians operating on the local level. The obverse situation obtained as well; party state central committees promptly proceeded virtually to ignore legislative contests, both in financial and other ways. Through the 1948 election, the practice of separating

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9 Fergus Falls Daily Journal, October 19, 1914, p. 2.

the two contests has continued.[10] Several persons connected with both caucuses have told the writer that they made little or no effort to aid the state or national ticket of the party they favored. A very small percentage of any one legislature is made up of those active in one of the parties. Party activity is generally regarded as a millstone around the neck of anyone in a middle-of-the-road district and as a rather thankless task and a non-reciprocating proposition in any other district. State central committees have been too concerned with state and national offices to be of much aid in getting a legislature that will support the the slate.

While the Republicans have had less reason to be concerned about getting a helpful legislature, the D. F. L. has actually been

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10 This has been especially true of the D. F. L. party (and its predecessors) and Liberal candidates. According to reliable sources, the Republican party as such never grants financial aid to legislative aspirants either in the primary or in the general election. However, prominent leaders in that party do have funds at their disposal, contributed by interested individuals and business and industrial firms, which are used to employ field men (one for the House and one for the Senate) who travel about the state to get the feel of local situations, encourage candidacies of the kind of people wanted by the leaders and, if the candidate is able to survive the primary, to offer some financial aid, if it is needed or wanted. Candidates who, on their own initiative, decide to run are, if acceptable, visited by this representative or by business interests in their local community and are encouraged to caucus with the Conservatives (in fact, they are sometimes pressured into doing so) in return for promises of favorable committee assignments and financial assistance in their campaigns.

Even among Conservatives, however, primary responsibility for financing a campaign, rests with the candidate and his backers. In fact, it has been reported (the present writer has not been able to make a direct confirmation, however) that the Republican state central committee has actually solicited funds for its own campaigns from Conservative legislators at various times.

the party least concerned with the question. Whether because of a lack of funds to use beyond national and state efforts, or because of despairing of ever controlling the predominately rural and conservative legislature, the D. F. L. state central committee has been a source of anguish and frustration to Liberal legislators who have wanted to work for a majority. They point to many close contests in the past where "a little help" from state D. F. L. headquarters "would have made the difference". When Floyd Olson rode to an easy victory in 1930, the Farmer-Labor party ignored the legislative contests altogether. In later campaigns, Olson assigned a man, Arthur N. Jacobs, to this phase of campaigning, but little further effort was made. As late as 1948, the D. F. L. devoted virtually all of its efforts to electing Hubert Humphrey to the Senate and to carrying the state for Truman (with emphasis on the former), ignoring the legislative contests almost completely.

A second characteristic of election without party designation evidenced itself in the 1914 campaign when the practice of "fence straddling" or silence upon as many issues as possible was adopted by the politically astute. For the most part, a candidate was expected to commit himself only on the county option question.

Lobbyists noted that "Many members made their campaigns on the Wet and Dry issue only and were supported or opposed regardless of their position on other matters."[11] This situation prevailed even in the large cities. The railroad brotherhoods'

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11 Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1915, p. 48.

lobbyists, somewhat too hopefully, expressed the wish that "As the liquor question has been happily disposed of, we hope in the future . . . you will see that your respective candidates are lined up on labor legislation. . . ."[12]

A few case studies from the 1914 election amplify the transition that took place with the adoption of the new system.[13] In the twenty-fifth district (Swift and Kandiyohi counties), only two candidates filed for nomination to the House of Representatives and three for the Senate. For the former office, no primary vote was needed but for the Senate seat two individuals challenged the incumbent, S. J. Froshaug. Leo McDermott went on record on only one issue — he expressed himself as favoring county option and hence made a bid for dry votes. Recognizing the possibilities of the new system and the fact that individualistic voting was regarded as evidence of independence from sinister forces, McDermott's advertising asserted:[14]

> I do not believe in idle pre-election promises. If elected, I will sacredly fulfill the duties of my office to the very best of my ability. . . . Every measure of interest to both counties would be supported and voted for by me.

The candidate was, at least, being honest enough in his request for carte blanche. Another aspirant, Rep. P. A. Gandrud,

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12 Loc. cit.

13 At this time the primary election was itself a novelty and politics was adjusting to it simultaneously with nonpartisan elections. Had partisan primaries been well established, the people might not have accepted the change so apathetically.

14 Willmar Tribune, May 27, 1914, p. 3.

made no promises at all, although he was known to be a dry. The incumbent, on the other hand, devoted one-half of a column of advertising to a statement of his stand on six important issues of the day.[15] In using this approach, Senator Froshaug was taking a time honored approach to politics -- and for his conscientiousness in stating his position on so many matters the voters promptly rewarded him with last place in the primary.

The run-off election in the fall proved to be a popularity contest between two drys. McDermott, who suffered the disadvantage of living in the less populous of the two counties, lost to Gandrud who went to St. Paul committed only on county option.

In the fiftieth district (Ottertail county), the circumstances were somewhat different, but neverthless indicated certain principles of electioneering under the newly adopted system. For the House of Representatives, there were no less than fifteen candidates in the primary for the four seats. In the run-off election, Elmer E. Adams ran first among the victors. Adams violated the practice that seemed the most advantageous by speaking his views on all current questions.[16] The fact that he came out first in the scramble appears to be attributable to several factors:

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15 See, Willmar Tribune, June 10, 1914, p. 7. On Gandrud, see ibid., p. 4 and the Willmar Republican-Gazette, May 14, 1914, p. 2. Gandrud had spent three terms in the House. The Tribune offers the best report of the election campaign from among the newspapers of the district.

16 See the Fergus Falls Daily Journal for a report of the campaign. The issue of October 29, 1914, p. 2 devotes a full page to a major campaign speech by Adams in which he went on record on all major issues. (Adams edited the Journal.)

(1) he was a well-known newspaper man and banker in Fergus Falls;

(2) He had the support of his Daily Journal, the only daily newspaper in the district;

(3) because of the first two reasons, he enjoyed heavy support in the principal city of the district; and

(4) he was on the "right" side of the dry question.

Newspaper support played a big part in the campaign as it has in many individual campaigns since. With no party designation on the ballot, it is imperative that the candidate get his name before the public frequently and in many districts definite support of a candidate by a newspaper of large circulation has proved to be the important factor.

For the fiftieth district senatorial seat, the veteran Ole O. Sageng sought reelection, being opposed by a man named Anderson. Sageng, a remnant of the old Populist party, was a dry and his views on all matters were known throughout the county. He had supported the Democratic candidate for governor in 1910 and 1912, but this time he favored Lee, the Republican, who was committed to county-option. Sageng spent much of the autumn arguing that people should "vote for the man" (Lee) rather than for blind obedience to the party and that the drys ought not to split their vote (an argument against the "bone drys" voting the Prohibition ticket).[17] He spent a good deal of time outside of Otter Tail county.

The incumbent, accustomed to reelection and assuming himself and his views to be well known throughout the district, spent

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17 See the Fergus Falls Daily Journal for the campaign, especially October 24-26, 1914, p. 2; November 4, 1914, p. 2.

little time on his own campaign. In the meanwhile, Anderson traveled over the whole district, attacking Sageng's voting on specific bills, criticizing the extravagance of the last legislature, (pointing out that Sageng had been a member of it), and remaining comfortably general concerning his (Anderson's) own views. Despite the unbalanced nature of the campaigning, the biased Daily Journal stated editorially that "Reports from the various parts of the county are to the effect that Senator Sageng has lost none of his popularity, and is going to be elected by a handsome majority."[18] Actually, on the day after the election, it appeared that Sageng had been defeated. It was not until the last votes were counted that it became certain that he had kept his seat.

There were a number of things that would-be legislative candidates learned from this contest:

(1) While a candidate is campaigning for a state ticket, there is not likely to be anyone at home looking after his own campaign, especially if he leaves his own district; and

(2) openly and actively backing a gubernatorial candidate, particularly a losing entry, is a way to lose votes without serving as a method by which to increase one's own following.

Sageng's efforts on behalf of Lee caused many of Hammond's followers (Democrats had generally supported him in the past) to turn against him. On the other hand, with no party label attached, Lee supporters felt free to vote as they pleased for the senatorial office.

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18 Fergus Falls Daily Journal, October 28, 1914, p. 2.

Because of the lesson learned by Sageng, it has become almost the universal practice of legislative candidates to stay away from the partisan campaigns. Campaigning for such an office is not returned in kind by the party organization and it serves chiefly to alienate, rather than to capture, one's own constituents. Exceptions to the practice are so unusual as to be correctly classed as rare. The Republican party, enjoying the support of the "independent" voter generally, with an ample treasury and speaker's bureau, has not particularly needed support of legislative candidates in order to elect its state officials, but even Farmer-Labor and D. F. L. minded candidates have been content to campaign for themselves and to let the regular state organization endeavor to accomplish its own purposes. In return, the regular organizations largely ignore the nonpartisan contests.

The campaign in the nineteenth district (Goodhue county) revealed another characteristic of the 1914 campaign. For senator from the county, Anton J. Rockne was once more before the people asking for reelection. In the preceding session, he had been largely responsible for Senate fiscal policy and had been a leader in the upper house fight against the nonpartisan election bill. In the campaign for reelection, he did not have to defend himself on these grounds, however. His opponent in the election was Jens K. Grondahl, publisher of the Red Wing Republican, a strong advocate of county option. Both were Republicans, but Rockne was associated with the Smith-Eberhart wet wing of the party. Grondahl campaigned intensively through his newspaper [19] as a dry. Rockne

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[19] See the Red Wing Republican for October and November, 1914.

was content to "stand on his record" and was reelected.

Senator Rockne was not challenged in the campaign for having opposed nonpartisanship and this appears to have been the case of every other incumbent seeking reelection. It is true that, prior to the convening of the 1915 session of the legislature, nonpartisanship was viewed as a ruse of the wets and, since Rockne had opposed the idea, he could scarcely be attacked by a dry for opposing the plan. The truth of the matter was, however, that people simply did not regard the new law as being of sufficient importance to pay very much attention to it.[20] People were interested in the "temperance question", not in election methods.

The Rockne-Grondahl struggle also manifested another change from earlier elections; the two principal candidates now generally had to fight it out in the general election when public attention is usually at its highest, rather than in conventions or in the less glamorous primary elections. Prior to 1914, with no major differences between the two parties and with the Republicans in command of the state, the real struggles usually took place in the various Republican conventions (where choices were at least

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[20] Of the sixty-three senators in 1913, only twenty-one (33.3%) were elected to the 1915 session. In the House, forty-five of the 119 in the previous session (37.8%) were returned. These abnormally low figures were not due to the change in election method, but chiefly to the readjustments of reapportionment and to the increased dry strength. The Democrats and Republicans fared about equally well. In the House, the former reelected 40.0% of their 1913 strength, while the Republican figure was 38.1%. In the Senate, the Democrats reelected 31.6% of their members to 32.6% for their opponents. Somewhat paradoxically, opponents of the change did very well under the new system. Thirteen of the twenty-one senators reelected had opposed nonpartisanship. Most of them were widely known veterans with large personal followings.

partially insulated from public participation), or in the primary. The general election was usually a formality with the Republican winning. Beginning in 1914, every voter of whatever party had a chance to cast a meaningful vote.[21] The new system hence served to give de facto enfranchisement to a large number of the state's voters for the first time. As would be expected, the autumn run-off election generally took place between two Republicans, although even in the 1914 election little attention was paid to the party label and it was not a major factor in making a choice. In many constituencies persons inexperienced in running for office and not active politically entered the campaign. This was due in part to the zealousness of some temperance leaders, but also in part, no doubt, to the new election law.

One additional important change resulting from the new method of election was noted: newspapers observed an increased effort on the part of the Republican and Democratic state press bureaus to get their propaganda material into the country press. Because of the break-down of local party organizations, which had always served as a publicity medium for party candidates, the importance of the press and of mail circulars increased greatly.[22] Later on, the radio made it possible for gubernatorial and other candidates to reach the citizen directly, but the aid of rural

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21 An editorial in the Democratic Willmar Tribune urged that "Every Democratic voter should go to the polls June 16 and register his choice for governor. The new non-partisan law gives him also the privilege of a choice for legislative and county office at the primary, something unknown before in these parts." Willmar Tribune, June 3, 1914, p. 4.

22 See editorial, Willmar Tribune, May 27, 1914, p. 4.

editors is still very important to both parties.

The overall result of the 1914 election, as Charles Cheney had predicted and in contrast to the expectations of the wets who had supported nonpartisanship, was a victory for county option. Without a split between county optionists and prohibitionists, the drys controlled the Senate safely and secured a bare majority in the House. In significant contrast to the legislative results, William E. Lee, dry Republican candidate for governor, lost to W. S. Hammond, Democrat who had not committed himself on county option (but who enjoyed wet support from both Democrats and Eberhart Republicans), by the 18,582 votes that were accorded to Willis G. Calderwood, Prohibitionist.[25] Not only had nonpartisanship been created under the most peculiar political circumstances, but the new creature had promptly proceeded to deliver to some of its progenitors a vigorous kick in the teeth.

Elections After 1914. The 1916 and 1918 elections were concerned chiefly with varying aspects of the liquor question. While in 1914 the issue had been county option, in 1916 it was state-wide prohibition and in 1918 the ratification of the eighteenth amendment to the United States constitution. There were many other serious issues involved, but these were the ones on which a candidate succeeded or failed in his campaign.

The 1916 election produced another phenomenon: a tendency to allow a large number of legislators to retain their seats

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25 The vote was: for Hammond, 156,304, for Lee 143,730, a difference of 12,574 votes. Earlier, the Republican primary was won by Lee over A. C. Eberhart by a vote of 102,757 to 86,340 (first choices).

without a contest. In the House, the only body before the people that year, no less than twenty members (15.4%) were reelected without opposition in either the primary or the general election. This tendency, while not unknown in partisan elections, seems to be particularly strong under nonpartisanship whenever (1) the district is homogeneous in character, or (2) the incumbent is a leader and is well known. In 1916, Theodore Christianson and Ralph J. Parker, a leading dry who was chosen the session's speaker, were both elected without opposition. In homogeneous districts, the incumbent's advantage is often so great that no one bothers to challenge him, or if there is an opponent, his candidacy is often not seriously intended. As late as 1946, thirteen members of the Senate were reelected without opposition; and that represented twenty-five per cent of the incumbents who chose to seek reelection. Twenty-one House members in 1946 and nineteen in 1948 were without opponents.

The tendency is for the incumbent to "stand on my record"--a record that is all too seldom known to the voter. In the twenty-fifth district in 1916, Rep. P. M. Frye, running for reelection, remained vague throughout the campaign, standing on his record and favoring "Temperance and Economy".[24] His opponent, G. A. Erickson, took a firmer stand on prohibition, wanting state and national constitutional amendments. He also favored "efficiency and economy in government" (this catch phrase was at the height of its popularity), lower taxes, more liberal co-operatives laws, and more fish for the state's lakes and streams. The incumbent

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[24] Willmar Tribune, October 11, 1916, p. 5.

offered less, but won easily (1969 to 1628).

After the successful defense of his office, Rep. Frye called a mass meeting at the county courthouse in order to discuss views on questions likely to come up in the legislature when it met. Only about fifty citizens answered the call. Although such important matters as woman suffrage, the tonnage tax on iron ore, state-owned grain elevators and an "investigation" of the International Workers of the World were expected to come before the next session, the time at the meeting appears to have been spent in discussing the likelihood of increased state aid for schools and methods of increasing the state fish population.[25] After the meeting, the local newspaper commented approvingly that Frye would "continue in the next session to use his own judgment, as he did in the last."

While the prohibition question was still an important factor in 1918,[26] the campaign was complicated by the active movement of the Non-Partisan League into the state from its North Dakota birthplace. The League, working within the Republican party and, after defeat in the primaries, petitioning onto the final ballot as the Farmer-Labor party, sought to increase its effectiveness through extra-legal endorsement conventions.

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25 Willmar Tribune, December 13, 1916, p. 1.

26 The 1917 legislature submitted a state constitutional amendment to the people that was believed to have settled the question. The amendment received a majority of those voting on it, but not a majority of those voting in the election and so was lost. Many campaigned on a platform favoring adoption of the eighteenth amendment to the U. S. constitution as a means of keeping their meal ticket intact. The amendment was ratified by the legislature on January 17, 1919.

beginning in February with two thousand precinct caucuses (the Minnesota Leader made the rather ambitious claim that 55,000 farmers attended),[27] the League held a series of conventions, starting with legislative district meetings in March. This method of organizing to circumvent the shortcomings of the non-partisan ballot was used by the League or the Farmer-Labor Association in every following election year, with the exception of 1924, until the present. D. F. L. caucuses and conventions still make endorsements. The Democrats (before the 1944 amalgamation) and Republicans also have used the endorsement system, but not consistently. In the early days, the League used a secret ballot and tried to have one man for each office in the primary. If the League candidate did not survive the primary, an endorsement was made of one of the two successful nominees, providing one was at least partially acceptable.

The strongest weapon against the League was its isolationist viewpoint. In contests for the legislature, League endorsed candidates were denounced as "reds", "Bolsheviks", or "unpatriotic". Actually, the League was not a Marxist organization, but was another in a series of agrarian radical movements. In the closing days of the war, and with a "red scare" waxing, this irrelevant and unfair question of patriotism served as a vehicle for many a legislative candidate . It served as a neat way to avoid the

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27 Minnesota Leader, March 2, 1918, p. 1. The Leader was the official voice of the League. For a sympathetic view of the League, see Robert L. Morlan, The Political History of the Non-Partisan League (1949), 861 pp.; and Arthur Naftalin, A History of the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota (1948), pp. 52-57. Responsible conservative viewpoints are offered in Christianson, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 396-398; and William W. Folwell, A History of Minnesota, Vol. III, pp. 556-575.

many potentially partisan issues of concern before the next legislature: state income taxes, iron ore severance taxes, property tax reforms, oleomargarine taxes, the executive budget, guaranteed bank deposits, hard surfaced roads, woman suffrage and the national prohibition amendment, among others. As a matter of fact, the Non-Partisan League candidates did stand on a definite, well-known platform. The artificial patriotism issue served effectively to circumvent disavowals or counter-proposals that the anti-League candidate would otherwise have had to make.[28]

In speeches and newspaper advertising of the 1918 and 1920 campaigns, League candidates prominently used the phrase "endorsed by the National Non-Partisan League," and the notation "Farmer-Labor candidate" began to appear in advertising for the general election of 1918. Opponents frequently noted that they were not League candidates, often letting that serve as their platform. Some opposition candidates offered a more definitive platform; when they did this, it was generally a moderate stand designed to approve the less radical League proposals and to draw votes from both sides of the bitter controversy.

The organized farmers, with a new technique in nonpartisan elections, actually brought the campaigns away from personality contests for a few years. While many opponents were able to win by assuring their constituents that the Non-Partisan League was a local adjunct of Russian Bolshevism and that a League government in control in St. Paul would bring to the state, among

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28 The "Cornfield Philosopher" in the pro-League Willmar Tribune, April 30, 1919, p. 4, asserted that a majority of the members of the legislature had been elected on the "fake issue of loyalty".

other things, "free love", others were forced to "come out and fight" on issues. Senator P. A. Gandrud, who had won in 1914 without going on record on a single specific issue (he was assumed to be a dry), was forced to announce a thirteen point program approving many League proposals. His endorsements included state hail insurance, state grading and marketing regulation, a tonnage tax on iron ore and univeral suffrage. His advertising prominently displayed a quote from the 1916 railroad brotherhoods' report endorsing his voting record,[29] and stressed his eighteen years in the legislature. The League candidate, J. B. Bosch, campaigned on the fourteen-point program of his organization. In the final tallying of votes, Gandrud's incumbency, plus his successful try for the votes of middle-of-the-roaders, enabled him to retain his seat, even though the district was a center of League strength.[30]

In certain areas of the state, the League set its big guns on reactionaries so widely known that they had no opportunity (and probably no personal desire) to escape by fence straddling. The veteran F. A. Duxbury of Caledonia, outspoken critic of change of any kind, was clearly defeated by the League candidate. In the forty-third district, irascible George Sullivan, veteran voice of some of the state's larger corporate interests, was evidently ousted by W. W. Wilcox by a margin of forty-three votes. After a recount still gave Wilcox a thirty-five vote lead, Sullivan carried his appeal to the Senate itself. The hearings reflected

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29 See, for example, Willmar Tribune, October 30, 1918, p. 3.

30 The vote was: Gandrud, 3210 and Bosch, 3026.

the political picture of the times. Under cross-examination, Sullivan admitted that he was on retainer to the Twin City street railway company and that he was "attorney-in-fact" for sixty out-of-state corporations.[31] Various business lobbyists brought strong pressure to bear on behalf of Sullivan. The Leaguers received much support, however, from moderates whose constituencies were located in the strongly insurgent Red River valley and surrounding area (including P. A. Gandrud and Ole Sageng).

The five conservative elections committee members, after the hearings, found "irregularities" in two precincts and voted to disregard them in totaling the results. The four other committeemen dissented, pointing out that for many years Sullivan had lost these precincts by wide margins and that Wilcox followers would have no reason to interfere there. Had the committee recommendation been followed, Sullivan would have been elected. Instead, a substitute motion was made to seat Wilcox. On a largely political vote, the motion was lost on a tie, 31-31, failing to get an absolute majority. The Senate then ordered a special election to fill the "vacancy" and Sullivan won. The bitterness resulting from what appears to have been a great injustice carried on in the upper house for several sessions.

In the cities, labor pursued an endorsement policy for the legislature for the first time in the 1918 session. Since the organized farmers and workers combined to petition onto the general election ballot as the Farmer-Labor party, the same "Red"

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[31] See, Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1919, pp. 20-24.

scare technique was possible in the cities as well as in the rural sections of the state.

Partly because of the "Red" hysteria and the vilification campaign and partly because of the inherent disadvantage in which any group with a clearly expressed policy finds itself under the nonpartisan system, the organized farmers and laborers had only moderate success with their legislative endorsements. Together, they elected thirty-five representatives and thirteen senators.

The election of 1920 closely resembled that of the preceding one with the League failing by a narrow margin to capture the Republican party and thenrresorting to the Farmer-Labor label in the fall. With falling farm prices, the threats made by conservative bankers to foreclose on mortgages in the event of a League victory became an important consideration to the desperate farmers. The legislative campaign was closely modeled on the preceding one, except that (1) the prohibition question was closed and could be utilized only in promises for rigid enforcement, and (2) status as a veteran of the World War became the major platform for a large number of candidates.

The election of 1922 was the last one in which the Farmer-Labor organization made an impressive showing prior to the beginning of the great depression. The 1921 legislature, failing to heed storm signals indicating a desperate need for adoption of some of the policies advocated by the League, passed several measures that gave it a reputation for being reactionary. Particularly unpopular was the defeat of the iron ore tax and the passage of the Brooks-Coleman bill which vested rate-making

authority for local utilities in the hands of the state railroad and warehouse commission, both strongly reflecting powerful lobbying. The Farmer-Labor Association worked hard, endorsing candidates in every possible district, sometimes over the strong protest of the candidate himself. (In many districts, endorsement by the Association was virtually a kiss of death.)

The intensive efforts of the Farmer-Laborites produced rather impressive results: in the House thirty-four members and in the Senate twenty-two incumbents were defeated in their efforts to be reelected. In addition to this, a fairly large number must have decided not to attempt to keep their seats. Of the thirty-four senators voting against the iron ore tax, only thirteen were returned to the 1925 session and of the thirty-eight supporting a bill to abandon the direct primary in favor of a return to the convention system, only ten came back. Concerning this apparently high degree of responsiveness to public opinion, two items should be noted: (1) the Farmer-Laborites were able, with the help of others, to focus attention upon those legislators who were extremely conservative only because they had wandered inordinately far from public thinking and had failed accurately to judge the rising protest of the farmer to low prices and high mortgage rates, and of the working man to the post-war recession; and (2) the vacated seats were filled, for the most part, not by Farmer-Laborites but rather by middle-of-the-road candidates willing to make some concessions to the demands of discontent as their predecessors had not. From the seventy-three new members of the House, the left-wing caucus could attract a net gain of but eleven men, despite its deliberate effort to nominate a speaker candidate acceptable to

moderates. This was the frustrating experience that continued to plague the Farmer-Labor efforts: either they failed initially in trying to focus public attention upon legislators who were not reflecting the thinking of their constituents, or they failed secondarily in attempting to take over the seat of the ousted member. The general pattern was this: the right-wing incumbent would be opposed by a left-wing Farmer-Labor endorsee in the primary election. Into the picture would come at least one moderate, promising some reforms and not associating himself with either extreme, but still remaining as vague as possible on as many issues as possible. In the primary election several things might happen, but whatever they might be, one result was almost certain: at least one moderate would survive the primary. In the general election, the advantage of a moderate against an avowed member of either the far left or right was usually very great. Ordinarily only an uncommonly familiar name or a deliberate and emphatic preference of the constituency for the extreme left or right could keep the moderate out of office. It is largely because of this phenomenon that in times of great social or economic unrest as well as in "normal" times, the Minnesota legislature contains such a large number of middle-of-the-road members. While other legislatures in two party states have shown great sensitivity to public discontent, the Minnesota legislature has not.[32]

Of the 1922 campaign, Professor Robert E. Cushman made a

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[32] On the 1922 election, see: C. J. Buell, The Minnesota Legislature of 1923, p. 7; Robert E. Cushman, "Non-Partisan Nominations and Elections," The Annals, Vol. CVI (March, 1923), pp. 92-93; Christianson, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 431.

eral analysis in which he concluded that: (1) in more than twenty istricts the two run-off candidates claimed the same party alle-nce; (2) in more populous districts, the party affiliation of candidate was frequently the only concrete data available;) there was a premium on self-advertising with the determining ctors the individual personality, experience in the legislature the extent to which the name is known; and (4) candidates nerally, though not invariably, avoid definite commitments on portant issues.[33] During the remainder of the 'twenties, legis-tive campaigns were rather dull. Primary candidates usually und it expedient publicly to associate themselves with the Repub-can party and to remain vague and general concerning state policy. vernor Christianson, in his campaigns, said that he was working ard "a bondless and taxless state -- taxless so far as a direct y for revenue fund purposes is concerned."[34] He thought that, his successors followed his plan, he could make it by 1935. program was generally given nominal approval by "Republican" ndidates (though they frequently resisted retrenchments when ncrete proposals affecting individual districts were suggested). The Farmer-Laborites elected a few members to each session ontinued to sponsor measures that harked back to the Non-rtisan League, but these ideas no longer held a great deal of erest either to the general public or to the majority of the islators, who usually ignored them.[35] The paucity of positive

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Cushman, op. cit., pp. 92-93.

Christianson, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 460.

Farmer-Labor policies called for repeal of the Brooks-Coleman w, increased workman's compensation, a state-owned printing plant, ate-guaranteed bank deposits, increased iron ore tax and broader eas of operation for municipal light plants.

issues before the law-makers during the optimistic years before 1929 is indicated in the fact that the 1927 session experienced one of its greatest struggles over the question of requiring fishing licenses within the state.

General discontent with the situation was expressed by a group definitely on the outside during this period in a campaign description that was perhaps not too unrealistic:[36]

> We are reminded of a candidate for the legislature who in all campaign speeches spoke on conditions in China. When asked one day, why he didn't speak on State issues he blandly remarked, "When I talk about China no one can contradict me and say that I don't know what I am talking about, but if I take a subject that my audience is familiar with there may be some who would disagree."

The Farmer-Labor Years. During the elections from 1930 through 1936, the Farmer-Labor party controlled the governorship, the lieutenant-governorship, usually the attorney-generalship and many of the congressional seats. Never, however, did the party organize the Minnesota Senate and it had some control over the House of Representatives but twice. In 1933, a coalition made up largely of nominal Farmer-Laborites, and in 1937, a majority of nominal Farmer-Laborites, organized the lower house. The failure of the party to capture the state legislature was a frustrating experience to many of its members. An active D. F. L. party member later argued that despite the three-party arrangement in the state, and despite the failure of the legislature to reapportion so as to afford full representation to the larger cities, where the party was relatively strong, the party would have organized

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36 Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1927, pp. 69-70.

the legislature had it been elected on a partisan ticket.[37]

It is impressive to note that in the election of 1930, when Floyd Olson had a majority of 154,517 and carried eighty-two out of eighty-seven counties, the Liberals in the House did not even present a speakership candidate. While much Farmer-Labor vote-getting ability rested in theppopularity of Olson as an individual, the lieutenant-governorship was in the party's control during the same period. In fact, in the election of 1934, Hjalmar Petersen secured a larger plurality for the lesser office than did Olson for the governorship.

It is possible to derive some rough estimate of the possible nature of the legislature had it been elected on a partisan basis in the 'thirties through a study of the voting for lieutenant-governor. By so doing, it is possible to reduce the error involved in using the governorship, an office that generally involves election campaigns based largely upon personalities and to avoid the problem of the gerrymandering of the cities.[38]

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[37] See, Arthur Naftalin, "The Failure of the Farmer-Labor Party to Capture Control of the Minnesota Legislature," American Political Science Review, Vol. XXXVIII (February, 1944), pp. 71-78.

[38] With an apportionment law dating from 1913, the state is badly gerrymandered against the urban areas and the severity of the situation will show an increase by the 1950 census. The discrimination against the cities is not as great as can be found in some states, but by the 1940 census, the population per representative varied from 7,254 to 64,250 and per senator from 17,653 to 128,501. Nine urban counties had 45.4% of the state's population, but only 37.3% of the senators and 34.4% of the representatives. Hennepin and Ramsey counties had 31.5% of the population but only 22.3% of the senators and 22.9% of the representatives. See, Louis C. Dorweiler, Jr., "Minnesota Farmers Rule Cities," National Municipal Review, Vol. XXXV (March, 1946), p. 115.

The make-up of the Minnesota legislature in the sessio from 1931 through 1939 is indicated in Table XI, showing th actual distribution and the approximate distribution had the legislature been elected on a party basis and the votes for legislative offices been distributed in the same manner as the votes for the lieutenant-governorship.

Table XI

PARTISAN MAKE-UP OF THE LEGISLATURE

Based Upon the Voting

For Lieutenant-Governor

1931-1939

House of Representatives

Year	Actual			Probable			
	Con	Lib	Indef	Rep	F-L	Dem	Indef
1931	98	33	-	48	62	9	12
1933	56	74	1	23	83	12	15
1935	82	49	-	43	71	9	8
1937	41	86	4	50	67	3	11
1939	100	29	2	101	19	3	8
			Senate				
1931	40	27	-	28	31	3	5
1935	44	23	-	25	33	4	5
1939	54	13	-	54	8	2	3

There are many weaknesses and qualifications concerning the above table that must be borne in mind. In the first place, Liberal and Conservative listings are based merely upon organizational voting and, in some instances, upon still less reliable sources. A particularly large number of independent drifters ere in the legislature during this period and they produce caucus statistics deceivingly out of proportion to actual voting

upon conjecture because of the difficulty in estimating the likely voting of urban constituents who often split tickets between the Farmer-Labor and Democratic candidates. Furthermore, in 1930, there was no Democratic candidate for lieutenant-governor. In the 1932 and 1934 elections, the Democratic candidate for this office carried six counties each time. Thirdly, the Farmer-Labor party was not at full strength and not fully organized for winning in the 1930 campaign. It seems likely that the party would have had little time to devote to legislative campaigns and the Republicans might well have kept control in that election. Fourthly, in many local constituencies, the Farmer-Labor party was plagued with radicalism. This factor would very likely have given an advantage to liberal Republicans in many legislative contests where the Farmer-Labor state-office candidates carried the district. (The party's candidates for lieutenant-governor were definitely recruited from the conservative wing of the party.) Lastly, the Minnesota habit of voting Republican, if in doubt, would probably have kept the totals for legislative candidates lower than those for lieutenant-governor.[39]

Despite these factors, and the inexactness of the comparison, it seems safe to suggest that the legislature, elected on a partisan basis, would have been in Farmer-Labor hands from 1933 through 1937. It is even possible, though not likely, that the party would have been successful in 1931. On the other hand, with the change

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[39] The lieutenant-governorship was chosen for comparison since it was the only office, except that of attorney-general, not held by veteran incumbents who received election support virtually on a nonpartisan basis. It probably best represented overall party strength.

in general outlook prior to the election of 1938, the Republicans would have held predominant control of the 1939 legislature in both houses. It is interesting to note that the Conservative as contrasted with hypothetical Republican strength was the same in both houses in 1939, indicating that only in this legislature, of the five cited, was the balance in agreement with relative party strengths (excepting, of course, that many of the Conservatives were actually independents who felt no caucus ties). Nonpartisanship appears to have been a very real boon to conservatives and a frustration to Farmer-Laborites during the hey-day of that party.

Since 1938. The broadening cleft in the Farmer-Labor party between the Communist-line left-wing and the more moderate groups, combined with a further move of the state in the direction of its Republican "normalcy", brought an end to an era in Minnesota.[40] Harold Stassen easily defeated Elmer Benson for the governorship. The legislative campaign of 1938 was rather unusual. Ordinarily the strength of a well-known name as an incumbent would have been sufficient to keep turnover to a minimum, but such was not the case in this election. The technique in a great many districts was to associate the terms Farmer-Laborite and Communist. Known association with the third party proved in many cases to be a severe liability. Turnover in the House was the highest since 1918, although most of those ousted were not members of the left-wing faction of their party. The Senate, paradoxically, had the lowest turnover in its history (up to that time) in the same election. The upper house had, however, consistently been

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40 See, supra, Chapter III.

Conservative-dominated and there were few Farmer-Laborites to attack. Leaders of the Liberal caucus in both houses failed to return to the 1939 session. Purged Senate chiefs included Fay Cravens of Milaca, Joseph Kozlak of Minneapolis and Victor Lawson of Willmar. In the lower house, Speaker Harold Barker and appropriations committee chairman William Ost of New York Mills were replaced, as were such Liberal leaders as Sam Bellman of Minneapolis, George Hagen of Crookston and Roy Wier of Minneapolis.[41]

Since that time, elections have been largely popularity contests although issues are once more becoming sharpened. The complaint continued to be heard that the minority party paid too little attention to legislative contests.[42] Tenure of legislators continued to increase. In 1946, of the fifty-two Senate members running for reelection, forty-six (88.4%) were reelected. Even in 1948, a year that saw some revival of the House Liberals, nearly three-fourths of the House seats were kept in the hands of the incumbents (72.5%).

Much was made by the Liberals in the 1949 session of the fact that forty representatives from thirty-five districts that were carried either by President Truman or Senator Humphrey or both for the D. F. L. chose to caucus with the Conservatives. It was pointed out that ten of these men were freshmen with a free choice and that they owed an obligation to their constituents to caucus with the Liberals. This argument, which failed to

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41 Barker was, however, defeated by a well-known independent Liberal, Carl Iverson.

42 See, for example, the Biennial Report, 1943, p. 4 and the comments in Naftalin, A History of the Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota, p. 76.

persuade a single representative to change his position prior to the meeting of the House, was essentially invalid. As has been pointed out, in recent elections the voters of Minnesota have shown a preference for the Democratic platform (especially for high farm price supports in rural areas and for opposition to the Taft-Hartley Act in urban areas) for national government positions, but they have been content with the Republican party for state offices. Had the state had a partisan legislature in 1948, it would very likely have been strongly Republican. A comparison of the disputed districts with the voting for lieutenant-governor indicates that the legislature, in its Liberal-Conservative ratio, was not greatly unrepresentative of a cross-section of state opinion on state matters.[43]

Case Studies: Inconsistencies of Representation. Since the most important single factor in Minnesota legislative campaigns is that of the individual personality, since the middle-of-the-road candidate often has the greatest advantage, and since, in the House, he can choose his own caucus membership, it is not at all uncommon for the same electorate at the same election to select two legislators who enter different caucuses (and sometimes the two have widely differing political views). The twenty-ninth district in Minneapolis, for example, over three elections simultaneously selected Roy Weir, secretary of the Minneapolis Central

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[43] A clear-cut distinction should be kept in mind between representativeness and responsibility. Since most representatives steer a middle path, they tend to reflect the views of the average individual in ordinary circumstances. With no system for responsibility, representativeness is left to chance and, in times of stress, it is often lacking.

Labor Union (AFL) and an outspoken Liberal, at the same time that B. L. Kingsley (the first time) and George MacKinnon (the next two elections), both well-known as Conservatives, were sent to the House. This anomaly is quite in accord with nonpartisan election characteristics. The bases of selection were simple: Roy Weir was a familiar name since he was a well-established trade union official in the old A. F. L. tradition and was running in a "working class" district; George MacKinnon was a familiar name since he had "made" All-America as a member of the University of Minnesota football team.[44] During his membership in the legislature, MacKinnon steered a course that was described as "independent" by proponents of nonpartisanship and as "fence-straddling" by opponents. Under nonpartisanship, as a matter of fact, most urban representatives have found it conducive to long tenure to become expert at walking the tight rope (to change the metaphor). It is significant that the twenty-ninth district is still represented (in 1949) by one Liberal and one Conservative.

A survey of the 1948 election indicates that electing men to opposite caucuses is particularly an urban weakness, although it is by no means unknown out-state. In that election, twenty-six of the sixty-seven legislative districts had representatives

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[44] George MacKinnon was later elected as a member of the United States House of Representatives and in 1948, as the incumbent, was defeated by his former colleague, Roy Weir. In the congressional campaigns, as in those for the legislature, the individual names and personalities must have been important factors, too. In all of his campaigns, as a Republican or a "nonpartisan," MacKinnon has placed heavy emphasis upon his athletic achievements. That he has been quite successful under either label, indicates that irrelevant factors are not limited to nonpartisan elections.

divided between the two caucuses. In sixteen districts, the men of different views were elected separately in different counties. Ten districts, however, selected men simultaneously to each caucus. The eighth district (Blue Earth county) reelected Robert Sheran, an active D. F. L. party member who had caucused with the Conservatives in 1947 but who joined the Liberals in 1949, together with Walter J. Croswell, a freshman who chose to join the majority group.[45] The twenty-ninth district in east Minneapolis saw the reelection of the incumbents, George Murk, A. F. L. business agent, Liberal, and Carl O. Wegner, Conservative. The thirtieth district of Minneapolis, a curious constituency including the "silk stocking" sector around the beautiful lakes area combined with the slum-like regions on the western edge of the business district, saw the reelection of Thomas N. Christie (Liberal) and Alf L. Bergerud (Conservative). Although it is very difficult to represent adequately the conflicting interests found within this district, both of these men were successful enough in the 1947 session to be reelected. Campaign literature of the two successful contestants was almost identical.[46] In the working-class areas, Bergerud was generally assumed to be a Liberal, but he was thought highly enough of by Conservatives to be entrusted with the chair of the reapportionment committee and the vice-chairmanship of the important tax committee.

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45 The politically ambitious Sheran joined the Conservatives when the Liberals were impotent, then, later switched to the reviving Liberals evidently as part of a campaign for the D. F. L. gubernatorial nomination.

46 The writer was able to observe the campaign as a resident of the thirtieth district in 1948.

In Duluth and environs, three districts were similarly made up of conflicting representation. In the fifty-seventh, Liberal August Omtvedt of Two Harbors was elected to a sixth term from the Lake-Cook county part of the district and Conservative A. B. Anderson was chosen to the Duluth part of the split constituency. The fifty-eighth district (consisting of the central part of the city and a section of St. Louis county to the north) has become accustomed to electing the same two men, members of different caucuses. Arne C. "Painter" Wanvick, a veteran of eight terms is a Liberal (although he has caucused with the Conservatives at times). His colleague is Thomas F. O'Malley, a Conservative veteran of six sessions. The fifty-ninth district (the western part of Duluth and southwestern St. Louis county) likewise was divided. The incumbent Conservative Dwight A. Swanstrom was re-elected for his third term, while a newcomer, Francis La Brosse, popular dance orchestra leader, joined the Liberal group.

Outside of the urban areas, the fifty-fifth district saw the incumbent, Theodore C. Swanson, Conservative, returned together with Thomas J. Ryan, freshman Liberal.[47] The tendency to elect a new man sympathetic to current views but also to retain an incumbent even though he may not fit present day thinking is rather typical. The sixtieth district (the normally D. F. L. Iron Range country) returned youthful Carl M. D'Aquila, radio announcer and a definite conservative, for a second term in the House at the same time selected a new representative in Loren S. Rutter who promptly caucused with the Liberals. The sixty-fifth

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[47] The fifty-fifth is a rural district at the upper end of the general agricultural area, taking in some cut-over land and some of the resort area around Mille Lacs. It consists of Kanabec, Mille Lacs and Sherburne counties.

district[48] reelected, as a matter of routine, the veteran Liberal Walter E. Day together with C. S. McReynolds, a third term Conservative. In the sixty-sixth district (Polk county), Thomas A. Letnes, Liberal, and Reuben H. Tweten, Conservative, were both reelected despite their memberships in different caucuses.

The capriciousness of the voter (or his lack of bases for voting other than purely personal qualifications) is further indicated by comparisons of representation in the House with that in the Senate. Robert J. Sheran, active in the D. F. L., represents the eighth district in the House while Val Imm, conservative Mankato editor, has long served the area in the Senate. Gerald T. Mullin, a Senate Conservative leader represents the thirty-fifth (Minneapolis) district which regularly contributes to the Liberal membership of the lower house. Mullin is, however, selected with the support of organized labor, and is a middle-of-the-roader. In the forty-first district of St. Paul the tables are turned for George L. Siegel, elected with labor support, sits in the Senate from the same district that is represented in part in the lower house by F. P. Memmer.[49] The list is too numerous to discuss in its entirety and the discrepancies are in part due to the fact that the Senate did not stand for election in 1948, a year of relatively high turnover. The Duluth districts should be noted,

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[48] Clearwater, Pennington and Red Lake counties in the northwest sector of the state on the border between the Red River valley and the state's resort area.

[49] This anomaly is not so great here as in some of the others since Memmer represents the white collar suburban half of the district while Siegel is elected by the whole district which includes a substantial number of lower income families.

however. All three of them contained one Liberal and one Conservative in the 1949 House. In the Senate, the fifty-seventh was represented by the ultra-conservative C. H. Dahle (since deceased), one of the most powerful men in the upper house. Another regular Conservative, Herbert Rogers represented the fifty-eighth. The fifty-ninth, however, had as its senator Homer M. Carr of the railroad village of Proctor (Duluth's only suburb), a veteran spokesman for the railroad brotherhoods and one of the Senate's ten Liberals.

The most outstanding divergence between the two houses was to be found in the forty-fifth district,[50] however. Its two House members were John T. Kosloske and Dewey Reed, both Liberal freshmen. In the Senate, the district was represented by Henry H. Sullivan of St. Cloud, conservative chairman of the powerful finance committee. Logically, unless the district voters change their minds considerably before the 1950 election, this should imply the coming defeat of Senator Sullivan. Under nonpartisanship, this seems unlikely, however. A Sullivan has represented the forty-fifth district since 1911, longer than most of its voters can remember. The incumbent, himself a veteran, was preceded by his father, J. D. Sullivan, who served for decades as one of the strongest leaders in the upper house. In 1946, Senator Sullivan did not have so much as token opposition as he was elected for a fourth term.

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50 Benton, the eastern portion of Stearns county, and that portion of Sherburne county that includes St. Cloud.

Case Studies: Individual Legislators. The secret to long tenure in the Minnesota legislature appears to be in having one's name become familiar and in not departing too far from the ancient principle of "moderation in all things". Men like John A. Hartle and Robert F. Lee have had little trouble remaining in the House once their names became known in their basically rural constituencies. Others, such as Claude Allen have enjoyed lengthy stays from urban areas, although most of the oldest members of the House (in point of service) are from farming areas. Urban Senators have generally enjoyed longer tenure than have urban Representatives, although long service by members from outside the three big cities is more common in the upper house, too.

Veteran members of the House must exercise caution in choosing to abandon a relatively safe position in order to seek his district's Senate seat, for the upper house position covers a larger area (generally) and requires more time and money in campaigning. Thus, Roy E. Dunn has had no difficulty in keeping his House seat since 1925 except for the two year interim when he made a try for the Senate seat of the veteran E. E. Adams in 1930 and found the task a little too difficult. Similarly, Claude Allen, despite long service in the House and a state-wide reputation as the treasury watchdog, has been very reluctant to abandon his secure seat to try for the position in the Senate vacated by the death of Charles Orr.

The career of Carl Iverson, who has represented Grant county in the lower House almost continuously since 1919, tells much of the story of the legislature. As a young man of twenty-four, he secured the alternate endorsement of the Non-Partisan League

legislative district convention (without particularly seeking the honor). When the endorsee died prior to the primary, Iverson received the backing of the organized farmers in an area where they were very ascendant. He experienced considerable opposition in the bitter campaigns of 1918 and 1920, but was successful each time. After that, the League blended into the Farmer-Labor party, which in turn became overshadowed by the optimism of the 'twenties. Iverson, never active in the Farmer-Labor party, remained in the legislature, however, avoiding radicalism, but always urging moderate reforms, With the coming of the depression, he moved into the Senate (in 1930, by carrying all four counties of the 48th District). He met with defeat but once: in 1934 when he abandoned his usual policy of moderate liberalism and publicly supported the actions of the radical Farmers' Holiday Association.[51] He was rather badly defeated (9,789 to 6,796) by C. I. Oliver, Graceville physician.

Iverson was returned to the House in 1937after what was the fourth campaign in which he was given serious opposition. In order to make a come-back, it was necessary for him to defeat the speaker of the House. His name and personal reputation (the Association incident being rather forgotten), combined with the general disfavor into which incumbent Liberals had fallen, enabled him to win. Since that time, he has had no difficulty in retaining his seat.

Iverson's career, with its moderation, its emphasis upon the individual, its lack of specific platform, is probably as typical as any of the nonpartisan legislature. Iverson himself typifies

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51 The Farmers' Holiday Association was an offshoot of the Farmers' Union, which was a fairly radical group during the depression. The Association took the view that there should be no farm foreclosures on mortgages until prices had returned to a profitable level. It also declared "holidays" from time to time in an effort to raise prices. During these, no farmer, union member or otherwise, was to market produce. To enforce the ban, the Association sometimes

the individual that proponents of nonpartisanship have in mind for membership in the type of organization they desire. He is modest, a deliberate amateur in politics with a healthy suspicion of "professional politicians", he has an abiding faith in the integrity of the individual human being and believes that, as a "little fellow", he must also protect the ordinary citizen against organized strength in society -- all of which marks him as a vestige of the Non-Partisan League. He has spent a lifetime in the cooperative movement and in advancing the cause of agriculture. A generation of Grant county farmers have, in return, time and again sent him to St. Paul with carte blanche. He is not expected to explain his behavior even when he makes striking deviations from the actions of the Liberal caucus, as he has done on many occasions. He is a free agent, but the people of his district know that he will vote sincerely and conscientiously for what he sees as the right. Lacking the pretentiousness and hypocrisy that are so often the tools of the career politician's trade, he sees his job as a civic duty and responsibility, not as a means of personal aggrandizement.

The election opposition of another veteran Liberal, E. J. Chilgren, serves as a good example of the nonpartisan system. Chilgren was first elected in 1926 succeeding another Liberal who had retired. The Liberals were too few in that session of the legislature even to organize themselves, but Chilgren was successful in his campaign against a retired lumberman (using the strategy of associating his opponent with the interests of Big Business), perhaps largely because sparsely populated, timbered Koochiching county had seen little of the prosperity that most

of the rest of the United States was at that time acclaiming.

He has been in the House continuously since that time, voting as a moderate Liberal, cooperating fairly closely with the policies and strategies of the D. F. L. party without actually being an active member of the party. Three times he has had no opposition at all and the rest of the time he has warded off challenges from either the left or right of his position. His campaigns for reelection have been a testimonial to the taking of the middle road:

> 1928. No opposition. Farmer-Labor endorsement.
> 1930. No opposition. Farmer-Labor endorsement.
> 1932-1936. Radical left-wing of Farmer-Labor party considered Chilgren too conservative, attempted to oust him. His run-off opponent was regularly such a candidate. Chilgren secured votes of moderates and conservatives (who could not get their candidate through the primary when they entered one).
> 1938. "C. I. O. money" backed an "authoritarian" left-winger against Chilgren.
> 1940-1944. Run-off opposition came from the right as the county Republican organization lent support to conservative candidates. Once Governor Harold Stassen spoke in the district and asked the voters to "send a Republican" to the legislature.
> 1946. No opposition. D. F. L. endorsement.
> 1948. Weak conservative opposition. D. F. L. endorsement.

<u>Religious and Ethnic Factors</u>. In every state, the faith and national background of the voters serves as an important factor in voting, especially for the offices attracting the lesser amounts of public attention. This has been true in Minnesota, although it appears to be growing progressively less important.

Popular views outside of Minnesota to the contrary, the state's largest single immigration influx has been from Germany, that country supplying more newcomers than all of the Scandinavian nations combined. German settlement concentrated chiefly in an area that describes roughly a triangle with the base consisting

of the southern boundary of the state and the apex somewhere around the center of Todd county. This area has sent scores of men with German names to the legislature. It is still represented by people with such names as Baughman, Dahle, Dietz, Lauerman, Mueller and Welle. The Germans were probably never as clannish in the state as were the first and second generation Scandinavians and as the years have passed, they have paid less and less heed to names. In 1949, F. E. Dougherty represented German-Scandinavian Martin and Watonwan counties, Edward Hagen was a veteran in similarly settled Chippewa and Lac qui Parle counties and Archer Nelsen represented predominantly German McLeod county. Furthermore, in earlier decades when clannishness was much more common, George Sullivan held German-Swedish Washington county, while Stearns county, overwhelmingly German (with a later Polish immigration into the northeast corner of the county), has been represented by John D. or Henry H. Sullivan in the Senate almost from the turn of the present century.

The German settlement has corresponded roughly to the usually prosperous corn-hog general farming area. It has been quite conservative and has not been affected as greatly by radicalism as has been the case in the wheat and potato country of the Red River valley in the northwest part of the state, or the thin-soiled, cutover areas of the north and northwest parts of the state, or the mining regions of the iron ranges.

Norwegian immigration, although it dots the state from Rock to Cook and from Houston to Kittson counties, has been predominant in the Red River valley (except for Kittson county which

was settled principally by Swedes) and on south into the upper Minnesota River valley in Lac qui Parle, Chippewa, Yellow Medicine and on into the western portions of Renville and Redwood counties. Naturally enough, this area tended to have strong legislative representation from people with Norwegian or Swedish names. In 1949, names such as Blomquist, Dahlquist, Iverson, Larson, Wahlstrand and Wefald were still dominant, although the people appear to be less and less concerned with such matters in voting. Customs, traditions, discriminations and language barriers have faded in importance under the influence of such factors as the radio, the public high school, intrastate migrations and intermarriages.

Swedish settlement has been spread throughout the central heart of the state, with additional immigrants going into the Red River area, particularly Kittson county. Principal concentration has been in Chisago, Pine, Kanabec, Isanti, Anoka and northern Washington counties. This area in 1949 was represented chiefly by persons with names such as Johnson, Ledin, Nordin and Oberg.

While statistics are not available on religious affiliations of legislators, this factor appears to be of consequence in elections. The Scandinavian areas are Protestant (in rural areas, still principally members of the traditional Lutheran church). German Catholics are strong in the southern counties of Blue Earth, Waseca, Le Seuer and Scott counties. Stearns, Morrison and Benton counties in central Minnesota and Winona in the southeastern section are largely German and Polish Catholic. Wabasha county is chiefly German and Irish Catholic and Ramsey county (St. Paul) has a very large number of persons of Irish descent. During the

depression, when the state as a whole was divided between the Farmer-Labor and Republican parties, the Democrats polled large votes in the Catholic counties, sometimes securing a plurality in them.

While statistical correlations on religious affiliations are not available, and on ethnic origins are virtually an impossibility, these factors have been very important in the past when politicians sought the "German vote" or the "Norwegian vote", and are still weighty in elections. Whether they are more important in nonpartisan elections cannot be safely demonstrated, but in "personality" contests, certainly such matters tend to overshadow issues. Edward Smith, for decades a Republican leader in the state, thought ethnic backgrounds to be very disproportionately effective in nonpartisan contests. Noting the lack of responsibility of many members of the legislature to their constituents upon definite issues, he bemoaned the fact that "in Minnesota, we frequently have a Son of Erin running on the platform that his wife is a Scandinavian and, before the war, his wife's mother was usually a German -- a triple alliance of great strength in this state."[52]

Newspaper Influence. While newspaper influence upon nonpartisan elections appears to be considerable in municipal elections, particularly in large cities such as Minneapolis or Detroit, and in judicial elections where the newspapers give publicity to bar association endorsements, it has been less

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[52] Letter to John T. King, August 18,1919 cited in Rollin L. Smith, The Philosophy of a Politician; An Epistolary Biography of Edward E. Smith (1932), p. 123.

effective in determining the make-up of the Minnesota legislature. This is not to say that newspaper editors do not influence their readers, or send themselves to St. Paul. Country weeklies, or some of them, devote considerable attention and space to legislative contests but their influence is tempered by the fact that contestants in rural areas are known, either personally or by reputation, to a large number of constituents. The urban dailies, which are in a position to influence elections in the impersonal city environment, have largely passed up their opportunities, devoting more space to the governorship and the national offices that are contested for at the same time.

Weekly newspaper editors, just as in partisan states, tend to take advantage of their names, known to the subscribers, and of the extensive publicity mechanism within their possession. In the 1949 legislature, there were three editors or publishers in the Senate (4.4% of the membership) and three in the House (2.3% of the membership). In the past, some legislative leaders have been newspapermen. One speaker, H. H. Barker of Elbow Lake, edited the Grant County Herald, Theodore Christianson ran the Dawson Sentinel, Hjalmar Peterson owned the Askov American, while Elmer E. Adams, for decades a legislator from Ottertail county, edited the Fergus Falls Daily Journal. The last-named newspaper was probably influential in the elections in large, heterogeneous Ottertail county and in maintaining that county's traditional conservatism.

Victor Lawson, of the aggressive, radical Willmar Tribune, had himself sent to the Senate, while conservative Val Imm of the Mankato News is another who has used his publication to aid

himself. Andrew Finstuen of the Kenyon Leader served in the House from 1921 through 1939 as one of the most independent men in the legislature. The 1949 House minority leader, E. J. Chilgren, editor of the Littlefork Times, has held his seat since 1927.

Newspaper men have been far from invincible although some of them have served lengthy tours of duty in St. Paul. Although Elmer E. Adams served for decades, first in one house and then in the other, although his Journal was the most important newspaper in the area and a daily, and although he could defeat Republican chieftain Roy E. Dunn in 1930, he went down to defeat in 1934 before T. H. Johnson, a veteran of two terms in the House. H. H. Barker was defeated for reelection despite the ownership of his own newspaper, after three terms in the House. During the wet-dry struggle, Jans K. Grondahl of the Red Wing Republican devoted a great deal of space in his newspaper to the wet record of A. J. Rockne, but was unable, despite the dry sentiment of the constituency, to overcome the incumbent's advantage. Victor Lawson of Willmar was unable to keep himself in the Senate, even with his own newspaper, after the agrarian radicalism for which he had stood had run its course. It seems quite likely that men such as Lawson and Barker actually were at a disadvantage in the 1938 election. As editors, they had taken definite positions in favor of the Farmer-Labor party. As candidates, they were thus definitely labelled in an election of high turnover when the incumbents with the least known about them would tend to have the greatest advantage.

While newspapers are generally thought to have great influence upon nonpartisan elections, this factor appears to be of less influence in the Minnesota legislative contests because the large city dailies have not been greatly interested while the rural newspapers must cope with personal acquaintance and reputation as competing bases for the decision of the doubtful voter.

Caucus Selection. The candidate for the legislature in Minnesota runs for office as an individual, not as a representative of a group or of a set of ideas. If he seeks to become a representative, he can freely choose his own caucus once he is elected. If he is chosen to the Senate, he must await an invitation to join the Conservative caucus. If that invitation is extended, as it usually is, he decides for himself whether to accept it or not. Occasionally, where the sentiments of a district are well known, the candidate will announce the caucus of his choice in advance, but this is not the usual pattern. Sometimes, of course, the individual makes promises to his financial backers, or is pressured by them into agreeing to join a certain caucus, but even then the pledge need not be a public promise.

In the early days of nonpartisanship, the House caucus was on a wet-dry basis and most individuals were committed on this question. During the 'twenties, the Conservatives were regularly in charge, but beginning in 1933 considerable shifting of House organization took place. During this time, the freedom of the individual to choose his caucus became very evident. The extent of individual transference from one caucus to another in the House is shown in Table XII. (Since the Senate was continuously under

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THE NONPARTISAN LEGISLATURE

IN MINNESOTA

-by-

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Department of Political Science
at the University of Minnesota

University of Minnesota
Minneapolis
December, 1950

Table XII

INDIVIDUAL SHIFTS IN CAUCUS

MEMBERSHIP, 1935-1949

Changes From Previous Session

House of Representatives

Session	Majority Group	Liberal to Conservative	Conservative to Liberal
1935	Lib	---	28
1935	Con	14	1
1937	Lib	---	13
1937	Lib	13	1
1939	Con	3	1
1941	Con	1	--
1943	Con	16	--
1945	Con	--	13
1947	Con	4	2
1949	Con	1	7

Source: House Journal, 1931-1949.

Conservative control, no such shifts were necessary in order to be on the winning side.)

In 1931, the Liberals did not present a speakership candidate, although three votes were cast for a Liberal. In 1935, the Liberals organized the House, getting the votes of the three who had voted for Munn two years earlier, twenty-eight who had voted with the Conservatives in 1931 (most of whom had, however, joined the Liberal caucus which met occasionally during that session) and forty-three newcomers.

In 1935, the Conservatives sought to recapture the speakership when Charles Munn did not return to the legislature. They nominated George Johnson who had a more liberal record than did the Liberal nominee, Harold Barker. Various new members were

brought into the Conservative camp along with some of the erstwhile Liberals and when the direction of trend had become fully obvious, a total of fourteen members switched their voting to the winning side.[53] One man, Andrew Finstuen who had been the Conservative speakership nominee in 1933, but who had voted consistently with the Liberals after failing to win the office, changed to the losing side.

In 1937, a large number of newcomers were swept into House offices in the great wave of sentimentality that made the way clear for nearly all who associated themselves successfully with the name of Floyd Olson. With a clear indication of the probable outcome of the speakership vote, thirteen fence-straddlers switched to the winning Liberal side after having voted with the Conservatives in the previous session.[54] It is interesting that in all of this maneuvering, only one representative succeeded in making a legislative double backward somersault: William Witt of Belle Plaine voted for Munn (Liberal) in 1933, for Johnson (Conservative) in 1935, and for Barker (Liberal) in 1937. He was on the winning side each time.[55]

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53. The group included: Bert J. Costello, Ralph E. Gyrte, Melvin H. Jebb, Martin P. Lager, George O. Lockhart, J. A. McIntosh, Joseph M. Masek, F. F. Moore, A. J. Powers, Fred W. Radde, William A. Syreen, Harry L. Wahlstrand, John A. Weeks and William Witt.

54. The group included: Ray Anderson, A. D. Crissey, L. O. Dixon, H. F. Ettel, A. O. Hayford, Raymond J. Julkowski, C. G. Mann, Kenneth Nissen, Theodore Slen, Richard L. Tighe, Arne O. Wanvick, William Witt, John M. Zwach.

55. Witt joined the losing side in the 1937 extra session, however, by voting for White. He was not a candidate for reelection in 1939.

The 1937 extra session is included in Table XII because it produced a strong change in caucus alignment without a change in House membership. The 1937 regular session had seen a great deal of executive-legislative strife and the Liberals were badly split internally between those who favored and those who opposed Governor Benson. Furthermore, Speaker Barker and his secretary, Arthur Jacobs, had made many personal enemies. The Conservatives, therefore, made a serious attempt to capture the speaker's chair, even though no election had intervened. They nominated John J. White of Ogilvie (who had himself voted for Barker a few months earlier) against the incumbent. Although the speaker was reelected, fifteen men who had given him their votes in January, joined the minority caucus in May.[56] Despite the sentiment against Barker, one man, H. J. P. Nielson of the twelfth district, switched to the winning side. (Nielson was not a candidate for reelection in the 1938 contest.)

In 1939, after the return of the Republican party to state offices, there was no question but that L. M. Hall, Conservative, would be the speaker. The caucus switching at this session was not great because most of the changes had taken place at the extra session and because of a fairly high turnover in the 1938 election. Of the fifteen who left the Liberals in the extra session, seven returned in 1939 and stayed with the Conservatives.

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56 Ray Anderson, Thomas Bondhus, George B. Cutting, L. C. Dixon, Michael F. Ettel, A. O. Hayford, J. A. Helling, Louis W. Hill, O. G. Mann, C. O. Middleton, W. Kenneth Nissen, Richard L. Tighe, Arne C. Wanvick, John J. White, William Witt. In addition, M. J. Castor, erstwhile Liberal, refused to vote for either candidate.

In addition, three more men left the Liberals to vote for Hall.[57] One man, Andrew O. Hayford of Minneapolis, a Liberal who had voted for White in the extra session as a protest against Arthur Jacobs, rejoined his regular group and voted for Slen.

Since 1939, the Conservatives have regularly organized the House and the amount of caucus switching had declined accordingly. In 1941, the only transfer came when the veteran independent, Carl Iverson, refused to vote for George Hagen and supported Hall. The 1943 and 1945 figures are not very meaningful, since the Liberals did not have a candidate in the 1943 war year, most of them supporting Hall. In the following session, the Liberals once more presented a name in nomination and most of the members caucusing with that group left the majority.

In 1947, four members changed to the winning side while two tardy Liberals returned to their fold.[58] In 1949, the Liberal caucus made a large gain in membership from the freshman crop of legislators and, with much talk heard of serious D. F. L. efforts to organize the 1951 House, no less than seven fence-straddlers, opportunists and independents among the representatives held over from the previous session, transferred to the Liberal caucus.[59] Only one man, Alfred J. Otto of St. Paul, left the Liberals to vote with the winning side.

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57 P. J. E. Peterson, Gilbert W. Terwilliger, John R. Trisch.

58 Patrick D. Creamer, Thomas A. Letness, A. C. Thompson and Oscar Widstrand joined the Conservatives while Odean Enestvedt and Carl Iverson met with the Liberals.

59 J. Henry Appledorn, Otto Clark, Thomas A. Letness, Henry Mattson, Michael R. Moriority, Robert Sheran and Arne C. Wanvick. Four of these were serving their second terms in the House.

Should the Liberals score large gains in the 1950 election, or, to the contrary, should the apparent Liberal upsurge prove abortive, the 1951 session may see a large number of caucus transfers to the winning side.

The evidence of Table XII, in summary (and ignoring the misleading statistics of the 1933, 1943 and 1945 sessions), indicates the freedom of the representatives in switching from one caucus to another and it suggests that from thirteen to fifteen fence-straddlers appear to be available for bargaining purposes at a time when a change in House organization is possible.

It should be noted that changes from one caucus to another take place in every session and that such changes are not always (although most of them certainly are) in favor of the majority caucus. These changes are another indication of the importance of the individual personality in state legislatures, and particularly a nonpartisan legislature. Unquestionably, personality was important as a factor in 1935 when two liberal-endorsed candidates opposed one another for the speakership and in the 1937 extra session when a large number of men left the Liberals for no more weighty a reason than the obnoxious personalities of Harold Barker and, more particularly, of his secretary, Art Jacobs.

If individual members were polled as to reasons for their shifts in caucus support, they would probably argue that they were voting "for the man", or at least for or against his personality, or that they sought to "protect" their districts. Some Liberals would argue that the Conservatives offered the more genuinely liberal choice in 1935 and so enjoyed their support. But the 110-111.

underlying reason for much of the switching must be in order to put the individual on the winning side and hence to improve his chances for good committee assignments and political plums for his district.

Legislative Tenure in Minnesota

General Trend. One of the most prominent and significant evolvements of nonpartisanship in the state legislature has been the regular increase in the number of persons held over from one session to the next. There are many factors affecting the return of a legislator after serving a term: pay is notably low, the House of Representatives is elected for a short two-year term, the sessions interfere with one's regular occupation, and the voters may not be willing to return the incumbent even though he may be willing to continue to serve. 43

Salaries for the Minnesota legislature are neither very outstanding nor very poor for a state of its size and population. Members receive $2,000 for two years plus $10 per day for extra sessions, in addition to traveling allowances of $.15 per mile. That represents approximately the same pay as in Iowa, but slightly less than that paid in Indiana and much less than in Wisconsin.[60] The salary (about $83.33 per month), scarcely appears to be a major consideration in seeking a seat in the

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60 Iowa pay is $2,000 for two years plus not over $20 per day for extra sessions and $.05 per mile for travel. Indiana pays $1,200 per year plus $.20 per mile for one round trip . Wisconsin legislators receive $4,800 for two years plus $.10 per mile for one round trip and $.06 per mile for a weekly trip home and back to Madison. See, the Book of the States, 1950-1951, pp. 110-111.

able XIII

E MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE

ns, 1902 - 1948

Holdovers		House of Representatives		Senate	
From	To	Number of Holdovers	Percentage of Holdovers	Number of Holdovers	Percentage of Holdovers
1901	1903	27	22.6%	21	33.3%
1903	1905	59	49.5	(62)	
1905	1907	33	27.7	23	36.5
1907	1909	53	44.5	(62)	
1909	1911	41	34.4	34	53.9
1911	1913	50	42.0	(63)	
1913	1915	45	37.8	21	33.3
1915	1917	71	54.6	(66)	
1917	1919	51	39.2	30	44.8
1919	1921	80	61.1	(67)	
1921	1923	58	44.3	27	40.3
1923	1925	89	67.9	(66)	
1925	1927	85	64.8	33	49.3
1927	1929	93	70.9	(64)	
1929	1931	83	63.3	32	47.7
1931	1933	68	51.9	(64)	
1933	1935	76	58.0	37	55.2
1935	1937	68	51.9	(62)	
1937	1939	52	39.7	46	68.6
1939	1941	91	69.5	(63)	
1941	1943	87	66.4	51	76.1
1943	1945	102	77.9	(63)	
1945	1947	98	74.8	46	68.6
1947	1949	95	72.5	(65)	

Source: Minnesota Legislative Manual, 1901 - 1949.

Note: Prior to 1915, the legislature consisted of 63 Senators and 119 Representatives under the reapportionment of 1897. By the reapportionment of 1913, the number was increased to 67 Senators and 130 Representatives. Percentage of holdovers, 1913-1915, is calculated according to the size of the 1913 legislature. In 1917, the House was increased to 131 members. Percentage of holdovers, 1917-1919, is calculated according to the size of the 1917 legislature.

legislature. In some cases it may serve as a desirable extra increment, but in other instances the individual probably experiences no net gain at all after paying for someone to do his work back home, letting work slip or refusing to accept cases or work offered. In Minnesota, as in most states, service in the legislature is more a matter of increasing one's personal prestige, of protecting one's interests, or of community service than it is a method of enhancing one's income. The impracticability of the legislature as a stepping stone to further political advancement reduces the attractiveness of the position somewhat in Minnesota in comparison with states having a partisan legislature (though the factor of having little chance for advancement tends to work in the direction of causing the legislator to seek reelection).

The make-up of the Minnesota legislature is not unlike that of other states. Farmers and lawyers are predominant. In 1949, there were forty-one farmers in the House (31.3%) and sixteen in the Senate (23.9%). There were sixteen lawyers in the House (12.2%) and twenty-three in the Senate (34.3%).[61] No other single group makes up a considerable percentage although there are several newspapermen, teachers and union business agents. Others earn their living as ministers, radio announcers, veterinarians, bankers, grocers and apiarists.

Since the legislature is quite average so far as salary, length of terms and occupational distribution of the members is concerned, it might be expected that tenure in Minnesota would

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61 Totals compiled by C. H. Wickenberg in the St. Paul Dispatch, January 3, 1949.

be not unlike that of other mid-western states; such is not the case, however. Table XIII indicates that nonpartisan elections have brought with them an almost uninterrupted increase in the percentage of holdovers from one election to the next. These figures are compared with other states below.[62]

The table indicates that the percentage of holdovers in the House has increased from 22.6% in 1902 to an all time high of 77.9% in the election of 1944. The Senate has seen an increase from 53.3% in 1902 to a record holdover of 76.1% in the election of 1942. Several items should be noted concerning Table XIII:

(1) House and Senate figures are not directly comparable since the upper house is elected for a four-year term, the House for but two years. Since the senator will have aged more during his longer term and more events will have transpired in his personal life, there is a greater likelihood that he will have more reasons for not seeking reelection. Senators, moreover, are older on the average than members of the lower house, hence the death-rate and retirement due to old age or illness is greater. Because of these and perhaps other factors, many elections since 1922 show the larger percentage of holdovers in the House.

(2) With certain exceptions, the House has had its highest percentage of holdovers in presidential election years, as compared with "off" election years. This was invariably true between 1904 and 1928. In 1932, however, the legislature, which had not followed the Farmer-Labor trend in 1930, began to respond somewhat to the

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62 <u>Infra</u>, Chapter VI.

Table XIII

HOLDOVERS IN THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE

Elections, 1902 - 1948

Holdovers		House of Representatives		Senate	
From	To	Number of Holdovers	Percentage of Holdovers	Number of Holdovers	Percentage of Holdovers
1901	1903	27	22.6%	21	33.3%
1903	1905	59	49.5	(62)	
1905	1907	33	27.7	23	36.5
1907	1909	53	44.5	(62)	
1909	1911	41	34.4	34	53.9
1911	1913	50	42.0	(63)	
1913	1915	45	37.8	21	33.3
1915	1917	71	54.6	(66)	
1917	1919	51	39.2	30	44.8
1919	1921	80	61.1	(67)	
1921	1923	58	44.3	27	40.3
1923	1925	89	67.9	(66)	
1925	1927	85	64.8	33	49.3
1927	1929	93	70.9	(64)	
1929	1931	83	63.3	32	47.7
1931	1933	68	51.9	(64)	
1933	1935	76	58.0	37	55.2
1935	1937	68	51.9	(62)	
1937	1939	52	39.7	46	68.6
1939	1941	91	69.5	(63)	
1941	1943	87	66.4	51	76.1
1943	1945	102	77.9	(63)	
1945	1947	98	74.8	46	68.6
1947	1949	95	72.5	(65)	

Source: Minnesota Legislative Manual, 1901 - 1949.

Note: Prior to 1915, the legislature consisted of 63 Senators and 119 Representatives under the reapportionment of 1897. By the reapportionment of 1913, the number was increased to 67 Senators and 130 Representatives. Percentage of holdovers, 1913-1915, is calculated according to the size of the 1913 legislature. In 1917, the House was increased to 131 members. Percentage of holdovers, 1917-1919, is calculated according to the size of the 1917 legislature.

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changes in the state and instead of a new high in holdovers the figure was the lowest in ten years. The election of 1936 did not follow the rule since many persons that year voted for candidates who could associate themselves with the name of the recently deceased Floyd B. Olson. In 1948, there was a slight reversal of trend as a result of D. F. L. efforts to associate the names of their legislative endorsees with those of the Democratic national ticket. Even so, the number of holdovers in 1948 was exceeded only twice in the history of the legislature (in the two previous elections).

This difference between presidential and non-presidential years has tended to decrease since the election of 1928. It is possible that the tendency to reelect most of the Republican incumbents, or those who claimed to be Republicans, was an important factor prior to that time. That is, people tended to vote for a Republican president and cast allied ballots for other offices. Since it is impossible to vote a straight ticket with some offices on the nonpartisan ballot, this should not have been the governing factor (although it may have been before 1913). It is possible that the lower turnout of voters for "off" year elections enables the candidate with energetic support to get out his votes, catching the confident incumbent off guard. Again, it does not seem likely that this would be a considerable factor, because of the casual nature of most legislative campaigns and the usual absence of such an energetic organization of supporters. It would appear that the most important reason for the phenomenon has been the general lack of interest by the electorate in other campaigns in a presidential election year. In "off" year elections the

voter, with no guideposts on the nonpartisan ballot, tends to support the most familiar name, which is usually that of the incumbent. During presdential campaigns the voter, his eyes on the glamour, color and noise of the "big show", has still less of his small span of attention left to devote to mere legislative candidates. The chances that he will content himself with a vote for the incumbent become even greater. (This is in contrast to the usual situation which gives incumbent state officials an advantage in low turnout off-year elections.)[63]

(3) It is likely that the percentage of holdovers in the upper house would be even higher if the senators were selected in presidential election years, judging from the results in the House. On the other hand, the Senate has not had to cope with three elections with relatively high turnover: those of 1932, 1936 and (to a lesser extent) 1948. Had the Senate been before the voters in these three elections, its percentage might actually have been lowered.

(4) There is a relatively modest turnover, even in times of great political and social unrest. In the election of 1932, when many states found themselves almost without an experienced legislator in one or both houses (nearly all of the Republicans having been turned out), the Minnesota House retained more than one-half of its members. The previous election (1930), one of

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63 Further light might be shed on this anomaly of greater advantage to the incumbent in presidential election years through the use of the public opinion poll. A great deal of information is needed on the question of why the voter votes as he does.

high turnover in most states since it was the first chance to vote after the "crash" of 1929, saw nearly two-thirds of the Minnesota House and almost one-half of the Senate returned to office. Even in 1936, when great numbers of voters supported anyone who claimed allegiance to Floyd Olson, more than one-half of the House members kept their seats. And in 1938, which witnessed a reaction to this kind of voting, forty per cent of the members were able to retain their places, and this represented the greatest turnover in the House since the advent of nonpartisanship.[64]

It is significant that after the election of 1922, which saw many stand-patters and reactionaries replaced by moderates promising agricultural reforms, one observer noted, despite the fact that more than forty per cent of each house was retained, that "Probably there was never a legislature in the state containing so many new members. . . ."[65] Actually, the 44.3% retained in the House would have seemed like a very <u>high</u> number of retentions anytime prior to 1916, and the 40.3% retained in the Senate would have seemed very high prior to 1918.

(5) While many writers have been concerned with the lack

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[64] The 1918 figure of 38.9% is not representative since many House members were not candidates for reelection, having entered the military or other war services. Rising agrarian radicalism was, however, a factor in the large turnover.

[65] O. J. Buell, <u>Minnesota Legislature of 1925</u>, p. 7. A similar comment is made in Christianson, <u>op. cit.</u>, Vol. II, p. 431.

of experienced men in many legislatures,[66] such a problem does not exist in Minnesota under nonpartisanship. Ordinarily more than one-half of either house is experienced, often with a large number of men with three sessions and more. It is rare to have as few as forty per cent of the men held over from the previous session and the retention of two-thirds of the members from the previous session is not at all unusual, especially since 1940. The problem in Minnesota appears to be quite the opposite: the legislature responds slowly, sluggishly and insufficiently to changes in public thinking.

In the not untypical 1949 session, the average Conservative had served 2.49 terms while the average Liberal had served 2.33 terms previous to the session. No less than eighteen Conservatives had served at least five previous terms, while eight Liberals could make the same boast. Forty (46.5%) of the Conservatives and twelve (26.7%) of the Liberals had served in at least three previous sessions. Certainly there was no shortage of experience in the lower house and the same statement can be made concerning the Senate. (The longer term in the upper house automatically serves to give greater experience to its members, of course.)

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66 Particularly Charles S. Hyneman. See any one of a series of articles by him, including: "Tenure and Turnover of Legislative Personnel," The Annals, Vol. 195 (January, 1938), pp. 21-31; "Tenure and Turnover of the Indiana General Assembly," American Political Science Review, Vol. XXXII (February, 1938), pp. 51-66, and (April, 1938), pp. 311-331; "Legislative Experience of Illinois Lawmakers," University of Chicago Law Review, Vol. III (1935), pp. 104, 106-7.

Summary and Future Trends

Summary. The general picture of nonpartisan elections for the Minnesota legislature can be summarized in this fashion:

(1) The span of attention of the large percentage of voters does not extend to the legislative campaigns. Busy with the "more important", more dramatic and better publicized struggles for the presidency, congressional seats and the governorship, and with no party labels to "guide" him, the voter will tend to cast his ballot for the candidate whose name is most familiar to him. Since the important thing is to attract the attention of the voter to a name, rather than to a party or a platform, the tendency is toward making the legislative campaign a popularity contest. Because the incumbent has an opportunity to speak at county fairs as a public office-holder, can write letters to the editor as such, and can keep the local editor well supplied with his name in the form of news from the capital while the legislature is in session, his advantage is even greater than that held by the incumbent in an ordinary partisan election.

The people of the state have, as a matter of fact, paid comparatively little attention to their legislature. Rarely have they become indignant or greatly concerned over the actions or inactions of a session. The efforts of the Farmer-Labor or D. F. L. parties -- the perennial "outs" in the Minnesota legislature -- to rouse the people in order to elect less conservative legislatures have generally been greeted with monumental unconcern by most of the voters. They look to the governor, not the

legislature, when a change in policy direction is desired. Even grossly unrepresentative legislatures, such as those of 1921 and 1931, have failed to elicit anything outstanding in the way of turnover of personnel.

(2) The rural voter, in a district that is usually less populated than the urban constituency and where the candidate is more likely to be known personally or by reputation to a great number of citizens, is in a much better position to know the personal views of those from among whom he must make a choice. He can thus usually cast a more informed ballot than can the urban voter, who suffers from numerous disadvantages: the city dweller is not apt to be acquainted with many individuals in his district, neither personally nor even by reputation; the urban districts, for the most part, are much more populous; and the urbanite is much more prone to be interested in the activities of his city council and of the United States government, considering the legislature an institution of and for the farmers.

(3) The candidate is not likely to make open promises on major issues. In some districts, especially in rural areas, he must take a definite stand on one or a few matters -- but if such be the case, both of the candidates in the run-off election will often take the same stand on the "must" issues. The successful candidate, in turn, is a free agent in the legislature, providing he takes the "right" stand on the few issues that the stronger groups in his district demand. Outside of a few issues, the legislator is answerable only to himself -- and in some districts he can secure election with no commitments at all. If attacked

on his record in the next election, he can frequently make a sufficient defense by proclaiming that he "has no strings attached" and that he "used his best judgment and will continue to use his best judgment in the interest of the district." The best defense is often a refusal to defend oneself on specific issues.

(4) In districts where one is required to commit himself on certain issues, a middle-of-the-road view with efforts to appease conflicting groups (and a subsequent indecisiveness of behavior in the legislature) is often the most successful approach. While an extreme conservative may be elected in certain districts, radicalism is seldom successful. Most candidates try to please both sides and this is particularly true in urban districts where the conservative who says a few things that may be taken as favorable to labor can often defeat an avowed labor candidate.

(5) In the overwhelming number of contests, there is no need for the candidate to commit himself concerning which caucus he will join. He may switch caucuses, as sometimes happens, from one session to the next without advising his constituents in advance. He can choose his caucus without reference to the vote of his district for other state offices.[67] Most members of the legislature have definite views and associate themselves with one of the two caucuses, but there is a group in every body (variously estimated at from fifteen to twenty-five per cent of the group by experienced legislators, but varying from one

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[67] In the Senate, caucus membership is by invitation. The individual is quite free, however, to accept or reject the invitation without considering the vote of his district for other state offices.

session to the next) who will vote for organizational purposes according to who is likely to win. Members of this group are not likely to contribute much to the efforts of the legislature or to reflect the views of their districts, but such vacillation is not likely to be condemned by constituents. The legislator who changes caucuses in return for better committee assignments, or for other reasons, can even defend himself by arguing that he did so to protect the interests of his district.

(6) Most campaigns are on an individual basis with the individual responsible for financing his own efforts. Sometimes the candidate attempts to associate his name with one of the major parties, hoping for financial or oratorical aid. This is sometimes forthcoming from the Republicans (by indirection), but not from the D. F. L. party. This party, operating on a more limited budget than its opponents and requiring much more effort to elect state officials, has not been anxious to spend its limited funds upon a candidate over whom they could exercise no control. The Republicans, on the other hand, have always spent enough money to try to ensure a conservative majority.

Future Trends. There is strong evidence to indicate that the two major parties are going to take a more active interest in legislative campaigns beginning with that of 1950. After the death sentence was passed upon the Farmer-Labor party in the election of 1938, legislative contests became even less important than they had been in the plans of the major parties. The Republicans could secure a large, if uncoordinated, majority with little effort on their part. The Farmer-Laborites and Democrats not only

divided the opposition, but they were themselves badly divided internally. Under such conditions neither minority party gave much thought to the legislature. With the amalgamation of 1944, the D. F. L. was concerned chiefly with the high priority matters of carrying the state for the Democratic presidential candidates and with congressional and state administrative contests. Basic internal conflicts of the party were not resolved until 1948 and in that election, the D. F. L. became more firmly rooted as a real challenge to Republican supremacy within the state. Even though it had relatively little time or money to devote to the legislative campaign, there was an increase of twenty Liberals among the lower house law-makers.

The D. F. L. is planning an aggressive campaign in 1950 in an effort to organize at least the House. Since ten or fifteen additional seats might make this possible (sixty-six is needed for a majority, but sufficient fence-straddlers can usually be bargained for), the Republicans are planning counter-measures to protect their position.

The D. F. L. began plans immediately after the 1948 election. One objective was to set-up dues-paying clubs in every county and to urge Liberal legislators and potential candidates to participate in the clubs, as a means of correlating policy and securing some degree of responsibility. The new attitude was voiced by Orville L. Freeman, chairman of the D. F. L. state central committee: "Unfortunately, in the last election our legislators

received little attention from the party. This should not happen again."[68]

Since many otherwise solidly D. F. L. counties elected conservatives to the legislature, the party plans to concentrate on marginal districts where a little additional effort might secure the election of a Liberal.[69] A policy committee, consisting of two incumbent legislators from each of the nine congressional districts, has been organized to point up issues and to assist in strategy.

The Democratic national committeeman, Byron G. Allen, has a long-range plan for increasing party control (and hence, presumably, responsibility) and producing better equipped candidates. He would provide for candidates' schools (legislative and otherwise), a research institute, a traveling library and a full-time speakers' bureau.[70] This plan, based upon systems already in use in Great Britain and Scandinavia, might raise the general level of legislative competence; it would almost certainly increase party control.

The seriousness of D. F. L. intentions to secure control of the legislature is indicated by the fact that the party's state chairman favors withholding party endorsement from any candidate who will not pledge himself to support a measure to return the

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68 Minneapolis Tribune, November 26, 1948.

69 Ibid., February 25, 1949.

70 Interview, Byron G. Allen, August, 1949. See also, Minneapolis Tribune, March 6, 1949.

legislature to partisan status.[71]

Republican counter-measures are hampered somewhat by the party split that has been important and unresolved since the Young Republican League, led by Harold E. Stassen, captured the gubernatorial nomination in 1938. With the conservative, "pre-depression" Republicans increasingly in the minority, they (the Conservatives) are opposed to active party participation in the legislative campaigns lest such action deprive them of legislative control -- a major strong-hold of conservative-wing strength.[72]

The Young Republicans, with the support of Governor Luther W. Youngdahl and Bernhard W. LeVander, chairman of the Republican state central committee, favor pre-primary endorsement of candidates, a practice heretofore avoided by the Republican party. In the past, Republican field representatives have lent public support to needy candidates, but only after the individual has survived the primary on his own. Eventhen the support is only to selected candidates and in sub rosa and not from the party itself. The proposed new approach is designed to secure greater correlation of party policy with legislative policy -- a factor seriously lacking in the 1949 session; it is designed as a method of defeating arch-conservative legislators; and is intended as a counter-move to the aggressive tactics being adopted by the D. F. L.

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71 Minneapolis Tribune, February 20, 1949.

72 See, Minneapolis Tribune, May 16, 1949 and Ibid., local section, May 29, 1949.

Whether the Republicans actually start the legislative fight by endorsing prior to the primary a candidate pledged to support the state platform and the gubernatorial candidate or whether they wait until the fall campaign and then lend aid where most needed, they are faced with the prospect of spending more time and money on the legislative campaign than has been their custom if they wish to maintain control.

Whether increased official party participation will result in abandonment of nonpartisanship is uncertain. In the past, legislators who consider themselves "good party men" of either party have been unwilling to go along with the state platform when it proposes that they surrender their autonomous position under nonpartisanship.

CHAPTER V

EXECUTIVE-LEGISLATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The Role of the Governor

Reasons for Gubernatorial Strength. Under the check and balance system used in American state government, a study of law-making must extend beyond the legislature. It must include the governor. Under the Jacksonian concept of a weak executive, the governor played a rather minor role both in relationship to law-making and to administration. As government became more complex, the necessity for legislative leadership and coordination became increasingly greater and the task fell, for many reasons, to the governor.[1] Since this new role is not yet completely accepted as a traditional pattern by legislators, nor even by the voters, members of the legislature are prone to resent this "outside interference" into their realm and are likely, from time to time, to rise to an occasion that will allow them to assert themselves over the chief executive. Legislative independence is thought of by legislators as a virtue and the voter, even while he is demanding a program from the governor and expecting him to promulgate it, is likely to accede to that view, labeling a particularly cooperative legislature a "rubber stamp" and hence helping to produce executive-legislative tensions.[2]

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1 See, Leslie Lipson, The American Governor: From Figurehead to Leader (1939), 282 pp.

2 Ibid., p. 222.

The factors enabling the governor to supplant the old style behind-the-scenes boss or the uncoordinated legislature with its individual district protectors, and to become leader of his party and chief legislator of the state are many:[3]

(1) The governor is the only person directly involved in the legislative process who can claim to speak for the state as a whole. The individual legislator represents a small area and thinks of himself as its protector. While the voter may not know the names of legislative candidates, he almost certainly knows that of the governor and looks to him to propose cures for the states ills. Indefinite as his platform may sometimes be, the governor must run on a platform and the individual is likely to have a general idea of what it contains, at least so far as his own pet interests are concerned.

(2) The governor has the veto power. Its use--or what is really more important, the threat of its use--requires the legislature to give due thought to all gubernatorial suggestions, no matter how repugnant they may be to a large number of the membership. The veto in Minnesota (and it includes the item veto) requires a two-thirds vote of both houses in order to be overridden. Generally, though not always, a vetoed bill will die.

(3) The governor possesses valuable patronage, even in a

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[3] See, Leslie Lipson, "Influence of the Governor Upon Legislation," The Annals, Vol. CVC (January, 1938), pp. 74-75; also Robert E. Cushman, "Non-Partisan Nominations and Elections," The Annals, Vol. CVI (March, 1923), p. 94; J.A. Beck, The California Legislature (1942), pp. 105-106.

day that makes extensive use of the civil service system. Favors offered or threats of withholding desired appointments serve as weapons for the governor in developing his program.

(4) The governor has the power to call an extra session if his program, or some specific item, is not apppoved. To members of the legislature in general, and to farmers in particular, this is a threat that is likely to be taken seriously. The small pay for an extra session does not make up for inconveniences and extra expenses that it involves to the individual. The farmer, anxious to get home to his spring planting, finds a continued session or a summer session a particular hardship.

(5) The governor is a full-time official with full-time advisors. Only the legislator who makes a hobby of specializing in some phase of administration (such as a Theodore Christianson or a Claude Allen) can hope to compete with the knowledge that the governor, even a mediocre one, is likely to have. Furthermore, the governor has a staff and whole departments to furnish him with research material; the legislator is likely to be forced to secure information on his own or through some interest group.[4]

(6) The governor may launch an executive investigation into some question in competition with, or before the instigation of a

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[4] The legislative council and the research committee have been developed in recent years to help fill this gap and are being used increasingly to furnish useful information to the legislator. In 1947, the Minnesota legislature provided for a Legislative Research Committee to consist of nine representatives and a like number of senators.

legislative investigation. (The legislative investigation remains, however, a primary method of criticism of state administration.)

(7) The governor may focus public attention upon a refractory legislature and force them into submission or compromise. Since public interest in state government is likely to equate with interest in the activities of the governor, since he is the only state official who carries considerable prestige, and since he has little difficulty in securing newspaper or radio attention to his words or actions, he can frequently cause great public pressure to be brought to bear against the legislature. He can do this through radio addresses, personal appearances before the legislature or its committees, addressing rallies or through other techniques.

In Minnesota, the threat of veto has been used by nearly all governors. The veto itself was most used by Theodore Christianson in enforcing his economy program. Floyd Olson, faced with a depression and an uncooperative legislature, made extensive use of the threat. The extra session threat was used by Olson and Elmer Benson, among others. Olson, again, was an expert at focusing public attention upon the legislature. He appeared before legislative committees many times, made radio speeches (this technique has been used by every governor since), wrote a newspaper column during one session and even led a protest march on the legislature.

The problem of executive-legislative relationships has been complicated in Minnesota by the fact that a partisan governor is faced with a group of legislators generally uncommitted and with

no collective, and little individual, responsibility; members who most likely have taken no part in the late party campaign and who view the governor as a special sort of lobbyist. Many members consider him, as a career politician, a person interested in using state government and legislation to further his private aspirations, as a means rather than as an end. Under the circumstances, the governor is more than ever needed as a policy leader and as an individual to assume responsibility, yet his ability to make himself effective is dependent upon a whole series of variable factors rather than upon any system of organization.

A History of the Governor's Role

Prior to 1915. The political party was more powerful in Minnesota before nonpartisanship was applied to the judiciary and the legislature. The legislature was almost always overwhelmingly Republican and a Republican governor could count on a working majority. There were instances--as in the extra session of 1912 and in 1913--when the Republican membership was so strong that it suffered from weakening internal strife, and at times the state organization was badly split, as in 1904. Generally, however, the governor could command a majority.

The legislature of 1899 was overwhelmingly Republican (one hundred thirty-five Republicans, eleven Populists, thirty-six Democrats and Independents in the two houses), but the governor, John Lind, was a Democrat-Populist. As would be expected under a a system of partisan politics, little legislation was accomplished.

(the fact that Lind was a renegade Republican probably did not ingratiate him with opposing party leaders.)

Lind requested numerous tax reforms and several state administrative reforms, including: the creation of a state tax commission, a board of control of state institutions modelled on the Iowa plan, and a county insane asylum system. The legislature steadfastly refused to adopt his proposals and a stalemate resulted. Other than routine appropriations and local bills, little was accomplished except to create a board of grain inspection appeals and to reduce the legal rate of interest from seven to six percent. Perhaps to reduce the governor's supply of campaign material, Republican leaders did not advance controversial bills and there was only one veto during the session. It killed an appropriation for bounties paid to encourage a sugar beet industry in Minnesota. The governor thought the bounty system "vicious in principle."[5]

Lind was narrowly defeated for reelection in 1900, but in 1904 the Democrats won the governorship again when John A. Johnson took able advantage of the Dunn-Collins split in Republican ranks. Partly due to Johnson's winning personality and his willingness to compromise on partronage dispensing, relationships with the solidly Republican legislature were cordial and not wholly unproductive during his three terms.[6]

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[5] Theodore Christianson, Minnesota; The Land of the Sky-Tinted Waters (1935), Vol. II, p. 255.

[6] See Winifred G. Helmes, John A. Johnson, The People's Governor (1949), Passim. After much of Johnson's all-party support began to melt away and Republicans sensed gubernatoral victory in the next election, his third legislature became less cooperative. See, ibid., p. 289.

Johnson asked for several long-range reform measures that were not granted, including an income tax, a change from the old common law fellow-servant rule concerning industrial accidents, minimum salaries for teachers, a county assessor system, registration of lobbyists, county insane asylums, a uniform municipal accounting system, establishment of county agricultural schools and a constitutional amendment providing for the initiative and referendum. While this is an imposing list, it is understandable that it was not made into law. In the first place, most of the proposals were several years ahead of the progressive movement in the nation and secondly, no Republican legislature would be anxious to credit so many changes to the opposition.

There was only one veto of any consequence during Johnson's six years. He urged the legislature to adopt a tax upon the royalties from iron ore mining. Such a tax had long been urged, but effective lobbying had prevented it. By now it became impossible to stave off the matter any longer and the legislature was forced to act. Lobbying, however, produced a tax, not upon royalties, but upon severance. Johnson thought--as doubtless did the mining lobbyists--that the tax would merely be shifted to the users of steel, and he vetoed the bill.[7]

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[7] The tonnage tax became a political football for the next eight eight sessions before a tax was finally adopted and the question of increasing the tax has kept the matter alive since. Various combinations were arranged in defeating the tax bills. Members elected with mining interest support joined with wets for mutual protection and at times labor representatives joined against the tax to get support for improvements in the workman's compensation act.

Some reform measures were adopted: a state tax commission (bi-partisan), outlawing of free railroad passes, a strengthening of railroad regulation, and a forest conservation and ranger law.

Under Nonpartisanship. To Governor W. S. Hammond fell the task of determining the new relationship between the executive and the legislature elected without party designation. Since he had himself enjoyed bi-partisan support in his election--wet Republicans having deserted Lee--the governor proceeded cautiously and with general approval of nonpartisanship, in keeping with wet views of the day.

In his keynote speech starting the fall campaign, Hammond gave his opinion of the new arrangement. Stating that legislators should follow individual judgments, subject to the will of their constituents and that party loyalty was no longer an explanation of a vote, he went on to say that the position of the governor was now also changed. Since the governor would no longer be the leader of a party that controlled the legislature, he, too, would be basically nonpartisan in his role as chief executive. The gubernatorial message should henceforth, he thought, dwell on administrative problems, not upon statements of partisan political questions.[8]

After election, this was the approach used by Hammond in his message to the legislature. The message was rather equivocal and engaged in considerable passing of the buck. He left to the legis-

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[8] Governor Hammond's keynote speech at Red Wing is quoted in the the Willmar Tribune, October 7, 1914, supplement.

lature, without recommendation, such important questions as county option on liquor prohibition and a civil service merit system for the state. Concerning the former matter, he urged that the legislature take it up immediately and dispose of it so that other items might be considered.

Drys sought to influence Hammond to sign the county option bill by having elderly John Lind, only living Democratic former governor, testify in favor of the bill before the House temperance committee. Such activity was probably not necessary, for Hammond did not desire to be a leader, and probably was serious in saying that he would accept the decision of the law-makers. The bill received exactly enough votes in the House and passed with two to spare in the Senate. Hammond signed it a few hours after it reached his desk.[9]

The governor did not completely vacate the traditional functions of the chief executive. He chose to veto one measure--a bill sponsored by the minority leader in the House, S. Y. Gordon, to turn the duties of hotel inspector over to the department of dairy and food. The change would have removed the inspectors from the partronage list and made them career men on permanent tenure.

Whether Hammond's refusal to assume legislative leadership and to allow the legislature to act as it would would have been made into a workable, permanent policy cannot be known, for the governor died before he had been in office a year and his successor, J. A. A. Burnquist, did not share his predecessor's views on executive-legis-

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9 Willmar Republican-Gazette, April 4, 1915, p. 4.

lative relationships. No governor since Hammond has favored non-partisanship nor have any of them accepted the passive role of the governor in legislation. What might have happened had Hammond taken an aggressive approach to the county option question is a matter for conjecture. By personal philosophy and political backing he was a wet and, with a closely balanced House, it is likely that he could have forestalled--at least for another two years--county option.

It should be noted that the chaotic incompetence of the 1915 legislature was probably not the result of the governor's view of his role, but rather was due to the novelty of a new system that had not been given time for readjustments in leadership techniques, and to the anomoly of electing a wet speaker in a House that actually had a majority of drys.

The fact that Governor Burnquist faced the 1917 legislature fresh from a 100,000 vote victory probably was an important factor in the considerable influence he excerised over the session. Furthermore, he was a "regular" Republican and hence had views similar to those of a majority of the legislature, most of whom considered themselves Republicans, and his personal views called for active participation in the legislative process, in contrast to the approach of his predecessor.

The governor met with the newly found independence of the legislature, however, and had to settle for many compromises. One of his strongest recommendations, for an anti-I.W.W. measure, resulted in a comparatively weak criminal syndicalism act. His own activities were at times confusing to legislators. In his inaugural address, he made statements encouraging the general idea of school aid grants. Since this was then a pet interest of Rep. Theodore Christianson,

that individual pushed through a deficiency appropriation to make up for the failure of the do-nothing 1915 session to give all districts their due under the existing law. Burnquist then vetoed the bill, presumably as being extravagant.

One of the governor's major quarrels in the 1917 session was not with the legislature, but rather with the state auditor, J. A. O. Preus, who had designs on the chief executive's position. Interested in the patronage involved in the administration of the state's lands, minerals and timber, the governor asked the legislature to create a department of public domain with a commissioner appointed by the chief executive. The auditor, publicly, claimed that such matters were given to his office by the state constitution and could not be transferred to a gubernatorial appointee without a constitutional amendment.[10] No certain that a legalistic argument would be sufficient in the legislature, Preus resorted to active, but secret, bargaining. He found fertile ground in the Senate, which under under nonpartisanship, has almost always enjoyed using its political independence gently to sabotage a governor it considers to be too aggressive. The bill passed the House but was buried in the Senate, a clear victory for Preus and of considerable aid to him in achieving the governorship.

Elmer E. Adams, conservative Republican editor of the Fergus Falls Daily Journal, was disgusted with the use to which the legislature was put and with the prospect of his party deteriorating into

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10 Three points of view (though none of them favorable to Preus) are to be found in: Christianson, op. cit., p. 561; Willmar Tribune, especially April 25, 1917, p. 7; Fergus Falls Daily Journal for April, 1917.

into another one of its periodic internal wrangles:[11]

> The work of the present legislature has been greatly interfered with on account of the manuvering of politicians who have got on one side or the other of legislation with a view of helping themselves politically. Many of the most meritorious measures have been, and are being, defeated on account of the political chicanery of men with political ambitions.

"There has never been a time in history," the editorial concluded bitterly--though perhaps inaccurately, "when so many lightweights have accidently gotten into positions of public authority." (Presumably including the governor as well as the auditor.)

For many reasons, one of the most important of which was the activity of the Non-Partisan League, Burnquist was returned to office in 1918 with such a reduced vote that he did not actually possess a majority. The psychological effect of this, combined with the fact that the House of Representatives, which had been slow in molding a system of leadership, developed considerable independence under the guidance of Nolan, Christianson, Girling, Warner and Bendixon, considerably reduced gubernatorial influence in 1919.

In his message, the governor particularly stressed the need for a "red flag" law, at that time in vogue as part of the "Red" scare. Although such a law was passed, it was watered down a great deal and with less severe penalties than the governor had requested. He also asked for a strong state Motor Corps as a continuation of the war-time organization.[12] This proposal was fought stremuously

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11 Fergus Falls Daily Journal, editorial, April 11, 1917, p.2.

12 See, supra, pp. 73-77.

not only by the Non-Partisan League and the labor representatives, but by many other progressives as well. The principal anti-labor aspects of the bill were taken out by the House (though the bill as a whole passed under the governor's insistence, 85-43); the bill was then killed in the Senate despite the best efforts of the governor. A move to kill the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety was averted, however, when Senator George Sullivan protested that passage of the bill would be a direct slap in the face to Governor Burnquist.[13]

The lack of success of the Burnquist platform was noted happily in the League press. It was reported by one observer that:[14]

> Such well known progressives as Christianson, Charles Warner and Bendixon have practically told the Governor's henchmen that they had better go and jump into the lake.

Whether or not the House leaders resorted to so unimaginative a cliche is not known, but certainly the newspaper was nearly right in concluding:[15]

> The Governor's legislative program appears to be either lost strayed or stolen and nobody seems to care.

Governor Burnquist vetoed but one bill in this session (as in the preceding one). He disapproved the so-called Welch bill prohibiting the use of "butter substitutes" in state institutions. It was alleged that the principal reason for the veto was that the bill was in fulfillment of a League plank.[16] It had had numerous supporters

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13 Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1919, p. 13.

14 "Observations of a Cornfield Philosopher," Willmar Tribune January 29, 1919, p. 4. See also, Biennial Report, 1919, p. 4.

15 Willmar Tribune, January 29, 1919, p. 4.

16 Ibid., April 30, 1919, p. 4. Welch was League floor leader.

from other groups, of course. The move to sustain the veto was successful by one vote in the House. The strength of a gubernatorial veto was indicated in the fact that several "butter representatives" changed their vote from the original passage in order to support the governor.

The 1921 session found J. A. O. Preus as governor of the state. Meeting at a time of increasing distress among farmers, he made a few concessions in his inaugural message. He asked for a general cooperative marketing law and gave a boost to the good roads movement. He also included a weakened version of the tonnage tax long advocated by the League and a legislative problem since 1905. He asked for a revised primary law "to safeguard the integrity of political conventions". The governor encountered considerable opposition, as he had expected,[17] on the tonnage tax and the cooperative law. Reactionaries opposed the matters as compromising with the "Red" League. The League itself considered the proposals a "camouflage" for conservatism and not a satisfactory compromise.[18] The primary was preserved by the legislature essentially as it was, but a two percent tonnage tax on ore was at long last achieved. The latter was generally thought of as a desirable way for the state as a whole to share in the vast resources of the iron ranges (the tax was imposed in addition to the property tax, which was continued), but the governor was criticised for it not only by the Farmer-Laborites, but by the Democrats as well. Their state

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17 Red Wing Republican, January 5, 1921, p.1.

18 Minnesota Leader, January 15, 1921, p.2.

platform of 1922 condemned the governor for "forcing upon the legislature the passage of a tonnage tax law of doubtful validity."

Preus probably exercised more control over the legislature than did either of his predecessors in coping with a nonpartisan body. While he had strenuously opposed a Public Domain bill as auditor, he now urged one upon the legislature. When legislators proved unwilling, many of them were called into his office and "all possible pressure" was used to induce support and secure passage. "This coercion was very discomfortable [sic] and embarrassing to many members and was resented on various occasions."[19]

Since Preus was willing to assume leadership, experienced senators such as A. J. Rockne were not adverse to passing the buck to him on politically difficult questions. The problem of whether to finance the payment of outstanding soldiers' bonus claims by direct taxation or through a bond issue was put to the governor by the Senate finance committee. He recommended immediate sale of state bonds and his suggestion was accepted.[20]

On the other hand, the governor avoided a question that even Governor Hammond thought it proper for the chief executive to consider. There was a struggle within the good roads movement as to whether a state highway department should be administered by a single commissioner or by a commission. Since the good roads group represented a powerful lobby at the time, the governor was understandably

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19 Biennial Report, 1921, p. 3.

20 Red Wing Republican, January 21, 1921, p. 1; January 22, 1921, p. 1.

not anxious to alienate either faction, and although the question was of an administrative nature and involved his own patronage powers, he refused to become a partisan in the issue.[21]

The results of the 1921 session in general represented an overall triumph for the governor and he was quite pleased with the results, even though the session was severely criticised and produced strong political reactions in the election of 1922, aided by the continuing economic difficulties of the farmer. Generally satisfied, the governor publicly thanked "the Republican members" of the legislature for their support of the party as the law-makers adjourned. (This practice of offering thanks has been continued intermittently since that time.)

In the fall of 1922, Magnus Johnson left his farm long enough to tell other farmers that they could expect no solutions to their problems from the Republican party and to urge them to vote the Farmer-Labor ticket. He almost succeeded. The Farmer-Laborites also tried to attach the blame for the half-hearted efforts of the preceding legislature in the field of agricultural legislation to the Republican party, pointing out that Preus had been very influential in the session. Governor Preus, seriously concerned about his chances for re-election, promised to make amends. In his campaign and his inaugural address, he asked for a rural credits bureau to aid in the rehabilitation of bankrupted farmers, a tax on iron ore, a state income tax, a state flour-testing mill and other compromises with the Farmer-Labor program.

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21 Ibid., February 5, 1921, p. 1.

Since a large number of new members of the legislature had been elected on promises of agricultural reforms less radical than those proposed by the League, the governor secured the adoption of much of his program (not including, however, the income tax).

The acceptance by the legislature of the governor's compromise proposals was an important factor in the reduction of the Farmer-Laborites to a second-rate power for the next three elections and in the re-establishment of firm feet under the Republican elephant.

The next governor of the state was Theodore Christianson, a man whose basic political philosophy was expressed in his first inaugural address when he asked the legislature:[22]

> . . . . to establish no new state institutions; create no new state activities; authorize no new state bonds; accept no new matching Federal grants; make no salary increases; make no appropriations for buildings unless urgent; and try to find some state activities that might be discontinued.

The Minnesota budget had gone steadily upward since the adoption of the nonpartisan legislature and Christianson was determined to reverse the trend. In making his request, he was asking the legislature to carry out the Republican state platform[23] and he was fairly confident, since many legislators had spoken of economy in their campaigns. His opening speech received the formal plaudits not only of the House majority leader, W. I. Norton, but also of Senator James A. Carley, Democrat, and the Farmer-Labor leader, Rep. Frank T. Starkey.[24]

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22 Christianson, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 451-452.

23 St. Paul Pioneer Press, January 8, 1925, p. 1.

24 Ibid., January 8, 1925, p. 2.

When the legislature proceeded somewhat in its customary fashion, after proclaiming itself in favor of economy, the governor forcefully reminded the members that his message had been in earnest. He brought out the veto as a weapon and used it more persistently than any governor before or since. He began by item vetoing a $1,359,436 supplemental school aid appropriation.[25] This was followed by vetoes of appropriations for new gymnasium at St. Cloud and Moorehead state teachers colleges, and bills to raise salaries of various state and local officials. In all, the governor reduced the state budget by $1, 836,160 through the use of a record-breaking total of nine regular and twelve pocket vetoes. Recognizing the propensity of individually responsible legislators to seek tangible evidence for deserved re-election, the governor decided that he must assume responsibility for stopping the trend. Departing from the usual practice of protecting fellow politicians' activities, his veto messages sternly chastised the legislators for approving, in so many words, "pork barrel legislation."[26] In the

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25 As a member of the interim committee to study state aid to education appointed by the 1921 legislature, Christianson had favored expansion of the principle and he had let it be believed during the 1924 campaign that such was still his position. See, Biennial Report, 1925, pp. 15-16. For the governor's view, see Christianson, op. cit., pp. 451-453.

26 Examples of the "pork" that had been dispensed in increasing amounts since the advent of the nonpartisan system, were the following 1925 items: a new road in Jay Cooke state park, a grandstand in Fort Ridgely state park, "improvements" at Traverse Des Sioux, Camp Release and Toqua state parks, bonus claims of eighty-five individuals and an increase in pay for the Marshall county probate judge. All were vetoed. See session summary, St. Paul Pioneer-Press, April 26, 1925, p. 1.

closing hours deadlock, the governor emerged victorious as the chief policy maker for the state.[27]

Christianson, in seeking further economies, asked for a reorganization of state fiscal administration. His plan was based upon the report of an interim committee on reorganization of state government of which he had been a member. It established a commission of administration and finance (which the newspapers dubbed "the Big Three"): a comptroller as chairman, a director of purchases and a budget director. The measure was speeded through the House, which was generally amenable to the desires of the governor (except for financial matters) under the leadership of his satrap, W. I. Norton. The bill did not progress as smoothly in the always independent Senate with its several powerful and independent men. A. J. Rockne denounced the proposal as a method of bringing "czarism" to Minnesota, claiming that it could lead to many abuses if the

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27 Last minute deadlocks between houses or with the chief executive sometimes leave little for rank and file members to do pending a settlement by the leaders. During these periods, a premature celebration of the session's end is sometimes held. At the 1925 session, this custom developed to exaggeration, resulting in an indignant editorial in the Pioneer-Press. In part, it read as follows:

> . . . . Some members were in such a state of inebriety that conduct of business became practically impossible for several hours. . . . How many such there were, and what were the exact degrees of intoxication, we do not presume to say. Let it be enough that one member was carried out in a state of collapse and fears were felt for his recovery, and that the number of the intoxicated was sufficient to provide a shameful spectacle for the people of this state.

While adjournment might levity is a legislative tradition, the overall dignity of the law-making process has increased steadily since the turn of the century and since this unhappy event. (The quotation is from the St. Paul Pioneer-Press, editorial, April 23, 1925, p. 6.)

governor wished so to use it. The governor was, however, able to round up enough votes to secure passage of the measure.

While Christianson was unquestionably number one lawmaker for the state and while he could usually count on a majority in both houses, he did not succeed in all he undertook, even where the pork barrel was not concerned. His suggestion, for example, that the legislature add its contribution to the effort to save the state from bankruptcy by submitting to the people a constitutional amendment to reduce the size of the Senate and House to fifty and one hundred, respectively, was greeted with understandable coolness.

Governor Christianson's policies did not change in the next session of the legislature. He continued to urge economy and to refuse to authorize increased appropriations. While he remained powerful in both houses, the session was marked by increasing clashes between the governor (and his supporters) and Senator Rockne, who resented the mounting influence of the executive in what had for years been his own domain.

A striking commentary (exaggerated so far as the Senate was concerned) on the power of the governor as policy maker under a nonpartisan arrangement was contained in the 1927 report to the railroad brotherhoods. The legislature was described as:[28]

> . . . . a body without purpose or direction, subject to to administrative guidance in matters where the Governor had political interest. The Governor with his veto power had matters pretty much his own way in all legislation. The Administration forces in both House and Senate were in

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[28] Biennial Report, 1927, p. 5. Organized labor was irked, of course, at the conservatism of the Christianson administration and the legislature. (Italics added.)

control at all times and not one piece of legislation became law without the Governor's approval. So all told the Legislature was a Christianson Legislature, carrying out his program, his wishes and his desires.

The governor kept Senator Rockne in line by once again using the veto freely. No less than eighteen Rockne-approved items were rejected from appropriations bills. The amount involved exceeded $1,500,000, including a fifty percent increase in legislative salaries and increased salaries for district judges. Christianson also vetoed a bill that would "put the state in business" by requiring state forests to support themselves through the sale of timber.

No basic changes in policy took place in the 1929 session as the general philosophy of prosperity continued to rule the day. There was an increasing degree of difference between the Norton-led House supporting the governor and the independent, Rockne-led Senate. The governor experienced more difficulty in securing the adoption of his measures than he had in the two previous session, the Senate killing several bills. The closing days of the session saw a deadlock between Rockne and Christianson over school aid and the University maintenance appropriations; the governor item vetoed both of them. Rockne favored an attempt to pass the measures over the item veto, but there was doubt as to the constitutionality of such a procedure. The issue was settled by both sides making consessions. "The University got what the governor said it ought to have, not what it asked for,"[29] and Christianson in turn gave ground somewhat on the matter of school aid. While the victory was qualified slightly, it

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[29] Christianson, op. Cit., p. 481.

was unquestionably another triumph for the chief executive.

Floyd B. Olson became governor under circumstances completely different from those of his predecessor. The rapid rise of the Farmer-Labor party was accompanied everwhere with the capturing of offices--except for the legislature which was overwhelmingly conservative in both houses. Olson's message to the legislature listed no less than thirty-five proposals, most of them involving the expenditure of money. It was greeted with reserve but not hostility by legislators, who fully realized the desperate economic situation.

The first of a series of differences that were bound to appear with a legislature so different politically from the governor began when Olson made the unprecedented request that the Senate return to him for inspection a list of 122 interim appointments made by retiring Governor Christianson.[30] After several days of negotiations the Senate refused, but it agreed to hold hearings on the appointments most obnoxious to the governor. Farmer-Laborites particularly objected to N. J. Holmberg, a Republican unalterably opposed to the Olson administration, as commissioner of agriculture, and F. A. Duxbury, veteran Republican, as state industrial commissioner. The latter was violently opposed to the beliefs of organized labor and had

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30 An intensive study of executive-legislative relationships during the Olson administration is to be found in an unpublished M. A. thesis: Marvel D. Braley, The Influence of a Governor Upon Legislation in Minnesota (1940), 181 pp.

On the appointments compromise, see Braley, op. cit., p. 24; the Farmer-Labor view is found in the articles by Hjalmar Petersen and Henry J. Teigan in the Askov American; see also Biennial Report, 1931, p. 20.

introduced a bill into the 1917 Senate imposing heavy penalties for picketing, boycotting or circulating printed matter calculated to make a worker dissatisfied with his job. There was no indicatio that his views had changed. With Senator Gerald T. Mullin of Minneapolis (a Conservative elected from a "labor district") leadi the fight against confirmation, Duxbury was rejected 40-25. Holmberg was disapproved, 49-19. While the governor had not exactly wo a great victory, he had saved face and the compromise left no bitte ness.

Another dispute with the Senate arose over the site for the state office building. Olson wanted to go ahead with the original architectural plans while the Senate, for various reasons, wanted to change the location. This dispute was won principally by the chief executive.

Since Republicans had long been in office, Olson proceeded in the usual search for administrative irregularities hoping to cast discredit upon his opponents. He launched executive investigations into the state fur farm and the rural credits bureau, finding evidences of some corruption in each. (For his part in the maladministration of the credits bureau, H. H. Flowers, speaker of the 1915 House, was indicted by the Ramsey county grand jury.) As a protective measure, the legislature countered with its own investigation of the bureau, recommending changes and a more conservative loan policy.

Although Olson asked a great deal from a legislature not of his political faith, he was fairly successful in securing the adoption of much of his platform. Of his thirty-five proposals,

nine became law while the purposes of four others were achieved without legislative action.[81] Among major states, this was a record second only to that of Governor James Rolph in California.

When an impasse was reached on the governor's reforestation program, he set another precedent by appearing personally before the public domain committee (rather than calling members informally to his office, the time-honored practice). This technique, as Olson well knew, focused attention of the state upon the otherwise undramatic hearings of a legislative committee. He demanded a bill that would move farmers out of the sub-marginal cut-over areas and asked that they be relocated on lands owned by the rural credits bureau. The bill was passed in the general form he had requested.

Olson's technique generally was to secure the sponsorship of one of his measures by a member in each house--often a Conservative--and work with that member. He employed the usual methods of personal conferences with members and used his private entourage for liaison work. The lieutenant-governor did not perform an important role in liaison between the governor and the Senate.

Out of 423 measures passed by the 1933 session, Olson vetoed only three. He disapproved the Minneapolis-St. Paul Sanitary District bill on the ground that it was so drawn that citizens of the two large cities would pay for most of the sewage costs of

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81 Harvey Walker, "The Results of Governor's Messages in 1931," American Political Science Review, Vol. XXV (February, 1932), p. 77. Of twenty-four items in California, twelve passed and six were partially approved. Pennsylvania's legislature gave approval to but three of seventeen recommendations of Gov. Gifford Pinchot. Connecticut's Republican legislature approved only eight of Democratic Governor Wilbur L. Cross' requests.

the South St. Paul meat packing plants. Minneapolis newspapers supported him in this.

The chief executive also vetoed the infamous congressional redistricting bill of 1931. The House had drawn up a measure designed as a compromise acceptable to the governor, but the Senate version was a shameless gerrymander for the Republican party. It cut Minneapolis into four parts, one extending all the way to the South Dakota border. The conference committee, after consulting with the governor and then ignoring his recommendations, adopted basically the Senate measure. Olson vetoed the bill with the approval of the Minneapolis newspapers (but not those of St. Paul). Senator Rockne claimed the veto of no effect since "redistricting was a legislative function", but the United States Supreme Court upheld Olson and Minnesota elected its congressmen at large in 1932.

The third disallowance was a pocket veto of the "truck bill" which had been passed at the instigation of the railroad and railroad brotherhoods lobbyists. It would have required truck lines paralleling railroads to charge the same freight rates as the railroads and added other restrictive requirements to the trucking industry. The bill did not have the opposition that might have been expected from the powerful farming interests, and was passed. Olson's veto was favored by organized labor, except for the brotherhoods, and was not opposed by agricultural interests.[32]

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[32] Farmer-Labor Leader, April 30, 1931, p. 4. See also Biennial Report, 1931.

The session, in general, was a tribute to the diplomatic powers of the governor. Recognizing the unrest of the country and the possible danger to their own positions if they remained wholly adamant, Conservative legislators generally stood ready to compromise and even to champion reforms. After the session was finished, considerable pressure was placed upon the governor to call an extra session to consider further the many items in his inaugural address that had been ignored. Evidently feeling that calling a "spite" session might result in more political harm than good, he refused to do so.[33]

The 1933 session met under even more trying conditions than had the meeting of 1931. The business cycle had hit rock bottom and seemed wont to stay there. Olson had been returned by carrying seventy-four counties and, by careful planning, the Liberals had succeeded in organizing the House, although the Senate carried over. On November 27, the governor established another precedent of the nonpartisan legislature by appearing personally before the Liberal (majority) caucus. He disclaimed any interference with the legislative branch, but claimed that the people had "been trying for years to get control of the legislative branch of their government" and had failed.[34]

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[33] John S. McGrath and James J. Delmont, Floyd B. Olson, Minnesota's Greatest Liberal Governor (1937), p. 59.

[34] Ibid., p. 66. The precedent has been followed by chief executives since, although they have had less reason to assure members that the group was not a party caucus. In 1948, Governor Youngdahl addressed the Conservatives as "fellow Republicans" even though a few members were nominally old-line Democrats. Minneapolis Tribune, November 13, 1948, p. 1.

"I am not appealing to you on behalf of Governor Olson, but come to you with a clear mandate from the people. . . . This is not a Farmer-Labor caucus but a progressive caucus.

"I want to ask you men here today who feel you are members of other parties to know that proper recognition will be given you as progressives. There should be no preference in appointments because of parties."

The conservative dailies pretended to be horrified, editorializing that the final pretext of nonpartisanship had been killed in the legislature,[35] but Olson had accomplished his task of putting the loosely knit caucus at ease. He knew that he did not have a working majority in either House, yet he was planning to ask for more legislation to combat the depression than any governor had ever requested before and it was necessary to placate all potential friends.

The session started off harmoniously enough when the Senate promptly ratified unanimously ninety-seven interim appointments by the governor.[36] Olson held daily morning conferences with House and Senate leaders in an effort to keep things going smoothly, but after January slipped by with no major legislation adopted and with the Liberal leaders in the upper house engaged in an intramural feud, he sent an ultimatum to the Senate (on January 27), "demanding that it get down to business at once and stop wasting

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35 St. Paul Pioneer-Press, January 4, 1933, p. 6; Minneapolis Journal, January 5, 1933, p. 16.

36 St. Paul Dispatch, January 6, 1933, p. 1.

time at the expense of the taxpayers, and telling the Liberal members thereof to cease their petty bickering immediately."[37]

Minnesota has probably never had a public official so clever in the focusing of public opinion upon a desired spot as was Floyd B. Olson. During the 1933 session, he made weekly radio broadcasts, spoke forfour different gathering in front of the capitol while the legislature was in session, appeared before the House and Senate committees, perfecting the technique initiated two years before, and even appeared before a committee of the whole meeting in the House. (In 1935, he expanded his arsenal of weapons to include a daily column in the St. Paul Pioneer-Press.) The pressure brought to bear upon the legislature, and especially the conservative Senate, by these activities was tremendous.

One of the important items in the gubernatorial message to the legislature concerned a series of public relief measures. Here he encountered the opposition of the ruler of finances in the upper house, the aging Anton J. Rockne. The Zumbrota veteran had fought Governor Christianson because he wanted to spend too little; now he fought Governor Olson for wanting to spend too much. House opposition was organized by Albert Pfaender (Democrat) and R. W. Hitchcock (Republican). After two months of deadlock, Olson resumed his technique of the previous session and appeared personally before a public meeting of the Senate finance

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37 McGrath and Delmont, op. cit., p. 81.

committee. In a stormy session during which the governor delivered an extemporaneous speech amidst table thumping and sharp exchanges with Rockne, he demanded the passage of his three relief bills, saying that delay threatened discontinuance of federal grants-in-aid.

On March 23, a mob estimated at up to 20,000 people marched on the capitol demanding relief legislation. At the head of the parade marched the governor of the state of Minnesota. Olson spoke to the crowd charging the Senate with unnecessary delay and in indulging in an orgy of investigations "while the people were starving." (The investigations were launched after Olson had been particularly ruthless in the highway department in making room for Farmer-Laborites.)

"I'm glad you came," said the governor. "If you had come sooner, the dignified body known as the Senate might have acted more quickly for the public welfare."[38]

The Senate capitulated. Olson got almost all of his relief requests--$1,500,000.[39]

The chief executive scored another victory with a minimum of compromise on his tax program. In campaign and inaugural speeches, he had asked for a net income tax and a chain store tax. He had asked for the income tax in the previous legislature, but that

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38 McGrath and Delmont, op. cit., p. 85.

39 In addition to the above incident, the governor also addressed a group asking for tax reduction on January 20, several thousand asking for more relief money on April 12, and several hundred veterans asking for bonus money on the following day.

conservative body had passed the issue on to the people in the form of a constitutional amendment. The amendment received a majority of those voting on it, but not of those participating in the election and hence failed. In 1933, Hjalmar Petersen, chairing the House tax committee, led the fight for a statutory income tax using the general taxation amendment already in the constitution. The conservative Senate and Rockne again offered opposition. Rockne held that property tax payers should be relieved by the amount of their income tax, or vice versa. The governor dubbed this a "rich man's" proposal and would not accept it. He suggested as a compromise that the new tax be used in part as a replacement tax on homesteads. This solution, establishing homestead exemptions in Minnesota, was the one eventually adopted. Olson also secured a chain store tax.

On another matter the governor, without even consulting lawmakers, virtually forced the letislature to pass an act whether they wanted to do so or not. On February 24, he issued an emergency proclamation halting all mortgage foreclosures until May 1, "pending legislative action." Even though this action was of doubtful validity, there was nothing the legislature could do. Unanimously it authorized sheriffs to postpone foreclosure sales. The action of the governor, which probably averted mob actions and bloodshed, was generally approved by the state's press, large and small.[40]

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[40] See newspaper comments quoted, Farmer-Labor Leader, February 28, 1933, p. 1.

On one item, the governor came into conflict before the legislature with the Republican secretary of state, Mike Holm. Holm recommended that motor vehicle taxes be cut in half. Olson, desperate for money, objected. He suggested that the tax be left high, but that the state take over the maintenance of additional county road mileage. Eventually another compromise was devised, cutting the tax fifty percent only in the lowest bracket and from twenty to forty percent in the higher brackets.

Olson procured further legislation he desired when he drove through a measure barring bank holidays in Minnesota; a bill prohibiting the state courts from taking jurisdiction to issue restraining orders or injunctions in cases growing out of labor disputes (except after a rather complex procedure); and an appropriation to advertise the tourist advantages of the state. On the last, however, he received less than one-half of what he asked.

In the entire session, the chief executive went down to total defeat on only two occasions. He did not get increased controls of public utilities he asked for and his compulsory unemployment insurance bill was lost. Concerning the latter, the employers' associations and the conservative press presented the usual arguments that if Minnesota were unique in having the insurance, industry would leave the state. The governor had presented a plan devised by Professors Alvin H. Hansen and M. G. Murray of the state university (with some of his own altherations changing it from a bi-lateral to a uni-lateral contributory system). In defending the plan, Olson personally appeared before the House[41]

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41 McGrath and Delmont, op. cit., p. 83.

to make use of his famed oratorical powers, but the arguments presented by employers' associations made a great impression and the Liberal caucus could not be held together. The plan was defeated 68-54.

Of all of the bills sent to him in 1933, Olson vetoed but five, and of them, only one was important: he killed a measure to reduce salaries of county employees (except in the three largest counties), arguing that it was poor public policy. (It was not a purely political move; most county offices were in the hands of conservatives.)[42]

In 1933 session once again demonstrated the power of the governor as policy leader before a nonpartisan legislature. The fact that the chief executive was more representative of public thinking than the legislature was important, of course, but the techniques available to the chief executive so exceed those of the legislature or any of its members that he would be highly influential under any circumstances other than outright public hostility.

On December 5, 1933, Governor Olson called the legislature back into session to consider the effects of repeal of national prohibition and to vote additional relief funds. The governor appeared before a special relief committee of the House to outline the state's needs and the committee reported out the

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[42] The other vetoes included one to allow correction of a technical error in a bank reorganization act, another concerning removal of rough fish by county commissioners, another relating to the interest of public officials in the letting of public contracts, and one relating to the expenses of the Metropolitan Drainage Commission, technical in nature.

administration bill without any major changes. In the Senate, however, A. J. Rockne questioned Olson's figures showing a need for five million dollars. He proposed one-half a million dollars and that in the form of loans to the counties, then by the counties to the individuals, declaring "there is no need for a wide-open relief allowance in this state."[43]

Olson appeared once again before the Senate finance committee to spar with Rockne. Later he sent a special message to the Senate directly attacking Rockne's alternate bill, saying that it represented "a smug, selfish, provincial viewpoint, which refuses to regard the state as a social unit. . . ."[44]

When the House passed the full amount requested by the governor on December 24, Rockne took to the radio to defend himself and to inquire as to just where Olson would spend five million dollars. Olson replied via the airwaves, asking the people to demand action of their senators. The Senate then threatened to pass a bill granting one-half of the amount requested and go home, leaving the House to take it or nothing. Olson threatened to call another extra session "before anyone left town".

The next day, Olson again demonstrated his diplomatic abilities, saying publicly that he knew the legislature had been working hard, perhaps too hard to pass good legislation, and that

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43 Braley, op. cit., p. 122.

44 Ibid., p. 123.

he thought they needed a rest over the New Year's holiday. After the recess the Senate voted the full five million dollars. Rockne had made the mistake of trying to defeat a master speaker at his own game. Olson's "radio debates with Senator Rockne probably won more votes for his relief legislation than any other one means. Politically, this exerted a powerful influence on legislators."[45]

The other principal question before the extra session involved beer and liquor taxes. The two houses could not get together on this matter and the conference committee had to call on the governor for help. He stood out for a high tax to help pay the costs of the $5,000,000 relief appropriation. In the closing hours of the session, he forced administration senators to amend their own beer tax because he said it was too low. When he heard that brewery lobbyists were attempting to influence the conference committee for a low tax, he ordered a Twin City brewery official "thrown out of the capitol." The gentleman discreetly left under his own power while he was being searched for and the committee settled for taxes high enough to be acceptable to Olson.

The session ended with a victory for Olson on his two major reasons for calling the meeting, but the two items consumed so much time that he could not secure consideration for other matters (a tax receivership bill, referendum on state liquor dispensary system, unemployment insurance).

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45 Ibid., pp. 163-164.

When the 1935 session met, the legislature was once more strongly conservative and Olson had been re-elected only by the margin given him in the three large cities. On November 17, 1934 the governor opened the meeting of the Liberal caucus, now the minority group, with a speech. Talking as "a private citizen" and saying that he did not want to interfere with the legislative process, the governor was once more careful to leave the door open for other than Farmer-Laborites. "This is not a party caucus," he stated, before moving on to deliver a lively pep talk generously embellished with Farmer-Labor cliches.[46] Olson had gone on the air the preceding night to ask for public support for the Liberal caucus, although he had no hope of organizing the House and offered Hjalmar Petersen no help in his efforts to control the Senate.[47]

As the session opened, the chief executive warned the legislature that "It'll be war, if you want war!" and he threatened "unsparing use" of the veto, saying he would stand firm for the enactment of the Farmer-Labor program. Actually, however, his message to the legislature was conciliatory in tone and brought responses from Conservatives to the effect that they stood ready to meet the governor on "truly progressive" legislation, but would have nothing to do with "radicalism".[48]

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46 See McGrath and Delmont, op. cit., p. 99.

47 See Supra, pp. 142-144.

48 Minnesota Leader, January 5, 1935, p. 1; McGrath and Delmont, op. cit., p. 114.

Much of the session was devoted to legislative investigations. The Senate began with a committee under the direction of conservative Democrat James A. Carley which included only one Farmer-Labor member. A special House committee to investigate expenditure of the five million dollars in relief appropriations voted by the extra session was combined with that of the Senate. On February 28, Olson demanded that he be called as a witness before the committee since he had served as federal relief administrator for the state. Probably the memory of previous gubernatorial appearances before legislative committees and their results prompted the group to refuse this offer. The committee could find no indictable probabilities of corruption, though they uncovered a good deal of inefficiency and the not particularly secret evidences of vast patronage appointments. When the committee found its task too staggering to be accomplished in one session, it recommended an interim group to investigate matters remaining on the agenda. The governor thereupon suggested that the scope of activities be extended to an examination of, and public report on, rumors of attempted bribes of legislators. The Senate tabled the request for an interim commission.

An important issue once again in 1935 was the size of the budget for public relief. In March, the United States for a second time threatened to withdraw relief funds if the state did not vote its share. Olson demanded that the legislature pass his bill calling for $10,000,000 for the next biennium. The debate this time was much less dramatic and the governor received the full amount requested.

A bitter struggle, and one in which the chief executive could hardly claim to have won even a draw, was fought over the matter of tax reform.[49] The Omnibus Tax Bill of 1935 made a few concessions to the governor, but the heart of it was the Conservative-sponsored retail sales tax, which the governor was committed against. The bill was pushed through both houses, but in slightly different form. The all-Conservative conference committee met secretly with the governor in an attempt to secure some kind of a tax measure. Olson said he would sign the bill only if clothing, fuel and food were exempted from the sales tax and if the corporate excess and ore taxes were increased.[50] After a stormy session at which nothing was accomplished, the final version of the bill was passed by both houses on April 23 and was presented to the governor on the last day of the session. Olson vetoed the measure and no attempt was made to repass it. The chief executive had been defeated, although he had won, too, in a negative fashion: his veto probably has helped to keep Minnesota free of the regressive sales tax to the present time (1950).

While the Senate continued to approve routine appointments by the governor, it made two refusals that attracted statewide attention. Olson had made interim appointments of Miss Florence Rood of St. Paul, who had been active in the organization of the St. Paul Federation of Teachers, and Mrs. Marion Le Sueur of Minneapolis, to the state board of education. Senate leaders

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49 See, supra, 137-142.

50 McGrath and Delmont, op. cit., pp. 117-118.

asserted that they had injected "politics" into education and opposed confirmation. The charges were not substantiated at the hearing, but the Senate voted down Miss Rood, 35-29 and Mrs. Le Sueur, 43-22. The governor was decisively defeated.

With the pressure of the depression relieved slightly and with the governor re-elected by a small margin, Olson understandably exerted less influence over the 1935 legislature and most of the Farmer-Labor platform was defeated. The governor did secure the enactment of his full relief bill, a bill for relief in drought striken areas, a new old age pension law and a reenactment of the mortgage moratorium act.

The Elmer Benson administration and the legislative session of 1937 were rather chaotic. Benson, allied with the left-wing of the Farmer-Labor party, got off to a poor start with a belligerent inaugural address that included aspersions cast upon the members of the supreme court who were sitting in his audience. The governor spent much of the session in conflict with many of the Liberals who were in a majority in the House and with the Conservatives of both houses. Undiplomatic, authoritarian, belligerent and quick to anger, Benson lacked Olson's brilliant qualities of leadership that had enabled the latter to evaluate a situation accurately and accept the best possible settlement of differences, to placate various sections of a heterogeneous party and to avoid making personal enemies even when political animosity could not be avoided. Benson labored under further handicaps: he owed his rapid rise from obscurity to the United States Senate and the governship to a small, but well-

organized group within his party and was never accepted by the party as a whole as its leader;[51] and the tense economic situation that had cowed Conservatives before the demands of Olson-inspired masses had eased sufficiently to give the opposition courage to oppose administration measures.

Early in the session, Benson violently protested against an anti-loan shark bill that came before the House public welfare committee. The bill provided for a maximum interest rate of eight percent on short-term, poor risk loans. This was generally thought to be a reasonable safeguard until the governor chose to make an issue of it. Using one of Governor Olson's most successful techniques, he appeared personally before the committee and in an antagonistic speech called the measure "unchristian and immoral".[52] The impression he made fell somewhat short of that of his predecessor.

The governor introduced a tax bill calling for increases in income, money and credits, iron ore, gift and inheritance taxes. A deadlock on this matter developed between the House and Senate which could not be resolved.

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51 The party was split between the followers of Benson and those of Hjalmar Petersen, each claiming to be the chosen successor of Olson. Benson's assertions that he was explicitly the selection of the party's dying leader have not been proved. Certainly Olson, as a well man, appeared to favor Petersen, but this may have been politically expedient as appeasement to the agricultural branches of the party.

52 The conservative view of the 1937 session is to be found in the St. Paul Pioneer-Press, reported chiefly by Joseph H. Ball. The Benson voice was the Farmer-Labor Leader, edited by Abe Harris.

By mid-march, the governor was so unpopular that he was having difficulty getting legislators to introduce administration measures. His popularity was not increased when he threatened to veto any bill in the tax field "except my bill". On the last day of March, Benson used Olson's technique again when he used the radio to try to rally public sentiment to his support. Two days later, Senator T. L. McLeod, the Liberal minority leader in the upper chamber, answered the address and publicly begged the governor for cooperation.

On Sunday, April 4, a "People's lobby" mass meeting was held in the St. Paul auditorium. Benson spoke at one of the sessions, urging that direct pressure be applied against his legislative foes and suggesting that it might be all right to "be a little rough once in awhile". The Lobby presented a petition to the legislature at an orderly session the next morning. In the afternoon, the group held another session in the House chambers in which Benson and others denounced the legislature. The meeting later got out of hand, one group of Lobbyists kept some senators from attending a relief committee meeting, another group spent the night in the Senate chamber. The next morning, Benson talked to the group and dismissed them, saying that they had done a good job. The Senate Conservative caucus held an extradordinary session to consider the matter, but voted down a resolution of impeachment.

So little was accomplished during the regular session that the governor called an extra session immediately after adjournment, giving the legislators until May 24 to straighten out their own personal affairs. Over the deadlock on the tax bill, Benson blamed

the Senate, his representatives in the House blamed the Senate conference committee managers ("corporation lawyers") and the Senate blamed Benson as the dictator of House strategy.

Benson opened the extra session with a somewhat conciliatory message but executive-legislative relations continued to worsen. Finally, amidst the heat of a St. Paul summer, a compromise was worked out that displeased the governor and that scarcely could be said to have been settled on terms favorable to him. The homestead exemption was retained, a reduction was made in the state property tax, and a modest increase was made in the state income tax. Benson let the bill become law without his signature, after which he suggested that the Senate finance committee was "asinine, immoral and dishonest."[53]

The Benson administration served to indicate that while the governor is the most probable and most likely leader in policy formulation, he cannot exploit the potentialities of his office without an adequate personality and temperament. His position is, of course, further weakened if he is inexpert at rallying public opinion. (In Benson's case, he probably could not have focused public attention had he been able, for the thinking of most of the state's citizenry was no longer along the lines of the Farmer-Labor party. They had voted for Benson as a symbol of the popular Floyd B. Olson, not for his policies primarily.) As is common under the check and balance system, with the two

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53 St. Paul Pioneer-Press, July 4, 1937, p. 1; July 30, 1937, p. 6.

houses of the legislature under rival leadership and with executive-legislative disagreement, little could be accomplished in law-making. Since the legislature itself was divided three ways ("left-" and "right-" wing Liberals and Conservatives), none of its members could assume the leadership role that remained empty throughout the session.

The 1938 election brought a change once more to the legislature. General public disgust with the Benson administration, the long run trend back toward the G. O. P. and a "revitalization" of the Republican party under Harold Stassen and the Young Republicans, brought in a new chief executive who was determined to continue the reforms in state government that Olson had begun. Potential executive-legislative conflict became evident when it was found that the legislature was made up for the most part of Republicans of the pre-1929 variety. The leadership in both houses was predominantly of this type, but especially in the Senate where the same small oligarchy of the previous decade still prevailed.

Stassen's refusal to return to the practice of deifying budget reduction and his rather positivistic view of government brought him into conflict many times with legislative leaders. Perhaps gradually improving economic circumstances combined with the fact that the Conservatives held a propondenant majority in both houses helped make possible the luxury of internal dissension, but certainly much of it must be attributed to basic differences of viewpoint. Another factor was founded in Stassen's great personal ambition. Many legislators who regularly come to St. Paul

in the spirit of service to their communities and with no ambitions ever to become more politically active, bitterly resented what they regarded as the governor's use of the legislature for purposes of securing personal publicity and his sometimes quite imperious attitude toward the law-makers. (This phenomenon, not unexpected when leadership comes from outside the ranks of the legislators themselves, was also very noticeable, with slightly varying nuances, during the administrations of Christianson and Olson. It has been very much present during the two sessions with Youngdahl as chief executive.)

Actually, with fresh memories of Benson's disastrous attempts to bully the legislature, the new governor took a cautious attitude toward the law-makers. He began by holding dinners for leaders of both houses at which he outlined his program. The governor did not, however, send along completely prepared administration bills. As weeks went by, he was criticised in the press for not offering enough legislative leadership. Some thought that he was not sure of what he wanted and was waiting for the legislature to take its course.[54]

Roy Dunn, House majority leader and a Stassen supporter during his first term as governor, said in a radio talk on March 23 that the Farmer-Laborites were stalling legislative developments in order to gather campaign materials. A more probable explanation (since both houses were overwhelmingly in Conservative hands)

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54 For a summary of the session, see Ivan J. Hinderacker, Harold Stassen and Developments in the Republican Party in Minnesota (1949), Chapter XVI.

was offered by the governor in a radio address in which he explained his philosophy of executive-legislative relations. He said that some governors introduce specific administration bills, then apply pressure to get them through, others sit back and ignore the legislature until it is too late, or they must use the veto. He said that he preferred to make requests in the inauguration speech, then coordinate his ideas with those of the legislature in "frank conferences" with leaders and others.[55]

Gradually the bills Stassen had suggested in his inaugural were introduced. One of his most important proposals was for a state-wide civil service merit system. This had been a campaign promise and a direct result of the abuses of the patronage system during the preceding administration. The bill encountered little difficulty in the house, but became stalled in a Senate sub-committee of the civil service committee. It is reported that the governor was able to get the bill reported out only by promising two patronage appointments to one of the sub-committee members.[56] For conferences, the Senate appointed managers opposed to the bill. The Senate preferred an arrangement that would force Stassen to do an old-fashioned political housecleaning, which was favored by many regular Republicans but which the governor wanted to avoid as not being in the spirit of the reform measure. Stassen eventually secured a civil service law, but the Senate view largely pre-

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55 St. Paul Pioneer Press, March 16, 1939, p. 1; cited in Hinderacker, op. cit., p. 396.

56 According to a "reliable source" cited in Hinderacker, op. cit., p. 414.

ailed, and he was forced into a position requiring a houseclean-
ing, with the result that most of the state employees blanketed
into the civil service system were Republicans rather than Farmer-
Laborites.

Another important Stassen measure was the administrative re-
organization bill. The governor favored an integrated adminis-
tration with a predominance of single-headed agencies. His bill
was guided through the House by Roy E. Dunn and George MacKinnon.
These two held a series of dinner meetings with groups of eight
to ten majority members at a time in order to explain the theory
and intent of the reorganization measure, and especially the ex-
tensive use of the single commissioner at the head of an agency.
A compromise bill, close to the governor's views, passed the House.

The bill faced a stormier route in the Senate, however. The
Old Guard, which had said that Governor Christianson's administrative
reforms would bring "Czarism" to Minnesota, modernized their argu-
ments to the extent of saying that Governor Stassen's would pro-
duce "Hitlerized government" in the state. The elderly veteran,
C. C. Rockne, argued that the board and commission idea should
be reemphasized and held that public welfare should be placed
under a three man board elected by the legislature and responsible
to it. The views of the ruling group did not prevail, however,
the Senate made only minor amendments (which were accepted by the
House) and passed the bill, 53-10. On this matter, the governor,
with the public support of many of the state's newspapers, scored
almost complete victory.

Strong pressure was applied by Stassen in support of an important law in the field of worker security. The state unemployment compensation law applied to all employers hiring one or more persons. Conservatives, and particularly rural legislators whose constituencies included small firms and businesses, were anxious to amend the law to exempt all employers with fewer than eight employees. Stassen said that he "was not trying to dictate" but that he could not sign such a measure. Senator H. H. Sullivan suggested that the legislature "hadn't paid any attention to Benson" and thought Stassen should get the same treatment.[57] The Senate refused to compromise and fears were expressed that a gubernatorial veto might bring opposition to the rest of the governor's program by rural members, most of whom did not like his liberal proposals anyway. In the House, Speaker Hall led the fight to kill the Senate coverage reduction proposal and it was defeated narrowly. Hall then presented a compromise providing an experience rating system with very low rates for small employers who did not cause unemployment. The governor succeeded in prevailing upon the Senate to accept this version and again the victory was chiefly that of the governor.

Most of Stassen's appointments were approved as a matter of routine, however, the nomination of Ralph Jerome as budget and personnel officer (in administrative theory, a position very close to the governor and often thought of as a "personal" appointment) was held up in the Senate. Ostensibly, the reason for the

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57 Ibid., pp. 406-407.

civil service committee's action was to investigate the charge that Jerome had been discharged by the preceding administration for payroll padding. The actual reason appears to have been as a test of strength by the Old Guard to see if the governor could be defeated. The test results were favorable to Stassen, for his nominatee was approved 54-3, although some of the Old Guard, including Rockne, abstained.[58]

Stassen was successful in securing an old age lien law, an increase in the iron ore levy from eight to nine percent (he had asked for ten percent), an extension of the mortgage moratorium act and a revision of the corporation income tax. The governor met with defeat at times, however, hHe proposed a five percent assessment on dedicated highway and game and fish funds for "administrative costs". The measure met strong interest group opposition and was killed. Stassen also suggested the repeal of the so-called Dunn act providing a one-mill state levy on property for road and bridge use. If that were done, the governor was willing to allow an extension of the four cent per gallon gasoline tax. Rural legislators wanted both continued and they were strongly supported by county officers, who packed the committee hearings. Senator James Carley of the Old Guard bitterly denounced executive interference, saying that the Senate "had told Benson where to get off" and that he felt the same way about

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58 Ibid., pp. 402-403. The vote came on February 3, and it is probably that a gubernatorial victory so early in the session made things easier for the administration in the important struggles that came later.

the incumbent governor. The repealer bill was killed and when it became clear that Stassen would veto a two year extension of the four cent gasoline levy, the legislature gave a little ground--just enough to avoid a veto--extending the four cent rate for only fourteen months.[59] The strength of rural interests before the legislature was once more demonstrated, this time resulting in a gubernatorial defeat. Stassen also discovered that the legislature resisted, as it always had, any attempt to eliminate "pet projects" from the budget. Despite much talk of "economy", appropriations ran about as high as they had during the Benson administration.

There was only one executive disallowance of any importance during the 1939 session; a pocket veto of the six percent corporation income tax on banks. Stassen thought it too favorable to bankers.

Two of Minnesota's governors, John A. Johnson and Floyd B. Olson had become definitely national figures. By 1940, Harold E. Stassen had added his name to the list. At the Republican national convention that year, he served as temporary chairman and later as Wendell Willkie's floor manager. This latter action displeased both conservative and isolationist Republicans and seriously deepened the split in the Minnesota party that had begun with Stassen's successful capture of the 1938 gubernatorial nomination.

In the 1941 legislature, the governor had lost the support of the House leadership (he had never had the support of the Senate

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59 Ibid., pp. 423-425.

leaders). Majority Leader Dunn (who had aided the cause of Robert A. Taft at the Philadelphia convention) was now definitely regarded as the leader of the anti-Stassen conservatives both in the House and in the party. Speaker Hall was an ally of the majority leader.

Gubernatorial requests for further administrative reorganization, an increased cigarette tax and a public housing enabling act (to make use of prospective national government funds) were all lost as were most of the other requests made by Stassen.[60] "The major accomplishment of the session was a negative one--at least it didn't kill or render ineffective the major items of the Stassen program that had been passed in 1939."[61]

The 1943 session still found the legislature in conservative hands with Stassen in the governor's chair. Little was accomplished except for the passage of acts needed to bring about cooperation of the state with the national government in the war effort.[62]

Edward J. Thye enjoyed a comparatively peaceful reign. Quiet, unassuming and lacking in the egocentricities and personal ambitiousness of his three predecessors, he made less of a deliberate attempt to become chief policy-maker. This served to endear him to many legislators and more veterans of the House and Senate speak kindly of him than they do of any governor in the last two decades.

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60 For a summary of the session, see ibid., pp. 524-528.

61 Ibid., p. 744. Hinderacker was a pro-Stassen member of the session.

62 For a summary of the session, see ibid, pp. 713-715, or the St. Paul Pioneer-Press, April 25, 1943, p. 1.

Governor Thye thought that the proper role for the chief executive in the legislative process was much less of a positive thing than had his predecessors. It is necessary to go back to W. S. Hammond to find a governor who described the ppoper gubernatorial role as that of "outlining problems" and "making suggestions".[63]

Thye, Stassen's personal choice as a successor, again had to cope with a legislature considerably more conservative than was he. He was defeated on several matters, but made less of an issue of them than his predecessors would have done. He unsuccessfully urged the legislature to divert a large amount of the surplus in the school income tax fund to the general fund.[64] He asked for a $5,000,000 appropriation for post-war construction of state buildings. The House wanted to use the money only for hospitals and would have the interim committee recommend to the next session the order of building. The Senate favored the governor's version of the bill, providing no limit as to the nature of the buildings to be constructed and calling for the accumulation of the money to be spent as the 1947 session should see fit. The House passed the bill on the last day and sent notice to the Senate that it was ready to adjourn. The Senate and the governor were forced to accept the lower chamber's version.[65]

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[63] For Governor Thye's concept of the chief executive as a legislator, see the Minneapolis Tribune, editorial, January 4, 1945, p. 4.

[64] St. Paul-Pioneer-Press, April 20, 1945, p. 4.

[65] Ibid., April 21, 1945, p. 1.

Since Thye did not possess the personality needed to exert great influence upon the legislature before final passage of important bills, he was forced to reactivate the veto as an executive weapon. During the 1945 session he vetoed conservative-sponsored bills providing for conciliation procedures for state, county and municipal employees and for eliminating the secondary boycott.[66]

Luther W. Youngdahl, another "Stassen" Republican, has helped keep executive-legislative relations from becoming dull and routine. Considerably more liberal than most of the House and Senate leaders, expansionist in his approach to state activities and forceful in his relationships with the legislature, his position in the law-making process has been similar to that of Harold Stassen's.

Youngdahl was very successful in securing the adoption of almost all of his 1947 inaugural address suggestions. His principal measure called for a school district reorganization act. This was adopted along with a public housing enabling act, a "youth conservation" program, state aid for a county nurse program, increases in liquor, cigarette and luxury taxes, increased pay for state employees, a legislative research council (a measure that had the strong support of Speaker Hall) and a strong anti-slot

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66 For a summary of the session, see ibid., April 20, 1945, p. 1; April 21, 1945, p. 1.

machine law.[67] The last measure encountered very strong Senate opposition, but was passed.[68]

The governor acted as an intermediary in one important matter, when the House held up the governor's tax bills until the Senate would follow the House lead on the trunk highway bill.[69]

The veto power was used by Youngdahl as a means of defeating special acts designed to give specific localities more liberal liquor regulations than were provided for in the general acts. The governor vetoed eight bills of this type.[70]

In the 1949 session, the definite position of Youngdahl as an advocate of liberal measures created an anomolous situation. The Conservatives were, for the most part and especially in the House, definitely cool toward much of the governor's program. The Liberals, on the other hand, had considerably increased their numbers in 1949 and yet had no clear position to take. Much of the Youngdahl inaugural message called for things the D. F. L. would have been happy to sponsor. Generally, the Liberals had no choice but to support administrative measures and often proved a source of important votes in aid to the gubernatorial program. Virtually all Liberals supported the final version of the governor's mental health bill, for example. In an extremely awkward position, they could do little more than disapprove of the method

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67 Ibid., April 20, 1947, local section, p. 1.

68 Ibid., April 24, 1947, p. 1.

69 Ibid., April 26, 1947, p. 1.

70 Ibid., April 25, 1947, p. 4; April 26, 1947, p.22.

of financing and to point out that the governor's budget of two years earlier had called for a reduction in appropriations to the state hospitals, implying that the chief executive's actions were not wholly humanitarian in nature.

The governor presented an inaugural message calling for a large number of items, the most important of which were the establishment of a comprehensive expansion program for state mental health facilities, an extension of his youth conservation program, increased old age assistance, increased school aid, and increased capital expenditures for the state university and teachers colleges. He asked for, and received, the largest state budget in Minnesota history (as had been the case in 1947). It was this fact that prompted many conservative legislators, in one wording or another, to assert that the governor was attempting to "out deal the New Deal". To further add to the complexity of the session, there was a veterans' bonus bill costing nearly $90,000,000 that no one could safely oppose and that required financing along with the governor's requests.

The particular interest of the governor centered around his proposal for a "bill of rights" for Minnesota's mentally ill. While Youngdahl had not paid any personal attention to the problem during his first term, the deplorable state of Minnesota institutions had been called to his attention and, after visiting the hospitals personally, he asked the state for a far-reaching and costly program. It called for a competent professional staff under a Commissioner of mental health, better trained and better paid hospital personnel, more research and training, clinics,

diagnostic services, a single food standard, abolition of restraints, doubling of the average daily expenditure per person, and an extensive building program.

In order to secure public support for this expensive, generally unpublicized program, he organized a "citizens mental health committee" of fifty which carried on an intensive county by county campaign to bring pressure upon legislators for the necessary appropriations. Without this effort, it is doubtful if a substantial appropriation could have been procured from the legislature. (Governor Youngdahl later, in an out-of-state speech, described the publicity campaign as "going over the heads" of the legislators.)[71]

While the Minnesota legislature, with its ninety-day session limit, has long been known for spending valuable time on minutiae, leaving much of the important legislation to be passed in a rush without due consideration after the covering of the clock, the tendency was carried to an extreme in 1949. At the end of the actual ninety days, hardly an important part of the governor's program had been disposed of. Undoubtedly much of the delay was due to the unsympathetic view taken in the lower house of the Youngdahl platform. The governor had more supporters and less outright opposition in the Senate, in contrast to the customary situation.

The House tax committee, under the direction of F. W. Schwanke of Deerwood, had the painful task of raising taxes sufficient to

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71 In a talk before the American Psychiatric Association, reported in the Detroit News, May 5, 1950, p. 11.

cover expenditures $33,000,000 higher than any ever voted by a previous legislature. (A sizable surplus in the general revenue fund reduced the amount needed considerably, however.) Not anxious to recommend more tax increases than necessary and with many of its members hoping to make substantial cuts in the gubernatorial requests, the committee delayed presenting most of the tax proposals to the House until after the clock had been covered (meanwhile, because the constitution requires that tax bills must originate in the House, the Senate could not officially consider the measures nor did it know with certainty what might be recommended once the committee did report). This delay almost ruined the Youngdahl program, or at least almost forced a special session wherein the program might well have been seriously curtailed.

The smoldering resentment against the governor's high budget and the differences that had existed all session between House and Senate eventually came into the open just before adjournment when a conference committee on taxes was unable to agree on methods of raising $14,000,000 additional in order to balance the budget. The governor called the group into conference with him, but it took three additional days before a compromise was devised. A bill acceptable by all three parties was finally announced as including: (1) the acceptance by the chief executive of a $7,000,000 trimming of his budget to be taken from state institutions, operation of the state government, the University and teachers colleges and public welfare; (2) a one-cent increase in the state cigarette tax; (3) a "temporary" $3,000,000 diversion of state income taxes dedicated to school use. The first represented Youngdahl's greatest

concession to the fifty-sixth legislature, although he was not pleased with the diversionary provision either.

The compromise was nearly stopped on a move by E. J. Chilgren, Liberal leader. Seeking to embarrass both the Conservative leadership and the governor and to make a political asset of the dilatory tactics used in the legislature, by forcing an extra session, Chilgren insisted upon the usually ignored three day consideration required by the constitution when Majority Leader Roy E. Dunn brought up the cigarette tax increase portion of the compromise. After a brief recess, Dunn asked for suspension of the rules, a procedure requiring a two-thirds vote. The balloting was a good indication once again of the strength, and at the same time the weakness, of nonpartisan organization. The majority caucus did not possess two-thirds of the membership and Liberal solidarity could have forced an extra session. All Conservatives supported suspension of the rules, but five Liberals, either because they believed in voting on the merits of the question regardless of political considerations, or because they wanted to go home, voted with the majority.[72] The major hurdle was thus passed, and the tax was later adopted, 79-59.

Another serious threat to the governor's program came just before adjournment when the House and Senate reached a deadlock on the $17,000,000 new buildings program (for the state university,

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72 Otto Clark, Carl Iverson, Thomas Letnes, August Omtvedt and William P. Tucker voted with the Conservatives. (Henry Mattson and George Park were absent or not voting.) Since the vote was 38-38, any one of the five could have defeated the Dunn motion.

teachers colleges and state mental hospitals). Nominally the impasse was caused by the insistence of the upper house that a $25,000 appropriation for the purchase of a site at Brainerd for the eventual construction of a hospital for the feeble-minded remain in the bill. Actually, while the Senate was protecting a political plum duly distributed, the comparatively small sum involved, was only a token of the basic objections of a large number of both House and Senate members who believed that tax reduction, not budget expansion, should have been the rule of the session.

After two days without solution and with failure meaning an extra session (for the governor was insistent upon his program), Youngdahl called the conference committee to his office. Whatever may have been the nature of the whip-cracking, it took less than thirty minutes. The committee reported out a proposal $5,000,000 above the House version of the bill. The token point of dispute was settled without an appropriation but with a statement that a site for the hospital would be purchased in Brainerd when funds became available.

The House defeat was not easy for many members of that body to take, although the report was agreed upon. Claude Allen, conservative House leader, commented that "I don't think it's fair when men in high places walk into a conference committee and tell how it should come out."[73] But the chief executive has often done exactly that, regardless of the possible moral implications, when administration measures are in the balance and that is true in

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73 Minneapolis Star, April 26, 1949, p. 1.

Minnesota as well as in other states. The bill, together with a property tax increase of nearly one mill to finance it, passed the House with but one vote to spare, 67-57, although it was happily received in the Senate.

When the session ended--the longest in history, ending just forty-five minutes before the absolute deadline--the governor had won a major victory over strong opposition. Some items, such as the mental health program, extension of the youth conservation program and the state university and teachers college building programs, had been granted most reluctantly, but they were granted.

For financing the program, together with the costly veterans' bonus, it was necessary to increase state property, cigarette, iron ore and individual and corporation income taxes. A diversion of $3,000,000 a year from the state income tax school fund and a $5.00 head tax on all income tax filings were also necessary.

For the 724 new bills approved by Governor Youngdahl, there was but one veto. The bill was not particularly important so far as the welfare of the state was concerned--it merely legalized some technically unauthorized issuances of bonds in certain counties in the northern part of the state--but it symbolized the resentment of the legislators against a strong leader from outside their body who placed demands upon them of which they did not approve, yet were helpless to refuse, and who tended to reduce the public esteem of the legislature through the exaltation of his own office. Youngdahl told the legislature that the matter should be more carefully

investigated prior to legislative approval. The law-makers, however, repassed the measure over his veto with near unanimity. The action served not only to take a slap at the political figure who seemed otherwise untouchable, but it served also the indicate the political views of many legislators, for the bill had the blessing of the state auditor, Stafford King, who had opposed Youngdahl in the 1948 primary election. (The Liberals also took advantage of the situation and voted to override the governor.)

Closing Statement. While the governor has developed as chief law-maker in nearly all states in recent decades, that trend has been accentuated in Minnesota by the nature of the nonpartisan system. A legislature of individuals acting in their own interests can often be given direction only by the governor. The chief executive, furthermore, possesses the necessary tools to assume the leadership role, although personality and political circumstance are important factors in determining the actual extent to which they can be put to use. (It should be noted that this is in contrast to the assertion sometimes made that the nonpartisan legislature makes it impossible for the governor to exercise important control over the legislature.)

To the extent that the program adopted biennially is that of the governor, the irresponsible nature of nonpartisanship in the legislature is reduced somewhat, since the chief executive of the state is responsible to the people and as much in the public eye as is any public official in the state. This does not, of course, excuse the lack of responsibility of the individual legislator.

CHAPTER VI

COMPARISONS WITH OTHER STATE LEGISLATURES

Adoption of Nonpartisanship Elsewhere

Nonpartisanship Approved. From April, 1913 until November, 1934, the state of Minnesota had the only legislature selected without party disignation. On the latter date, the state of Nebraska adopted the system in conjunction with a unicameral legislature. All other states, at least nominally, choose their law-makers through the conventional methods. Minnesota and Nebraska both make legislative nominations through the use of the primary election, as do the other states of the union with the exception of Connecticut and Rhode Island, both of which have retained the delegate convention system.

Nonpartisanship has been adopted for other than the legislature in various states, particularly for local government offices. The idea was largely the product of the reform movement that centered in the second decade of the twentieth century. The principle lost most of its fascination for the public after the early years of the 'twenties, although it enjoyed somewhat of a revival in connection with the unicameral movement in the 'thirties.

Seventeen states (including Minnesota) now choose some or all of their judiciary without party designation. Nearly one-half of the nation's population, choose various local officials by this method. The list varies in each state, and includes county, township, school, village and city officials. Some states have certain classes of municipalities elected by nonpartisanship while in others,

particularly in home rule states, the matter is optional. California, Minnesota and North Dakota elect virtually all local officials without party labels. Some school officials are so elected in Nebraska, Nevada, Wisconsin and Wyoming, and so are the state superintendants of schools (under varying titles) in California, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota and Washington. The North Dakota state tax commission and the University of Nebraska regents are elected by the people on a nonpartisan ballot. Home rule, the commission plan and the council-manager plan for municipal government have been found generally compatible with nonpartisanship.[1]

Since nonpartisanship for other legislative offices may, and probably does, involve factors other than those relevent to the state law-making branch, this study is not addressed to such offices.

Nonpartisanship Disapproved. There have been a number of attempts to install nonpartisan legislatures in other states subsequent to the adoption of the idea in Minnesota. In 1915, the California legislature, at the urgent recommendation of Governor Hiram Johnson, proposed and referred to the people a plan that would make the legislative and executive branches (and therefore the entire state government) nonpartisan. The plan was rather narrowly defeated in a referendum on October 26, 1915.[2] The vote was 112,681 to 156,967. The proposal was considered simultaneously with the first meeting of the

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1 On this subject, see: C. C. Young, The Legislature of California: Its Membership, Procedure, and Work (1943), pp. 129-130; Malcolm C. Moos, Nonpartisan Legislative and Judicial Elections in Minnesota (1938), pp. 2-3 and 63.

2 For an excerpt from Governor Johnson's message to the California legislature, see supra, p. 27.

Minnesota legislature after the official elimination of parties and hence there was no opportunity to examine the Minnesota experience (although this could have been done prior to the autumn vote). The movement for nonpartisanship appears, however, to have taken place independently on the west coast and in Minnesota, although both of them were products of the same "efficiency and economy" era.

In North Dakota, the 1916 state platform of the Non-Partisan League called for the nonpartisan election of all legislative, judicial and executive officers of the state. Since the League was attempting to work within the frame of the essentially hostile Republican party (it being the only major party in the League theater of operations), its leaders believed they could operate more freely if party labels were abolished. The League became a powerful defender of nonpartisanship in both North Dakota and Minnesota. It succeeded in making most North Dakota elective positions, but not those of the legislature, nonpartisan.

Efforts continued in North Dakota to eliminate parties from the legislature. The Independent Voters Association initiated a constitutional amendment for that purpose in 1921, but it was badly defeated. The 1923 legislature approved a measure making both legislative and executive offices nonpartisan, but this attempt was defeated in a referendum in March, 1924 by a wide margin.

The movement spread to the state of Nebraska where a proposed constitutional amendment to elect the legislature without party designation was defeated in the election of November, 1924 despite the strong support lent to the campaign by Senator George W. Norris. After years of campaigning, and with the aid of a serious economic

depression, the famous Nebraska statesman finally secured, by the election of November, 1934, the adoption of a constitutional amendment making the state legislature unicameral and nonpartisan. The development of the system in Nebraska is considered later in this chapter.

Since the beginning of the Nebraska experiment, scores of bills have been introduced in other states calling for the adoption of unicameralism and most of these proposals would also adopt nonpartisanship in keeping with the established precedent. One scholar has found that there were forty-two proposals for a unicameral legislature in 1937 and that twelve of them prescribed, and one additional permitted, nonpartisan elections.[3]

With the decline of interest in unicameralism, its running mate, nonpartisanship, has been given constantly decreasing public attention. In 1950, there appeared to be very little likelihood of either being adopted for the legislature of any state in the immediate future.

Some Comparisons and Contrasts

From Quasi-Nonpartisanship to Unrelenting Partisanship. There are many possible bases upon which legislative cleavages can rest. New York has a division between the City and the rest of the state that is not wholly a Republican-Democratic split, and there is also a division between urban and rural areas in that state. Louisiana is divided between the downstate Catholics, most of them Creole, and the upstate Anglo-Saxon Protestants. New Mexico has Anglo-Saxons in

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[3] Alvin W. Johnson, The Unicameral Legislature (1938), pp. 152-155. See also, John P. Senning, "Nebraska's First Unicameral Legislative Session," The Annals, Vol. CVC (January, 1938), pp. 159-167.

the east and Spanish-Americans in the west. Illinois is split between Chicago and downstate (although this is largely a party difference, too). Massachusetts is divided between the Irish and Italians of fairly recent immigration and the outstate Yankees. This is not wholly a party split, for Boston's Italians are often found in the Republican column together with the Yankees. California has long had a difference of interest between its two major cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles as well as between the urban and rural areas in general.[4]

In the deep South, the political party has not been the basis for legislative organization since before the Civil War. With the final election a formality, the Democratic primary election is the essential contest and does not differ a great deal from choice without party designation. V. O. Key, Jr. has made the following comment:[5]

> . . . . Without a continuing state-wide organization with a perceptible program orientation, legislators may be elected entirely without regard to their attitude on the program advocated by the winning candidate for governor. The transient,

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4 In this connection, see Leslie Lipson, The American Governor: From Figurehead to Leader (1939), p. 223.

5 V. O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics (1949), pp. 44-45.

On the quasi-nonpartisanship of politics in the South, see: Hallie Farmer, The Legislative Process in Alabama (1949), 353 pp.; Caleb P. Patterson, Sam B. McAlister, George C. Hester, State and Local Government in Texas (1948), especially pp. 34-37; and V. O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics (1949), especially Chapter III, "Alabama: Planters, Populists, 'Big Mules'," Chapter IX, "Arkansas: Pure One-Party Politics," and Chapter XII, "Texas: A Politics of Economics."

Not all southern legislators are free agents, however. The highly organized Byrd machine in Virginia keeps effective control over the legislature. See, George W. Spicer, "Gubernatorial Leadership in Virginia," Public Administration Review, Vol. I (1941), pp. 441-457.

factional followings of candidates preclude the existence of a state-wide organization to designate and back legislative candidates, and thus leave much to chance in the legislature. . . . Moreover, after the election no disciplined factional group exists to carry out a program in the legislature. A great advantage goes to those who seek to obstruct action.

Even in two party states, law-makers may not be chosen on a party basis. The California legislature of 1913, for example, established a unique type of primary election, allowing candidates to file for the nomination of more than one party. Although the law does require the candidate to secure the nomination of his own party in order to appear on another party ballot in the general election, the system makes for a wide-open primary not unlike nonpartisanship.[6]

Because of this phenomenon, party labels played a small role in the California legislature from 1913 to 1935. The majority in both houses during this period was nominally Republican, with the actual division made on the basis of progressives versus stand-patters. The progressives were in control most of the time and some of them were registered Democrats. During this period, party caucuses for the purpose of organization of the houses were not usually held, nor was party affiliation a determining factor in the selection of committees or employees.[7]

When the depression produced an appreciable number of Democrats in the legislature, that group began holding its own caucuses,

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6 Young, op. cit., pp. 117, 120. "This procedure of 'double filing' is, in a sense, using the partisan primary non-partisanly."

7 See, Joseph A. Beek, The California Legislature (1942), pp. 146-149; Dean E. McHenry, "Legislative Personnel in California," The Annals, Vol. CXC (January, 1939), pp. 45-52.

beginning in 1935. Prior to that time, the entire membership in each house caucused together before the session to fill offices and make committee assignments. Seats on committees, offices and employees were all decided upon without party considerations.

Since 1937, the Assembly has been organized more definitely, but not completely, upon party lines.

"Political party affiliation has not played an important part in the selection of committees in the California legislature," the veteran secretary of that state's Senate has said, "for the reason that state issues usually result in alignments other than political."[8]

The governor appears to be powerful in California in providing legislative leadership and policy formation to the rather unorganized legislature. The assumption by the governor of leadership, whether as a result of his own volition or the demands of the people, "has been the cause of most of the friction between the legislature and the executive departments of the state."[9] This pattern appears to be similar to that in Minnesota where a striking contrast is noticeable between the administrations of such men as W. S. Hammond and Edward J. Thye, on the one hand, and men with intense personal ambition and leadership ability, such as Floyd B. Olson and Harold E. Stassen, on the other.

A system of individualism and personalities appears to have been encouraged in California in a manner similar to that found in

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8 Beck, op. cit., p. 84.

9 Ibid., p. 109.

Minnesota. Perhaps because of this, movements for total elimination of party labels, begun by Hiram Johnson, continue.[10]

Legislative discipline appears to be much stronger in many two party states than it is in Minnesota or in California. New Mexico for example, appears to use the caucus for policy making purposes, with the parties seeking to bind their members.[11] The state of New York has the strongest party discipline of any state in the nation, and a discipline that is much more effective than that exercised by the party over the members of Congress.[12]

Outside of stronger caucus discipline and more party responsibility for legislative actions, many of the other factors of organization are similar in two-party states and nonpartisan Minnesota, so far as the legislature is concerned. Committees, generally, are not made up on a basis of proportional representation for the parties; the majority ordinarily seeks to give itself a strong working control on important committees, as happens in Minnesota. Many states use the committee of the whole as a method of speeding up work as well as a convenient way to avoid roll calls where a record of votes might be embarrassing. (Some states, such as California, use the committee of the whole only for purposes such as addresses by visiting dignitaries and hence nearly all votes are recorded.)

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10 In 1937, four measures, in 1939, seven measures and in 1941, two measures were introduced calling for nonpartisan legislative and executive elections. Young, op. cit., p. 120.

11 Thomas C. Donnelly, The Government of New Mexico (1947), pp. 98-99.

12 See, Warren Moscow, Politics in the Empire State (1948), 238 pp.

Executive leadership is much stronger in some states than it is in Minnesota. The governor is much more influential in committee actions in New Mexico and New York, for example, than he is in Minnesota.

Probably the most striking difference between Minnesota and partisan legislatures in two-party states in the nature of organization is in the absence of any official cognizance of a minority. In states such as Iowa, Michigan, and New York, the minority is recognized, it is given a caucus room, a recess during which to confer if a reasonable request is made, stenographic assistance for the minority leader, representation on the rules committee and other privileges recognizing that the minority may one day be a majority. These practices do not prevail in Minnesota.

It is customary in two-party legislatures to give the minority representation on the rules committee. The Minnesota House rules committee never, and the Senate committee after only one election, has had minority representation under the nonpartisan system. This discrimination, while probably aided and abetted by the lack of party recognization, should not be thought to be a product of nonpartisanship, however. No minority member has sat on the House rules committee in the twentieth century.[15] In 1915, the Democratic minority leader, Albert Pfaender, publicly urged the speaker to give his party representation on the important rules committee, claiming that it "represented 500,000 Minnesota people." Henry Rines refused,

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[15] A spot-check back to 1870 revealed no minority member on the committee.

however,[14] and a minority party publication noted that "Certainly judging from past experience [the Democrats] have little warrant to hope for favors even from a progressive presiding officer."[15] The difference between Minnesota and other states in this matter is one of tradition, although certainly the leadership in either house under nonpartisanship has not sought to remove the inequity.[16]

Comparative Tenure and Turnover

Minnesota and Other States. A generation ago, one of America's leading scholars pointed out that the greatest cause of weakness in American legislative bodies was to be found in the limited length of service of legislators.[17] "They are so largely made up of inexperienced men that the wonder is their work is no worse," he pointed out. He found the situation in the nature of a dilemma, since public awareness of legislative inadequacy merely served to increase the rate of turnover. Lack of experience in the legislative body has likewise been the major concern of a more recent scholar.[18]

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14 Red Wing Republican, January 9, 1913, p. 1.

15 Willmar Tribune, January 8, 1913, p. 4.

16 For comparisons with other states, see in addition to items already cited: Dorothy Schaffter, The Bicameral System in Practice (1929), 110 pp.; Cyril B. Upham, Some Aspects of the Legislature in Iowa (1916), 72 pp.; Cyril B. Upham, The Speakership of the House of Representatives in Iowa (1918), 81 pp.; Belle Zeller, Pressure Politics in New York: A Study of Group Representation Before the Legislature (1937), Appendix B; Russel McInnes, "Legislative Oligarchy Handicaps New York Governors," National Municipal Review, Vol. XXIII (May, 1934), p. 254.

17 Robert Luce, Legislative Assemblies (1924), pp. 358-359.

18 Charles S. Hyneman, "Tenure and Turnover of Legislative Personnel," The Annals, Vol. CVC (January, 1938), p. 22.

Charles S. Hyneman has pointed out that adeptness in political maneuvering and acquaintance with existing legislation and with legislative procedures and practices comes only with repeated trips to the capital.

In the decade following 1925 (and hence including the rapid turnover during the first years of the depression), ten states showed the following lack of experienced legislators:[19]

First term members in lower house: 39.6%
First term members in upper house: 20.3%

First or second term members in lower house: 63.4%
First or second term members in upper house: 39.6%

The lower house in Maine in 1925 included forty-three of the forty-eight committee chairmen who were serving in their first or second session. The Washington House of 1935 could boast of only two committee chairmen who had been in more than two previous sessions. The Democratic majority in the Iowa House of 1933 contained only one man with three sessions of experience. In 1931, the lower house in Indiana could point to but one member of the majority and two of the minority who had been in three previous sessions. Many other such examples could be cited.[20]

This type of situation is unparalled in Minnesota where the Senate has enjoyed uninterrupted leadership of experience since the adoption of nonpartisanship. Never has the upper house been forced to depend upon individuals with but one or two terms of experience for important decision-making or leadership. In the

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19 Lipson, op. cit., p. 219.

20 Hyneman, op. cit., p. 24.

House of Representatives, the Conservatives have always enjoyed the guiding hands of veteran members. The Liberals, who have controlled the House but twice, have been less fortunate when in the majority, as would be expected. Harold Barker became speaker with only two terms experience in the House, many committee chairmanships went to second and third termers in 1933 and 1935. Hjalmar Petersen, for example, headed the vital tax committee of the House during a period of major tax reform with only one previous term in that body.

In the 1949 session, however, both caucuses boasted ample veteran material. The Conservatives were led by a man with ten previous terms in the legislature, while the Liberal leader could boast a record of twelve terms. The chairman of the appropriations committee had six terms of experience; of highways, seven terms; of judiciary, five terms; of labor, six terms; of taxes, five terms; and so on through the major committees. Leadership in the Senate was even more experienced.

A comparison of tenure and turnover in Minnesota with that of another mid-western state, Michigan, indicates some of the effects produced by a nonpartisan election as against the conventional type of selection. While there are many differences between the two states,[21] many of the same pressures affected these two in the 1948 election.

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21 Perhaps a factor in Michigan tenure in the past has been low pay for legislators. Before November, 1948, the constitution limited the salary to $3.00 per day. Since 1949, the Michigan legislature has been one of the better paid in the nation, each member receiving $2,400 per year plus $500 annually for expenses, in addition to mileage allowances.

In 1949, 51.0% of the Michigan House of Representatives consisted of holdovers from the preceding session. This compares with 72.5% in the lower house in Minnesota.

The 1949 Michigan Senate of thirty-two members contained eighteen holdovers from the preceding session (the entire Senate stands for reelection every two years), two members with previous experience in the Senate and two members with no previous membership in either house. Only 56.2% of the Senate was thus held over from the previous session. The Minnesota upper house did not go before the voters in 1948, but in the previous election, 68.6% were held over and the percentage has not been as low as fifty-five percent since the election of 1934.

While Michigan is basically a Republican state and the legislature is especially so, since it is badly gerrymandered to discriminate against Wayne county, serious economic unrest produces sudden shifts in electoral opinion. Unlike Minnesota, these shifts are clearly reflected in the legislature as well as in other branches of government. The ability of the voter to register a protest under the system of partisan elections is indicated in TableXIV.[22] (This table should be compared with the Minnesota experience shown in Table XI.)

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22 The turnover indicated for Michigan is not unique, as is shown in the following table for the state of Washington:

Year	House		Senate	
	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats
1931	90	8	41	1
1935	8	91	9	37

Source: Lipson, American Governor, p. 25.

Table XIV

FLUCTUATIONS IN PARTY STRENGTH

Michigan Legislature, 1931-1949

Year	House		Senate	
	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats
1931	98	2	31	1
1933	45	55	15	17
1935	51	49	21	11
1937	40	60	15	16
1939	73	27	23	9
1941	68	32	22	10
1943	74	26	25	7
1945	66	34	24	8
1947	95	5	28	4
1949	61	39	23	9

Source: Michigan Legislative Handbook, 1931-1949.

It is clear from the above table that the Michigan voter chooses his legislators to a large extent as representatives of a political party. The table reflects protest voting very emphatically. The Democrats had but three men in the House and Senate combined in 1931, but they controlled the organization of each two years later. The election of 1946, a reaction against long years of Democratic rule nationally, almost eliminated the minority party in both houses.

The table also demonstrates a peculiar result of voting by parties when national and state officials are selected simultaneously, for each presidential election since 1932 has had a very definite effect upon the relative party strengths in both houses of the Michigan legislature, and especially in the House of Representatives.

Table XIV indicates very rapid fluctuations in turnover in the Michigan legislature, demonstrating a sensitivity to changes in the attitude of the public. It also reflects the effect upon legislative

contests of the balloting for national offices. Nothing approximating this high rate of turnover has been found in Minnesota under the system of individual elections, nor have Minnesota elections to the legislature been seriously affected by presidential campaigns.

A comparison of House tenure in the 1949 sessions of the legislatures of Minnesota and Michigan is shown in Tables XV and XVI. They indicate a slightly higher percentage of new members among the majority in Minnesota and a much higher percentage of new members among the minority in Michigan. There is an ample number of veterans among the majority in Michigan, nearly as many as in Minnesota. Of the members with at least three previous terms of experience, Minnesota could claim forty of eighty-six (46.5%), while Michigan pointed to twenty-eight of sixty-one (45.9%). It is in the minority caucus that a great difference is noticeable. Not one Democrat in the Michigan House had had more than three previous sessions in the legislature, and only six of thirty-nine (15.4%) had been present for more than one session. This compares with eighteen of forty-five (40.0%) in Minnesota.

Considering the House of Representatives as a whole in each state, Minnesota could boast of considerably more experienced lawmakers. Fifty-two of them (39.7%) had served at least three previous terms as compared with twenty-eight (28.0%) in Michigan. Of the veterans whose service in the legislature totalled a decade, twenty-six (19.8%) could be found in Minnesota to sixteen (16.0%) in Michigan.

The tables serve to indicate several characteristic contrasts between these two midwestern states: (1) The Michigan legislature,

despite the fact that it is more seriously gerrymandered in favor of conservatism than is the case in Minnesota, is more responsive to changes in public opinion. (2) The organization that plays the role of the protest party,

Table XV

EXPERIENCE IN THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE

1949 House of Representatives

Previous Sessions	Cons.	Libs.	Total
0	20	15	35
1	12	12	24
2	14	6	20
3	14	1	15
4	8	4	12
5	10	3	13
7	7	2	9
9	--	--	--
11	1	--	1
13	--	2	2
	86	45	131

Table XVI

EXPERIENCE IN THE MICHIGAN LEGISLATURE

1949 House of Representatives

Previous Sessions	Reps.	Dems.	Total
0	12	28	40
1	11	5	16
2	10	4	14
3	9	2	11
4	3	--	3
5	5	--	5
7	8	--	8
9	1	--	1
11	--	--	--
13	2	--	2
	61	39	100

is more likely to come to power with a mere handful of experienced

men in the Michigan partisan legislature.[23] During periods of Republican "normalcy" the opposition is virtually wiped out. This does not happen in Minnesota. If the Liberals were to organize the House or Senate in 1951, they would have a trained working nucleus of sufficient proportions. (3) An election of relatively high turnover in Minnesota does not necessarily mean a great increase in minority strength. While the minority caucus doubled in size in 1949, many new members, representing protest voting, joined the Conservatives, since the individual chooses his own caucus. (Of thirty-six newcomers, only nineteen joined the Liberals.) In Michigan, protest voting is much more certainly accorded to the "out" group. In 1949 in that state, the House minority increased its membership eight-fold. (4) An election of high turnover is likely to affect the Michigan House of Representatives much more than it will that of Minnesota. In 1949, Minnesota had thirty-six new House members (27.4%), while the corresponding total in Michigan was forty (40.0%).[24]

Charles S. Hyneman has compiled many statistics on tenure and turnover in American legislatures.[25] His figures substantiate the

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[23] Lent D. Upson once suggested this phenomenon as a possible reason for adopting a nonpartisan (and unicameral) legislature in Michigan. See the Foreward to Charles W. Shull, American Experience With Unicameral Legislatures (1937).

For a proposal for nonpartisan elections for New York state, see Samuel Seabury, "Proportional Representation and the Constitutional Convention," National Municipal Review, Vol. XXVI (December, 1937), pp. 570-571.

[24] Data for Minnesota are from recent volumes of the Minnesota Legislative Manual. Data for Michigan are from the Michigan Legislative Handbook, 1949-1950, pp. 120-124.

[25] Data for the following tables are from Hyneman, op. cit., pp. 23-25.

contention that Minnesota ranks among the states with the highest tenure and lowest turnover. His study of ten states covering the years 1925-1935 is shown below. Only in the populous states of Illinois and New York, where the salary makes the position attractive and where a cooperative legislator is assisted in his efforts to be reelected by highly organized political machinery, was a smaller percentage of the lower house made up of those serving their first session.

Table XVII

EXPERIENCE IN TEN LEGISLATURES

Average of Years 1925-1935

State	Sessions of Service					
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth to Ninth	Tenth or more
	LOWER CHAMBERS					
California	40.7%	23.1%	14.2%	8.5%	13.3%	0.2%
Illinois	28.2	20.7	14.9	9.3	22.8	4.1
Indiana	60.1	24.3	8.7	3.7	3.0	0.2
Iowa	49.4	28.7	12.0	5.4	4.5	0.0
Maine	55.7	30.5	8.4	3.0	2.4	0.0
Minnesota	32.1	24.3	16.2	10.9	16.0	0.5
New Jersey	37.2	27.2	14.7	9.2	10.3	1.4
New York	17.7	15.4	13.8	11.6	31.0	10.5
Pennsylvania	38.7	23.8	14.0	8.9	12.8	1.8
Washington	47.7	22.8	12.1	5.5	11.0	0.9
Ten Lower Chambers	39.6	23.8	12.9	7.8	13.6	2.3
	SENATES					
California	15.2%	18.6%	16.8%	13.5%	32.4%	5.5%
Illinois	19.6	18.3	13.4	10.8	27.1	10.8
Indiana	29.3	28.3	13.3	11.7	16.0	1.3
Iowa	25.0	23.4	17.3	19.0	14.3	1.0
Maine	15.8	21.6	30.5	18.9	13.2	0.0
Minnesota	18.4	21.6	10.7	11.7	30.9	6.7
New Jersey	15.4	18.7	12.2	11.4	35.8	6.5
New York	12.1	3.3	11.8	3.6	35.2	34.0
Pennsylvania	22.7	20.3	13.3	12.3	26.4	5.0
Washington	25.4	18.5	11.5	8.1	26.1	10.4
Ten Senates	20.3	19.3	14.3	11.9	25.6	8.6
ALL CHAMBERS	35.4	22.6	12.3	8.9	16.8	4.0

This was also true of second and third session members, if the percentages are considered cumulatively, indicating that in Minnesota there was more experience among representatives than could be found in any but the most poplous states. Relatively, the Minnesota Senate had more first and second session men than did the House, but if the figures are considered cumulatively, only New Jersey and New York could claim a more experienced upper house, for only those two large states had a greater percentage of men with four or more sessions in the legislature.

Additional figures by Hyneman indicate that Minnesota had more committee chairmen (by percentage) in the lower house with four or more sessions of service than any of the other states with the exception of New York, Pennsylvania and Illinois. Since the period he was studying included the days of the two Sullivans, Rockne, Orr and other veterans, it is not surprising that only New York had a larger percentage of Senate committee chairmen with four or more sessions of experience. (New York: 76.2%; Minnesota: 61.5%.)[26]

It was Huneman's contention that legislators did not return, not so much because of defeat at the polls as because of the lack of inducements. He thought they were uninterested in a job that was low in pay and relatively low in prestige.[27] He evidently did

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26 Hyneman, op. cit., Table II.

27 See, especially: Charles S. Hyneman, "Tenure and Turnover of the Indiana General Assembly," American Political Science Review, Vol. XXXII (April, 1938), pp. 317-320.

not note that Minnesota, with its nonpartisan elections, rated at the top of the list after the two large, well-organized, well-paying states of New York and Illinois. Hyneman contended that most legislators retired without a fight and for non-election reasons. In the light of Minnesota's abnormally high position in tenure, and with no other evident reason therefor,[28] it would appear that the great advantage held by the incumbent under nonpartisanship must be of considerable importance in making the campaign easy enough to convince the experienced legislator to stay on the job. Using this theory as a basis, the present writer is of the opinion that Hyneman placed too much emphasis upon insufficiency of salary and prestige and too little upon the probability that a great many legislators make no effort to return to the capital city after one or two trips because the fight for the nomination and against the opposition party in the general election together with the necessity for carrying part of the load for the state and national tickets, is simply not worth the effort. In Minnesota, with a lightened burden, the prestige and salary appear to be sufficient to keep a large portion of experienced men on hand.

In summary, the nonpartisan system in Minnesota, in comparison with other states, results in a more experienced legislature with more experienced committee chairmen. That this increased tenure comes at the cost of reduced responsiveness to changes in public thinking and sentiment has been discussed previously.[29]

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28 It is true that the Minnesota political scene has been particularly interesting in recent decades with a possible increase in interest in political activity. On the other hand, neither in length of term nor in salary has the state attempted to make the job of legislator more attractive.

29 Supra, Chapter IV.

Nonpartisanship in Nebraska

The Adoption of the Unicameral Legislature. For two decades prior to the adoption of the amendment to the state constitution in November, 1934, Nebraska had considered the use of a single house legislature. The great reform leader, George W. Norris, had long advocated the plan. A legislative committee appointed in 1913 recommended to the 1915 legislature a unicameral plan modelled on the Canadian provincial parliament. Legislation to carry this out failed and a unicameral proposal lost in the constitutional convention of 1919-1920 by a tie vote. Proposals of this nature were defeated in the legislatures of 1923, 1925 and 1933. Most of them provided for nonpartisan elections.[30]

In an article in the New York Times as early as January 28, 1923, George W. Norris explained his theory of unicameralism, including in his argument a demand for the nonpartisan election of legislators.[31] He urged a body of twenty to thirty men, elected on a nonpartisan ballot for a four-year term, with good salaries and continuous sessions. In part, he said:

> Members of the legislature should be elected by districts upon a nonpartisan ballot. The business of a legislature of a state is in no sense partisan. The evils that creep into state government and state legislatures on account of such positions

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30 John P. Senning, "Nebraska Provides for a One-House Legislature," American Political Science Review, Vol. XXIX (February, 1935), p. 69.

31 New York Times, January 28, 1923. Reprinted, Congressional Record, Vol. LXIV, February 5, 1923, pp. 2999-3000. Since its first edition in 1920, the Model State Constitution of the National Municipal League had been advocating unicameralism, but it combined it with proportional representation rather than with nonpartisanship.

being coupled with national questions of politics are exceedingly great. Men are often elected to the state legislature because they happen to be candidates on some particular party ticket, while the duties they are to perform when elected have nothing to do with the national administration or with the welfare or success of any particular party. If politics were eliminated, members would be elected according to their qualifications for the state legislature. The state would be similar to a gigantic corporation and the members of the legislature would be members of the board of directors.

Without being handicapped on account of any partisan matters, they would be able to give the best that was in them for the welfare of the state. Their duties would be mainly of a business nature. How illogical it is to elect a man to the legislature because he believes in a tariff for protection or because he is a free trader, or because he believes in a Federal subsidy to the National Merchant Marine or is opposed to such subsidy, or because of his ideas on the League of Nations, or what is more probable, because he belongs to some political party and will follow that party regardless of what course it takes, when as a matter of fact, the duties of the office for which he is a candidate have nothing to do, either directly or indirectly, with any of these partisan questions. Why should we not divorce the business of our states entirely and completely from such partisan influences? Why not elect a legislature that shall become a business organization looking solely after the interests and the welfare of the people of the state? It would not be difficult to have a legislature entirely divorced from partisan politics. . . .

This argument, essentially the same as that advanced eight years earlier in the inaugural address of Governor Hiram Johnson of California, became the standard dialectical approach of the proponents of the Norris legislature.

So far as the present writer has been able to discover, no argument pointing to the two decades of experience with a nonpartisan legislature in Minnesota was used by either opponents or proponents of the plan. It seems probably that this obvious source of debate material was overlooked because of the fact that the question of unicameralism far over-shadowed that of nonpartisanship and the Minnesota system was evidently thought not sufficiently comparable. Nebraskans were not

unfamiliar with the nonpartisan principle, since they had long elected their judges, school and municipal officials, superintendents of public instruction and state university regents through this medium.[32]

Despite the opposition of both the Democratic and Republican parties, nearly all of the newspapers in the state and most of the members of the legislature, the voters approved the Norris amendment by a 93,000 vote majority.[33] The new amendment, while not precisely what Norris had hoped for, called for a nonpartisan, unicameral legislature of from thirty to fifty members chosen for two year terms and meeting biennially, with the lieutenant-governor presiding. In part, the amendment provided:[34]

> Each member shall be nominated and elected in a nonpartisan manner and without any indication on the ballot that he is affiliated with or endorsed by any political party or organization.

It will be noted that the Nebraska plan differed here from the Minnesota approach in that it had its basis in constitutional rather than statutory law.

The setting for nonpartisanship differs considerably in Nebraska from that in Minnesota. The Norris experiment was launched

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32 John P. Senning, "Nebraska's First Unicameral Legislative Session," The Annals, Vol. CVC (January, 1938), p. 165.

33 See: L. E. Aylsworth, "Nebraska's Non-Partisan Unicameral Legislature," National Municipal Review, Vol. XXVI (February, 1937), pp. 77-81; Charles D. Green, "Nebraska Launches Unicameral," State Government, Vol. X (January, 1937), pp. 3-5; John P. Senning, The One-House Legislature (1937), 118 pp.

34 Nebraska Constitution, Article III, Section 7.

in a state that has a small, essentially homogeneous (agrarian) population with only one city of any size, and that well oriented toward the rest of the state. The sparseness of the population in all but a few areas (even the largest city, Omaha, is less than one-half the size of Minneapolis) makes it possible for voters to have something approximating a personal knowledge of the legislative candidates, hence affording them more than a mere name for which to vote. The state has long been essentially a conservative Republican stronghold with the consequent break-down of party lines characteristic of a party in a state where effective opposition from another party arises only at times of great public protest.[35]

Views on Nebraska Nonpartisanship. An accurate appraisal of the Nebraska experiment is extremely difficult since virtually all of the literature has been strongly biased in favor of the plan. Most of it was written in the first flush of victory and nearly all of it is strongly overlaid with the stereotyped concepts characteristic of the second decade reform movement.

It seems generally agreed that the Norris plan for a unicameral legislature encountered its greatest opposition over the matter of nonpartisan elections.[36] It was argued that a partisan governor and a nonpartisan legislature would unduly complicate executive-legislative relations and that the system would provide for no

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35 Experienced Nebraska observers state that these factors have been important in the general acceptance of nonpartisanship. See: William E. Johnson, "Unicameralism Works," State Government, Vol. X (November, 1939), pp. 198, 207; John P. Senning, "One House, Two Sessions," National Municipal Review, Vol. XXVIII (December, 1939), p. 843; also Lipson, op. cit., p. 257.

36 Green, op. cit., p. 5; Senning, The One-House Legislature (1937), p. 55.

method of holding legislators responsible.

The argument that the political party is necessary for responsibility was placed under a strong and constant attack by George Norris and the Model Legislature Committee of citizens. Norris held that the exact opposite was true, that "In the one-chamber legislature the responsibility is direct. It cannot be evaded."[37]

"Experience," Norris later wrote, "shows that this matter of party responsibility is mostly 'bunk'. One of the greatest evils in our government, from federal down to municipal, is rank partisanship."[38]

After three sessions without party designation, another enthusiast wrote:[39]

> This party responsibility idea is a fetish, originally devised as a whip to hold party legislators in line and used and usuable as a false front behind which timid-minded legislators may hide.

Responsibility, another observer asserted, is maintained through the constant glare of publicity upon the legislative meetings and through the fact that secret meetings of the legislature or of any of its committees is prohibited.[40] It has also

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[37] George Norris quoted in Carl B. Rudow, "Legislative Caliber Raised in Nebraska," Detroit News, May 3, 1944, p. 8.

[38] George Norris in a letter to Malcolm C. Moos, Nonpartisan Legislative and Judicial Elections in Minnesota (1938), p. 73.

[39] H. T. Dobbins, "Nebraska's One-House Legislature--After Six Years," National Municipal Review, Vol. XXX (September, 1941), p. 512.

[40] Carl B. Rudow, "Nebraska's Legislature Open to Public View," Detroit News, May 2, 1944, p. 7.

been pointed out that the small size of the legislature--forty-three members--concentrates attention and helps to hold the individual legislator responsible.[41]

It is further argued that "Party platforms are vague and misleading as guarantees of what legislators will do"[42] and that the party label really ties the candidate to the platform of the gubernatorial candidate. Nonpartisanship, on the other hand, allows for greater flexibility to meet the unique demands of the individual constituency.[43]

A member of two sessions of the unicameral body explained this matter in a vein also heard by the present writer in interviewing Minnesota legislators:[44]

> I think the most satisfactory feature of the unicameral is its non-political character. Absence of the party whip allows consideration of measures on their merits and not because of partisan necessity.

This general line of thinking has by no means been accepted by everyone in Nebraska, however. After the first unicameral session, Governor Robert L. Cochran reported:[45]

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41 Carl B. Rudow, "Nebraska's One-House Legislature A Success," Detroit News, May 1, 1944, p. 9.

42 Gertrude L. Schermerhorn, "Lobbies and Pressure Groups: A Lobbyists' Point of View," Annals, Vol. DVC (January, 1938), p. 89.

43 Dobbins, op. cit., p. 518.

44 Senator O. Edwin Schultz, "Nebraska's Unicameral Adjourns," a symposium, State Government, Vol. X (July, 1937), p. 133.

45 Governor Robert L. Cochran, symposium, Ibid., p. 131; see also, Green, op. cit., p. 5.

> The chief difficulty, perhaps, that developed arose from the non-political character of the legislature. This resulted in a lack of responsible leadership, which intensified the difficulties. . . .

Another writer, who as lieutenant-governor had presided over the legislature, approved the concept of unicameralism, but insisted that nonpartisanship should be abandoned since it had failed to concentrate responsibility.[46] He also throught that partisanship would make campaigning less of a personal chore and much less expensive for the individual.

Although proponents of the system argued that there were few state issues that could be deemed political in nature,[47] it has been pointed out that the anticipated disappearance of all partisanship has not taken place.[48]

Much criticism was directed against the legislature during and after the first unicameral session on the grounds that it was lacking in leadership, that it floundered around, wasted time and did not know how to proceed. George Norris admitted that this was true, but asserted that the problem would solve itself after a few sessions.[49]

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46 William E. Johnson, "Unicameralism Works," State Government, Vol. X (November, 1939), pp. 198, 207.

47 Dobbins, op. cit., p. 512. It was claimed that most of the legislature's work dealt with such things as the licensing of professions, small loan laws, gasoline tax refunds to users of tractors, unfair trade practices and teacher retirement funds.

48 Kenneth R. Keller, political reporter for the Lincoln Star cited in the symposium, "Nebraska's Unicameral Legislature," State Government, Vol. X (July, 1937), p. 134. Another writer later felt that the legislature had been effectively divorced from partisan politics. See: Alfred Willoughby, "Restoring Confidence in the Legislature," National Municipal Review, Vol. XXXIII (February, 1944), p. 59.

49 George W. Norris, statement to the press, June 14, 1937.

Furthermore, he said, the very fact that leadership was lacking indicated that "machine politics" had been eliminated and this was worth the cost of reduction in concerted action.

The leadership problem did not solve itself, however, and objections to the legislature on the grounds of lack of leadership continued to be heard. They were still being made as late as the 1949 session.[50]

Objections have been made in Nebraska, as in Minnesota, that the nonpartisan character of the legislature encourages excessive vote trading. On this matter, the 1949 Nebraska session was charged with being a "fraternity of tolerance."[51]

One writer has found an advantage in nnnpartisanship in that it is a safeguard against gerrymandering of legislative districts. Since members are not elected by parties, the temptation to alter the shapes and sizes of districts to the benefit of the dominant political party is eliminated.[52]

It appears to be generally conceded that the caliber of legislators rose after the adoption of the nonpartisan, unicameral legislature.[53] Many observers have stated that the principal reason for

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50 Richard C. Spencer, "Nebraska Idea Fifteen Years Old," National Municipal Review, Vol. XXXIX (February, 1950), p. 86.

51 Loc. cit.

52 Ibid., p. 84.

53 Carl B. Rudow, "Legislative Caliber Raised in Nebraska," Detroit News, May 3, 1944, p. 8; John P. Senning, "Nebraska's First Unicameral Legislative Session," Annals, Vol. CVC (January, 1938), p. 165; Harry T. Dobbins, "Legislative Procedure Under the Unicameral System," University of Kansas City Law Review, Vol. XI (December, 1942), p.35, ftn.

this is the elimination of the party label. Skeptics have pointed to other important considerations: better pay under the new plan; newness of the idea with a consequent increase in public interest resulting in greater prestige adhering to the position; and a smaller legislature, making the job of a senator more important.

Although it is admitted that nonpartisanship has not reduced the number of, nor the persistence of lobbyists, it has been argued that the nonpartisan method of election has worked to reduce the effectiveness of lobbying before the Nebraska legislature.[54] This is said to result from the fact that members are free to reject the commitments made by political parties to interest groups; that pressure groups tend to neutralize one another (this is true before any type of deliberative body); that individual legislators have few commitments, enabling them to decide questions on their merits; and that "with better pay and a membership that includes many men with private means, there no longer exists an urge to end sessions with a rush or to accept partial support in the closing days from the eager lobbyists."

It is interesting to observe that this theory is quite the opposite of that expounded a few years earlier by an expert on the American legislative body. William F. Willoughby reported that he

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54 Carl B. Rudow, "Nebraska Legislature Disliked--by Lobbyists," Detroit News, May 4, 1944, p. 3; John P. Senning, "Unicameralism Passes Test," National Municipal Review, Vol. XXXIII (February, 1944), p. 65; Harry T. Dobbins, "Legislative Procedure Under the Unicameral System," University of Kansas City Law Review, Vol. XI (December, 1942), p. 55. Quotation is from Dobbins.

had found that the party served to protect the individual legislator against the pressures of special interests in that he could plead loyalty to the caucus as a defense. He found that "the pressure of special minority groups" upon the party is not "as effective as it is when brought to bear upon the individual member."[55]

It should be noted that no claim to the effect that lobbying is more difficult under nonpartisanship has been advanced in Minnesota. Liquor lobbyists urged nonpartisanship in 1913. The numerous biennial reports of the railroad brotherhoods' lobbyists have never even so much as hinted that a partisan legislature would improve their success. The adoption of nonpartisanship in Minnesota in 1913 was not deemed of sufficient import to rate a mention in the biennial report, neither was there any note of any changes in lobbying strategy in the 1915 report. Lobbying is, and has been, important and effective in the nonpartisan Minnesota legislature. (As a few examples from among a constant procession, the drys wielded great influence in the 1915 and 1917 legislatures; employers associations were very effective lobbyists against Governor Olson's unemployment insurance bill; and the Minnesota wine and spirits Institute hired a former speaker to guard its interests before the 1949 legislature, not without success.)

The attitude toward the role of the lobbyist implied in writings concerning the Nebraska legislature is interesting. The

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55 W. F. Willoughby, Principles of Legislative Organization and Administration (1934), p. 57.

implication that lobbyists are "all bad" was the result of the activities of interest groups that exceeded accepted public norms of behavior and was partly responsible for the numerous reform movements in the second decade of the twentieth century. Political scientists today are increasingly recognizing the lobbyist as a legitimate and proper phenomenon in the democratic process. If legislation be the end result of the interaction of pressure groups before the legislative body, then public interest should be oriented toward keeping the lobbyist within the bounds of publicly accepted moral standards, not toward his elimination or emasculation.

As in Minnesota, the observer in Nebraska was struck by the increased independence of the individual legislator. One writer reported that "all experts. . . agree, there is more actual independence in the legislature than ever before."[56] Also as in Minnesota, this independence was greeted by proponents as a sign of individual action according to the merits of the questions and by opponents as evidence of irresponsiblility.

After the nonpartisan system had been in force in Minnesota for some years, it became generally accepted and serious challenges to it did not reappear until recent years. In Nebraska, too, the plan is so well accepted that "the people don't discuss it."[57] A survey conducted for the Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation in 1943

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56 Carl B. Rudow, "Nebraska's Legislature Open to Public View," Detroit News, May 2, 1944, p. 7.

57 Carl B. Rudow, "Nebraska's One-House Legislature A Success," Detroit News, May 1, 1944, p. 9.

among one hundred former members of the legislature and one hundred "civic leaders" indicated that sixty per cent of them approved nonpartisan election of legislators, sixty-four percent approved the size of the legislature and eighty-five percent objected to any change in the state constitution at that time.[58] Although the major political parties have not approved the nonpartisan principle, never have the state platforms of either major political party asked for a change in the mode of electing the legislature.[59]

Legislative Personnel. Superficially, at least, the members of the Nebraska legislature do not appear to differ a great deal from those in other states, except that the number of lawyers chosen is somewhat smaller than is the usual case. In the 1947 legislature, there were twelve farmers or ranchers, twelve small businessmen, seven lawyers, five newspapermen, two bankers and five individuals with occupations varying from dentist to trucker.[60] The one thing that seemed to characterize them was that nearly all of them were experienced legislators, and nearly two-thirds of them were reelected incumbents. The tendency for the people to reelect the incumbent was noted in the very first election under the nonpartisan system, and the trend has steadily increased. A report of the 1936 primary election, the first under the new legis-

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58 Carl B. Rudow, "Foes Unable to Shake Nebraska's System," Detroit News, May 5, 1944, p. 12.

59 The platforms are printed in the Nebraska Blue Book, biennially.

60 Compiled from biographies in the Nebraska Blue Book, 1948, pp. 207-216.

lative system, stated that:[61]

> . . . . the voters showed a decided preference for candidates with legislative experience. Of 122 such candidates, sixty, or fifty percent, were nominated while only twenty-six or sixteen percent of the 161 lacking such experience survived. Within the ranks of those who had served in the legislature, a decided preference was manifested for members of the last legislature over those who were not. Of the thirty-eight prior members not in the last legislature, only five, or thirteen percent hurdled the primary as compared with fifty-five, or sixty-five percent of the members of 1935. And as between the eighty-four members of the last legislature seeking nomination, . . senators were preferred over representatives, eighteen, or eighty-two percent of the former, and only thirty-seven, or sixty percent, of the latter being nominated.

Of the eighty-six candidates, forty-five claimed to be Democrats and forty-one Republicans. In twenty-two districts both candidates affiliated with the same party and in twenty-one they were of different parties. This evidence of a non-party approach is similar to that found in Minnesota. It is interesting that eleven of the twenty-one districts with two parties represented were won by Republicans in a strongly Democratic year. The legislature had been five to one Democratic in 1932 and two to one Democratic in the next election. In 1936, a Democratic governor was elected, but the legislature was nearly equally divided between the parties, the Democrats claiming forty-five seats, the Republicans forty-one.[62] Of this group, 74.4 percent had had legislative experience.

In the second legislature under the nonpartisan plan, there

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61 L. E. Aylsworth, "Nebraska's Non-Partisan Unicameral Legislature," National Municipal Review, Vol. XXVI (February, 1937), p. 78. Italics added.

62 Loc. Cit.

were nominally twenty-four Republicans and nineteen Democrats. In this, the 1938 election, Nebraska returned to "normalcy" and a veteran statehouse reporter was moved to comment:[63]

> If the election had been held on a partisan ballot, the Republicans would have outnumbered the opposition by at least two to one, as election returns indicate.

The tendency to support the incumbent and the reduced sensitivity to changes in public thinking, so evident in Minnesota, thus appear very important in Nebraska, too. The strength of the incumbent has constantly increased. In the 1949 legislature, twenty-seven incumbents (62.7%) were held over and of these, ten (37.0%) had no opposition in the general election. (One newcomer was also elected without competition.)[64] The increasing advantage given to the "name" candidate as non-partisanship matures in Nebraska is indicated by the fact that in the 1938 general election, only two members (4.7%) were elected without opposition. In 1946, there were seven (16.3%) and in 1948, eleven (40.7%). In 1948, ten incumbents were defeated in the general election, but the others of the thirty-seven seeking to retain seats were successful. Thus nearly three out of every four wishing to remain in the legislature did so.

In addition to legislative experience, the successful candidates for the legislature are characterized by the fact that they have "already won some local distinction by long

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63 Quoted in John P. Senning, "One House, Two Sessions," National Municipal Review, Vol. XXVIII (December, 1939), pp. 843-844.

64 Nebraska Blue Book, 1948, pp. 417-419.

service on school boards or in city or county offices."[65] They are also, for the most part, men who have successfully established themselves as farmers, small businessmen or professional men in their communities and are not persons who seek to make a profession of holding political office. In this respect, the membership of the Nebraska body very much resembles that in Minnesota.

The desire of legislators to disassociate themselves from the party machinery once they become accustomed to their newfound status as independents is indicated in the 1948 BlueBook where only three of the forty-three members mention partisan activities.[66] One noted that he was formerly a Republican county chairman and member of the state central committee, another that he was currently a member of the state central committee and a third that he was formerly state chairman of the Young Republican Club of Kansas.

As in Minnesota during the early years of nonpartisanship, some legislative leaders in Nebraska have carried along their party associations, although this tendency will probably decrease there as it has in Minnesota. The 1937 speaker of the legislature, Charles J. Warner, was the unsuccessful Republican candidate for governor in 1938 and the 1943 speaker, Robert B. Crosby, was elected lieutenant-governor as a Republican in 1946.

The definite trend toward increased tenure in office has

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65 Spencer, op. cit., p. 84.

66 Nebraska Blue Book, 1948, pp. 207-216.

already been noted in the state of Minnesota.[67] The tendency to reelect the incumbent has been even more marked in Nebraska where the propensity to hold over the members has enjoyed a steady, uninterrupted increase since the adoption of nonpartisanship, as is shown in Table XVIII.

Table XVIII

HOLDOVERS IN THE NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE

Elections, 1924 - 1948

Holdovers		House of Representatives (100 members)		Senate (33 members)	
From	To	Number of Holdovers	Percentage of Holdovers	Number of Holdovers	Percentage of Holdovers
1923	1925	32	32.0%	15	45.4%
1925	1927	45	45.0	19	57.6
1927	1929	52	52.0	17	51.6
1929	1931	42	42.0	19	57.6
1931	1933	47	47.0	12	36.3
1933	1935	32	32.0	11	33.3
		Unicameral Senate (43 members)			
1937	1939	20	46.5%		
1939	1941	22	51.2		
1941	1943	24	55.8		
1943	1945	26	60.4		
1945	1947	26	60.4		
1947	1949	27	62.7		

Source: Nebraska Blue Book, 1948, pp. 118-169.

Note: The first unicameral session was that of 1937. Because of the scope of the change, figures between 1935 and 1937 are not comparable.

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67 Supra, Table XIII, Incumbent advantage and lengthy tenure appear to be universal characteristics of nonpartisan legislative bodies. A study of municipal nonpartisanship in Detroit concluded that "the public showed a marked preference for incumbents, and lengthy tenure was frequent" in the common council. See, Maurice M. Ramsey, Some Aspects of Non-Partisan Government in Detroit, 1918-1940, pp. 86-92, 107.

Organization of the Unicameral, Nonpartisan Senate.

There was some confusion in the first nonpartisan legislature in Minnesota concerning the method of choosing officers. It was settled when caucuses on a wet-dry basis were organized for this purpose. The first session in Nebraska, on the other hand, decided to outlaw the traditional partisan caucus. A suggestion that a preliminary, informal caucus of the entire membership, as has often been used in California, be called in order to choose officers was rejected.[68] Instead, it was decided to have an informal ballot first, followed by the official roll call using the names of the men receiving the three highest number of votes on the informal ballot. This system worked satisfactorily in 1937 and was written into the permanent rules.

The first legislature, using this system, chose Charles J. Warner, a Republican who had served longer in the legislature than any other member, as speaker.[69] There seems to be a tendency in this direction in Nebraska. It raises once again the well-worn, but very serious question as to whether there is a correlation between seniority and ability. The man with the second longest seniority, a Democrat, was unanimously selected to chair the committees. It is interesting to note that Warner, a Republican,

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[68] Aylsworth, op. cit., pp. 80-81.

[69] The lieutenant-governor serves as president of the legislature. The speaker's position is that of president pro-tem. The legislators, not having titles designated in the constitution, decided at the first session that they were senators.

On leadership in the Nebraska legislature, see: Senning, "One House, Two Sessions," p. 844; Dobbins, op. cit., pp. 511-513.

was chosen speaker even though the Democrats held a one vote majority. He defeated W. F. Haycock, who had been the Democratic majority leader in the heavily Democratic House in the previous session. The clerk selected was a Democrat. Party lines were definitely not drawn for organizational purposes.[70]

As in the Minnesota Senate since 1931, committees in the Nebraska legislature are chosen by a committe on committees.[71] Similar to that in Minnesota is the arrangement whereby the group is made up of two men from each congressional district. The chairman of the committee is elected at large.

In the first legislative session under the Norris plan, the nominal Republicans held a majority in four of the five congressional districts, yet in every case there was at least one member from the Democratic party chosen from each district. This phenomonon was hailed as a true example of nonpartisanship.[72] (Actually, it would appear to be a much better example of bi-partisanship.) The committee consisted of seven Democrats and Four Republicans, yet it gave sixty-three out of 124 committee positions, more than one-half of them, to Republicans. The chairmen of five important committees were affiliated with the party of a minority of committee members. Party labels were clearly not important criteria.

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70 Green, op. cit., pp. 3-4; Senning, "One House, Two Sessions," p. 844; Lane W. Lancaster, "Nebraska's Experience With A One-House Legislature," The University of Kansas City Law Review, Vol. XI (December, 1942), pp. 25-26.

71 In Minnesota the committee is titled the committee on organization.

72 Aylsworth, op. cit., p. 81.

The second session, with a majority of five nominal Republicans, chose a Democratic speaker on seniority[73] and reelected the Democratic clerk.

While there are many areas of comparison between the Minnesota and Nebraska legislatures, in the matter of rules of procedure there are wide and important differences. In Nebraska, there are only eleven standing committees of a substantive nature and four dealing with organization and administration of the house. Each committee is required to keep a record of its proceedings, public hearings must be held before any bill can be reported out and five days notice must be given before such hearings. All hearings are open to the public except for an occasional executive session, and even at these the press cannot be excluded. Instead of making a routine recommendation on a piece of legislation, each committee is also required to give its reasons for its decision. These must be mimeographed and placed on the desk of every member.

The tendency for certain legislators to dominate the important committees, so common in Minnesota, is circumvented by a rule limiting each senator to no more than two of the eleven committees dealing with substantive material. No member ever has a committee meeting conflict.

Because much legislation is actually made in many state legislatures in the committee of the whole where no record of the vote is kept, the first session of the unicameral body in Nebraska seriously

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73 Since the speakership is largely honorary, the office is "passed around". No man has yet been reelected to the post.

considered eliminating this mechanism. The idea eventually was rejected, but the rules were written so as to require that the committee of the whole keep a record of its proceedings and upon the request of any member the yeas and nays must be taken upon any question and entered upon the daily journal. This is in direct opposition to the practice in Minnesota (and many other states), where most important amending takes place in the committee of the whole, no record is kept and no recording of the roll call is allowed.

No bill may be placed on final passage until five legislative days after the initial reference to the committee on enrollment and review nor until two days after reference to the third reading file. These rules are actually observed, thus giving the individual senator opportunity to digest the many matters upon which he must vote.[74]

These intelligent, democratic rules of procedure, adopted as part of the general overhaul of the legislative branch, no doubt are important factors in making the Nebraska legislature more truly nonpartisan than is the case in Minnesota, where the rules are carry overs from olden days and are, in fact, strongly favorable to the majority group in violation of the theory of a nonpartisan body.

Executive-Legislative Relationships. In Nebraska, these appear to differ somewhat from Minnesota insofar as the adoption of nonpartisanship appears to have increased rather than decreased the

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[74] On the rules of the Nebraska legislature, see Nebraska Blue Book, 1948, p. 200; Aylsworth, op. cit., pp. 80-81; Senning, "Unicameralism Passes Test," p. 62; Harry T. Dobbins, "Legislative Procedure Under The Unicameral System," The University of Kansas City Law Review, Vol. XI (December, 1942), pp. 51-57.

power and prestige of the legislature in relation to the governor. Predictions that the governor would completely dominate the small Nebraska body did not materialize. Evidently the chief executive felt the same lack of traditional party pressure that has hindered the efforts and ambitions of Minnesota governors. To combat this, Nebraska gubernatorial officers have resorted to some of the same techniques used in Minnesota.[75]

The use of the veto appears to have increased somewhat. While Norris thought that having but one house would eliminate passing of the buck, the legislators discovered that the governor was still available for that purpose. In 1937, the governor vetoed seventeen bills, one of which was repassed. In 1939, six bills were vetoed and all died.

The governor uses the technique of frequent conferences in his offices in order to avoid deadlocks and the possible use of the veto. Compromises are worked out in this manner. As in Minnesota, the uncommon practice of the governor appearing before a legislative committee "as a citizen" has been used. In the special session of April, 1944, the governor appeared before the public works committee to urge the adoption of a highly contested public power bill. He "received the same treatment as other witnesses."[76]

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[75] On this subject, see, Senning, "One House, Two Sessions," p. 844; Senning, "Unicameralism Passes Test," pp. 63-64; Senning, "Nebraska's First Unicameral Legislative Session," pp. 163-164; Rudow, "Nebraska's One-House Legislative A Success," p. 7; Rudow, "Nebraska's Legislature Open to Public View," p. 7.

[76] Rudow, "Nebraska's Legislature Open to Public View," p. 7.

The first nonpartisan session saw two serious executive-legislative differences on the allocation of the gasoline tax to poor relief and on appropriations made in excess of the governor's budget. There was considerable feuding between the two branches and the governor strongly criticised the legislature for going beyond his budget. (The appropriation act had passed by more than a three-fifths vote and, under the constitutional rule, could not be vetoed.) Sessions since have demonstrated the fact that the legislature has increased an independence and importance. On the other hand, the governor does not appear to have emerged as policy leader to the same degree as has been the case in Minnesota.

Summary. There appear to be many similarities between the nonpartisan systems found in the legislature's of Minnesota and Nebraska. In both states, an increasing number of holdovers from one session to the next is to be noted, as is the very strong advantage held in an election by the incumbent, the independence of the legislator both from the party and from the governor, and the relative slowness of change of personnel in response to changes in public thinking. In both states, most of the legislators are not active in either major political party. Both legislatures encountered difficulties in the leadership question, especially in the first session, although this matter tended to be solved after the passage of time.

In organizational matters, both legislatures choose their officers with no particular reference to party labels and there

is a similarity in the use of the committee to name committees. Governors in both states have been forced to use some rather unusual techniques in order to bring pressure on the legislature after losing the force of the party whip.

There are some important differences between the two states, however. The homogeneity of the people, the relative sparseness of the population and the absence of large cities makes it more possible for the Nebraska voter to have a first hand knowledge of legislative candidates in the "personality contest" campaign. The Nebraska legislature is much smaller, thus focusing the spotlight much more upon each individual.

The caucus is not used at all in Nebraska, there are no organized groups except on an ephemeral basis and hence no minority to be discriminated against. The rules of prededure in Nebraska are much more modern than in Minnesota and they are very much more in a truly nonpartisan spirit.

The differences between the two states appear to be factors in Nebraska's favor and seem to have helped that state toward an acceptable form of nonpartisanship. Even so, opposition to the practice is to be found there.

CHAPTER VII

PROPOSALS TO RETURN TO PARTISANSHIP

Gubernatorial Attitudes

The View of Governor Hammond. Winfield Scott Hammond was a man who fit very well the classic description of a truly versatile politician: he was able to straddle the fence while keeping both ears to the ground. In the campaign of 1914, he managed to collect nearly all of the votes of wets of both parties and to keep the vote of Democrats in general without committing himself on the key question of the campaign: county option for saloon licensing. Having bi-partisan support behind him, he recognized the advantage of the "nonpartisan" election for his own purposes. Scoffing at the possibility that he was a mere Democrat, he urged that the office of chief executive was in fact, and should be legally, nonpartisan:[1]

> If our judges, our county and our legislative officers are to be so elected, there is no reason why the Governor of the State and other State officers should not be elected in the same manner. There is little need of party organization so far as State affairs are concerned. . . .

Governor Hammond has been the only chief executive of the state to advocate extension of the nonpartisan principle to the constitutional executive officers, although this idea was advanced by some legislators and by such Non-Partisan League voices as the Minnesota Leader and the Willmar Tribune.

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[1] W. S. Hammond, "keynote" speech at Red Wing, quoted in the Willmar Tribune, October 7, 1914, supplement.

Hammond was, of course, sympathetic to legislative nonpartiship. In his inaugural address of January 6, 1915, he told the legislators that the nonpartisan statute:[2]

> . . . . is entitled to a fair trial. . . . Indeed, each member of this body owes it to his constituency and to the state to conduct himself in matters coming before him as he would if he were affiliated with no political party. . . . It is to be hoped that political partisanship will not appear in the discussions or the actions of either body of the present legislature. . . .

The first legislature to meet under the new law thus was unable to launch the plan with the sympathetic understanding and support of the chief executive. Elected under peculiar circumstances, Hammond was in no position to plead for "party regularity" and this was probably fortunate for advocates of the new system, for no governor since that time has spoken kindly of nonpartisanship.

Later Gubernatorial Views. Although it was generally known that Governor J. A. A. Burnquist did not accept the idea of a nonpartisan legislature, he made no comment on the matter in his first inaugural address in 1917.[3] In his second inaugural, coming immediately after the bitter campaign of 1918, during which the Non-Partisan League had made the first of many strong attempts to capture the Republican party machinery, he took a definite

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2 Willmar Tribune, January 7, 1915, p. 4. Quoted in part in Theodore Christianson, Minnesota; The Land of Sky-Tinted Waters, Vol. II, p. 342. Part or all of each inaugural address is also to be found in the St. Paul Pioneer-Press for the first week in January of odd-numbered years.

3 Fergus Falls Daily Journal, January 3, 1917, p. 5.

stand in favor of alterations in the election laws. The governor said that it was not desirable to return to the old convention system, but that the law should be changed to prevent "minority nominations" (i. e., those of Leaguers). He recommended that delegates be selected at primary elections who would attend conventions in order to discuss party principles and platforms. "For the state to do this in a way which will accomplish the best results, the legislature should be put on a party basis."[4] Burnquist thought that parties should be allowed to adopt platforms "so as to create party rather than personal issues in the conduct of campaigns."

This was the first gubernatorial recommendation for an abandonment of the nonpartisan legislature. While it came about in large part through the efforts of the "regular" Republicans to make the party safe from the Non-Partisan League, it was merely the first of many similar suggestions by Minnesota chief executives.

Governor J. A. O. Preus, still confronted with the challenge of the League, urged changes in the primary law "to safeguard the integrity of political conventions." He asked legislators to "give consideration" to a return to party designation for members of the legislative branch.[5]

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[4] Willmar Tribune, January 8, 1919, p. 6. For a League editorial denouncing the governor's recommendations as a move to destroy the farmers' organization, see the Minnesota Leader, December 18, 1920, p. 4.

[5] Red Wing Daily Republican, January 5, 1921, p. 1.

The views of Preus were denounced by the League as an attempt to make "petty party politics paramount again,"[6] and it was claimed that the "reactionaries" would "wipe out all the hard won progress the state has made in democratic election machinery." There was no question but that the party "regulars" thought that endorsing conventions and a return to partisanship would force the dissident Leaguers out of the Republican party.

The 1923 session of the legislature put into law some of the recommendations of Governor Preus designed to aid the farmer and to compromise with the League. These measures, together with the mass concept of prosperity during the 'twenties, served greatly to weaken the League and when Theodore Christianson became governor in 1925, Republican "regulars" felt the lessened pressure. The new governor, a veteran of many terms in the House, told the legislators that his program was: "Economy first, other issues must wait."[7] He did express himself as being in favor of a partisan ticket for law-makers, but thought that this, along with all other reform issues, would have to wait for the next session. Only economy should concern the legislature during his first term in office.

Many years later, after having spent a decade in a position of leadership in the House of Representatives, after six years as governor, and after having observed the confusion of the legis-

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6 Minnesota Leader, January 15, 1921, p. 1.

7 St. Paul Pioneer-Press, January 8, 1925, p. 1.

latures of the 'thirties, Theodore Christianson wrote:[8]

> The nonpartisan legislature has one great demerit that, like the nonpartisan election of county and municipal officials, it has served to break down party organization. Without party responsibility and a reasonable amount of party discipline democracy degenerates from an orderly method of government into one motivated by individual ambition. Each candidate announces his own personal program and makes his alliances, open or secret, with anybody from whom he can get political support and often with persons of political views different from his own. The voter becomes confused, discouraged and eventually cynical. The government falls into the control of a guild of job holders who have little in common except the mutual desire to perpetuate themselves in office.
>
> In many instances, candidates are able to break their promises to the voters with impunity; for when every candidate runs on a personal platform, there are so many different platforms that none of them makes much impression on the voter and all of them are forgotten after the election.
>
> . . . . an exceptionally conscientious voter would endeavor to learn how the candidate stood on an issue in which he was particularly interested. But the candidates might not choose to tell him; if they told him there might be no intention upon the part of the candidates to keep their promise; if elected there would be no party discipline to hold the victorious candidate in line if the persuasion of argument, flattery or money should tempt him to change his mind.
>
> A party caucus would be less likely to yield to such persuasions; those weak in faith would have their convictions renewed by the arguments of their stronger colleagues; no body of men are influenced en masse by the blandishment of the opposition; and no entire party can be bribed. Furthermore, a political party, unlike a politically-minded individual, exists not for one term, or two, or three, but expects to be of permanent duration. It has a past to honor and a future to protect. It cannot break a promise because it knows that a breach will invite the visitation of the penalty, not only in the individuals directly responsible but on the party as a whole; indeed not only on the party of the present but on the party in the entire future! . . .

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8 Letter to Malcolm C. Moos, dated January 16, 1938, quoted in full in Nonpartisan Legislative and Judicial Elections in Minnesota (1938), pp. 76-80.

This is a powerful, well-stated argument by an intelligent, veteran politician. It contains some probable exaggerations concerning the merits of the political party, however. In the first place, while a whole party cannot be bribed, certainly contributions to the treasury can keep a specific party consistently solicitous of the interests of a certain group. In the second place, while the penalty for political sins is sometimes visited upon the second or third generation of a party, this happens only in instances that are particularly dramatic or important in the eyes of a very large number of people and become somewhat of a legend. Party designation may very well increase, it certainly does not complete, political responsibility.

As has been discussed above,[8a] Floyd B. Olson, confronted with a formidable radical element in the Farmer-Labor party and for other reasons, was not anxious to have both houses of the legislature in the Liberal camp. Whether he would have wanted a partisan legislature (which would have most surely been under Farmer-Labor control) also is questionable. The party would certainly have had increased internal difficulties with its radical group under those conditions.

None-the-less, Olson's third inaugural address, delivered on January 9, 1935 suggested both a unicameral legislature and a return to partisanship. The governor recommended that if the legislature wished to reduce the number of state employees, it could start by reducing its own size. "I am heartily in favor of a

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8a Supra, Chapter III.

unicameral legislature," said Olson.

Concerning nonpartisanship, he pointed out:[9]

> The platforms of the three leading political parties of the State of Minnesota proposed the election of members of the Legislature upon a party basis. In view of those pronouncements, and assuming that all of you are members of some one of these three political parties, I anticipate that legislation to that effect will be passed without any dissent.

There was considerable dissent, however, and there is considerable question concerning the anticipation with which the governor viewed the change suggested. In any event, there is no evidence that Olson threw the weight of his office, or devoted any time, to the advancement of such a bill.

Governor Elmer Benson, perhaps with the hope that his faction of the Farmer-Labor party would come to be dominant, recommended a return to partisanship in his inaugural message of 1937.[10]

Harold Stassen also suggested, without urging, repeal of the 1913 law.[11] Edward Thye overlooked the matter in 1945,[12] but Luther Youngdahl twice took a strong stand in favor of party designation.[13]

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9 St. Paul Pioneer-Press, January 10, 1935, p. 1. Also quoted in John S. McGrath and James J. Delmont, Floyd B. Olson, Minnesota's Greatest Liberal Governor (1937), pp. 284-285.

10 Minneapolis Journal, January 5, 1937, p. 8; Minnesota Leader, January 9, 1937, p. 1.

11 Minneapolis Star-Journal, January 6, 1943, p. 1.

12 Ibid., January 3, 1945, p. 9.

13 Minneapolis Star, January 8, 1947, p. 1; Minneapolis Tribune, January 7, 1949, p. 8.

Bills Before the Legislature

Brief History of Legislative Bills.[14] The first session under nonpartisanship in 1915 considered some changes in the state's election machinery. A bill was introduced in the Senate to allow party conventions to adopt platforms and endorse candidates for partisan offices, but it was killed in the House. The legislature did repeal the second choise provision in the 1912 primary election law as being too complicated for its worth.[15] There was, however, no attempt of any kind to repeal the nonpartisan provision as it applied to the legislature.[16]

After the miserable performance of the 1915 legislature, particularly in the House, it is not surprising that the next session saw the introduction of the first bills proposing a return to partisanship. Rep. J. M. Harrison of Minneapolis introduced a bill that would provide for party conventions whenever no candidate received a majority of the vote in the primary election and for party elections for legislators. This measure was reported as being "very unpopular except among the party bosses and the special interest newspapers, who were very loud in their demands."[17]

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[14] Principal source for this section: House Journal and Senate Journal, 1915-1949. Because the titles of bills are vague, it is probable that not all of those providing for a partisan legislature are included, but the ones cited are certainly typical.

[15] Fergus Falls Daily Journal, April 19, 1915, p. 2; April 23, 1915, p. 2; Christianson, op. cit., p. 343.

[16] Willmar Republican-Gazette, May 20, 1915, p. 4.

[17] C. J. Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1917, p. 34; see also, Willmar Tribune, February 14, 1917, p. 4.

When Harrison saw that the bill was not well received, he himself moved that the section dealing with the legislature be eliminated, as it was. The bill as a whole was then killed, 87-20.[18]

In the Senate, W. S. Dwinnell of Minneapolis, a progressive Republican, introduced a bill to return the legislature to the party lists. Dwinnell and Holmberg, progressives and F. A. Duxbury, highly conservative Republican, urged that brewery interests had put the nonpartisan legislature over on the people and "every dry man should vote to go back to the party system." It was pointed out, correctly, that even if that were true, the system had back-fired on the wets. The Democrats and Non-Partisan League members strongly opposed the measure. The bill actually came to a vote and was defeated, 43-23. Among those voting against a restoration of the old system was A. J. Rockne, who had fought to keep the traditional system in 1913.[19] The bill was supported by Twin City newspapers but was violently denounced in the Non-Partisan League press.[20]

The 1917 session failed to adopt a bill providing for nomination of supreme court judges at nonpartisan conventions,[21] and another giving women the right to vote for president.[22] It did

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18 Buell, loc. cit., seemed surprised that Harrison, a "good, clean, high-minded statesman" should have introduced the bill.

19 Buell, op. cit., p. 37; Willmar Tribune, January 24, 1917, p. 4; February 7, 1917, p. 5.

20 Willmar Tribune, January 3, 1917, p. 4; February 21, 1917, p. 4.

21 Fergus Falls Daily Journal, February 22, 1917, p. 2.

22 Christianson, op. cit., p. 361.

not act on legislative nonpartisanship.

The 1913 law had required the non-party offices to be listed on the ballot with the notation "Nominated Non-Partisan." With the rise of the Non-Partisan League in Minnesota in 1918, this was the source of considerable confusion to the more casual voter. One of the first bills introduced in the 1919 session (H. F. 5, by Corning) proposed a rephrasing of the ballot so that it would read "Nominated Without Party Designation". The bill passed the House 84-1 and later became law.

In the 1919 House, Warner and Hompe introduced a bill to restore the party convention. While the bill was in the elections committee, considerable Republican pressure, including the prestige of United States Senator Knute Nelson, was brought to bear to amend the bill to provide for a restoration of party designation for county and legislative officials. With this millstone attached, the bill could not muster the strength required to get out on the floor and it was killed.[23] The League press, commenting on the effort, said that a return to partisanship would "make it mighty easy" for big business lobbyists. They would be able to "fix" a whole party whereas now they must go to each individual.[24]

In the Senate, A. J. Rockne introduced an unsuccessful bill designed to amend the primary election law to allow the words

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[23] C. J. Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1919, pp. 24-29.

[24] Willmar Tribune, April 23, 1919, p. 4. This was the same argument used two decades later in Nebraska. (Supra, Ch. VI.) Contrast this with Governor Christianson's comments, supra.

"Endorsed by. . . ." after the names of individuals on both partisan and nonpartisan ballots. The bill was amended on motion of J. D. Sullivan (conservative Democrat of St. Cloud) to except county officers and legislators. It did not pass.

In 1921, a resolution calling for a constitutional amendment permitting proportional representation for the legislature and local representative bodies was reported out favorably by the House elections committee and was placed on special order, but it was buried in the rush of the final night of the session.[25]

In the Senate, Rockne reintroduced his bill (S. F. 43) calling for party conventions. It was amended to provide that conventions recommend rather than nominate candidates. Under the lead once again of J. D. Sullivan, assisted by Gandrud and Guilford, the bill was further amended to exclude all city, county, legislative and judicial offices. This carried. In the final form in which it passed, the bill amended the primary election law to prevent a defeated candidate in the partisan primary from seeking the same office by petitioning onto the final ballot. This was aimed directly at the Non-Partisan League efforts to capture the Republican party. It further provided that a pre-primary convention would be allowed to endorse candidates in partisan contests and this endorsement could be placed upon the ballot. The machinery was too complex, however, and was repealed at the next session.

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25 C. J. Buell, Minnesota Legislature of 1921, pp. 81-86.

The attempt to restore partisanship in the legislature produced the usual blunt denunciation in the League press:[26]

> The plan to make party plums of the judgeship, county offices and legislative seats by complete destruction of the nonpartisan features of the election laws, failed, though it was recommended by Governor Preus in his message. . . .
>
> This attack on the liberal and democratic features of the primary and election laws, and recognition of the old boss-ridden party convention, will likely cost a large number of representatives and senators their jobs. It was a deliberate betrayal of the people, and an unfortunate backward step for a state that has had progressive, up-to-date primary and election laws.

As the Non-Partisan League lost much of its impetus and as it became more of an integral part of the Farmer-Labor party, thus removing the threat to the regular Republican party, moves for election law reform decreased in intensity. There were two bills introduced into the 1925 House, however, calling for party designation. One was offered by John E. Stevens of Minneapolis and another by Kinneberg "by request of Thomas Keefe". The elections committee recommended both for indefinite postponement.

In the 1927 House, interest in the matter continued. The very first measure (H. F. 1) introduced called for partisan elections for the legislature. It stirred up a great controversy. Some Republicans were in favor of it while others claimed that it was a Farmer-Labor bill. Some Farmer-Laborites favored it while others claimed that it was a Republican bill. "Since both parties were confused and suspicious, it was deemed expedient by a majority

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26 Minnesota Leader, May 7, 1921. p. 1.

to kill the bill without bringing it out for a record vote."[27]

As a substitute, Rep. Brophy introduced H. F. 650 calling for a referendum by the people to determine if they did or did not want a partisan legislature. The bill was reported out by the elections committee on March 2 and was discussed in committee of the whole. On March 30, Brophy moved for a suspension of the rules in order to consider the bill. The motion lost and the bill died on general orders.

In the Senate, Edwin L. MacLean of Minneapolis introduced S. F. 25 to put the legislature on the party ballot. This bill died in committee. He also joined with another Minneapolitan, W. B. Anderson, to introduce S. F. 760 calling for a referendum "to ascertain the will of the people" on the matter of party designation. This, too, disappeared in the elections committee.

In contrast, Frank A. Day of the ninth district and Victor E. Lawson, editor of the Willmar Tribune (Long an advocate of nonpartisanship), introduced S. F. 949 to elect all state officers without party designation. The elections committee again performed the final rites.

In 1929, Rep. J. A. Weeks, a liberal Republican, introduced H. F. 208 providing for a partisan legislature. Lamb and Lightner were later added as co-authors. On February 18, the elections committee recommended indefinite postponement by a vote of 10-4.

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27 Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board, 1927, p. 69.

The minority, Chairman W. A. Campbell, M. C. Lightner, Donald D. Wright and Mabeth Hudd Paige sought to have the minority report adopted. The motion was lost, 32-86. Among those voting in favor of a partisan legislature were Roy Dunn, George W. Johnson (later speaker), Charles Munn (later speaker) and Emil Youngdahl. Men of all political leanings, including most of the Liberals opposed the bill. Among those voting "nay" were Atwood, Chilgren, Finstuen, Hompe, Iverson, McDonough and McNulty.

The Senate of 1929 saw Edwin L. MacLean again introducing his bill (S. F. 6 this time). It was reported back by the elections committee without recommendation and was considered in committee of the whole on six different calendar days, but on March 12 it was recommended for indiefinite postponement.

In 1931, J. A. Weeks and Brophey introduced H. F. 4 calling for a partisan legislature. It was reported out without recommendation and was discussed in committee of the whole where municipal and county officials were added to the list. An attempt to have the bill advanced to the calendar failed, 46-83. Among those supporting the measure in its amended form were G. W. Johnson, Koslak, McDonough, McNulty, Munn, Norton, Weeks, Emil Youngdahl and Speaker Oscar A. Swenson. Opponents included such arch-conservatives as E. E. Adams,and Hompe, and Liberals including Barker, Chilgren and Stockwell. Opinion on the bill was badly split with the matter complicated by the lumping together of the questions of legislative, and municipal and county nonpartisanship.

At that time and many times since, opponents of a change in the system have often been agreeable to a repeal of nonpartisanship only if it extends to all three classifications of offices. Many legislators favoring a partisan legislature have objected to considering the other question simultaneously. H. F. 4 received further discussion but was eventually indefinately postponed.

In 1933, Rep. John A. Weeks (Republican) and Emil Youngdahl (Farmer-Laborite) introduced a party designation bill, H. F. 10. The Liberal-controlled elections committee recommended that it do pass and it was debated in committee of the whole, but was indefinitely postponed on January 20, on motion of Harold Barker who was a strong proponent of nonpartisanship.

In the Senate, Lightner, Hausler, Mullin, Teigan and Marshall introduced S. F. 28 calling for party designation, but it died in the Conservative-controlled elections committee.

The 1933 legislature put into law an old Farmer-Labor plank when it provided for a "consolidated" (open) primary ballot. In dealing with the question of the nonpartisan primary, it was provided that there should be separate ballot marked "Primary Election Ballot, Candidates to be Nominated Without Party Designation".[28]

In accord with the recommendations of Governor Olson, H. F. 24 was introduced in 1935, once again by John A. Weeks. The elections committee (Conservative-controlled this time) reported it back without recommendation. W. H. Campbell of Minneapolis, chairman of the committee and long in favor of a change in legislative

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28 Session Laws, 1933, Chapter 244.

elections, moved to add the bill to special orders. This was done, but the bill was never reached in the closing rush.

In the 1935 Senate, Koslak introduced S. F. 682 calling for party designation. Regarded as a Liberal bill, the measure was recommended for indefinite postponement. Senator Milton Lightner of St. Paul introduced S. F. 211 as a companion bill to H. F. 24. On April 12, the elections committee recommended the bill do pass after it had had numerous amendments, including one that eliminated the nonpartisan legislature provision. The bill finished the session on general orders.

The 1937 House was once again in Liberal hands and the Farmer-Labor governor had recommended in his message the reestablishment of a partisan legislature. Pursuant to this, Rep. Nordin, a Liberal, introduced H. F. 7. As in 1933, the Liberal elections committee recommended passage of the bill. On January 25, however, the bill was recommended for indefinate postponement. Rep. Sam Bellman of Minneapolis moved that the bill be excepted from the report, which was done. It was then moved that the bill be advanced to the calendar subject to amendment. J. J. Kinzer moved adjournment. This lost and then the attempt to keep the bill alive failed, 50-65. Most of those voting to advance the bill were Liberals, although they were joined by such Conservatives as Mrs. Paige. The speaker voted "aye" although he was strongly opposed to a partisan legislature and the weight of his opinion split the Liberals badly on the

matter. Those favoring the status quo included Brophey, Eastvold, Finstuen, L. M. Hall, Hartle, George Mac Kinnon, Wanvick and Zwach. Roy Dunn did not vote, but later supported a move for reconsideration.

The 1937 Senate considered two bills calling for partisan elections. S. F. 99 (Lodin, Hausler, Sprung) was returned to the authors by the elections committee. S. F. 777 (Sprung) suffered the same fate.

The legislature of 1937 appointed a joint interim committee on elections to consider revision and codification of the election laws. Rep. G. H. Dalen of Hayfield, in a letter to the committee, suggested a novel approach to a restoration of party designation. Pointing out that one objection to a change was the three-party system then in use in Minnesota, he suggested that minority representation could be avoided if the two men with the highest vote in the primary (of two parties, however), contest the fall election. This would overcome one strong objection to a restoration of a party legislature.

A 1937 questionaire by Judge John F. D. Meighen, chairman of a Democratic state central committee, sent to members of his committee found that they favored a party legislature, 48-9.[29] They also favored conventions to endorse candidates and set-up platforms by a 47-8 vote, but they opposed the abolition of the primary election, 35-20.

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29 Moos, op. cit., p. 93.

With the return to power in both branches of government of the Republicans in 1939, the question of partisanship in the legislature suffered somewhat of an eclipse. With the law-making body overwhelmingly Conservative in membership and with a Republican governor, the matter did not particularly cause concern.

In 1943, French, Burnap and Dickinson introduced H. F. 110 calling for a partisan legislature, but the bill was pigeon-holed in the elections committee. Senators E. A. Johnson and Milton C. Lightner introduced S. F. 742 which was recommended for indefinite postponement by the elections committee.

The 1945 House received H. F. 126 (Gibbons and later Welch) for a party designation. It was not reported out of committee.

In 1947, indefatigable Milton C. Lightner of St. Paul introduced S. F. 73 but it was buried in the elections committee. In the House, Oberg, Clem and Rundquist, all conservatives, introduced H. F. 142 providing for party designation. The bill was side-tracked in the elections committee in deference to H. F. 17 which had been introduced by five other Conservatives, Welch, Lee, French, Rogosheke and Root. The latter would return party labels to both legislative and county officers. Those who claimed that the two questions were separate and should be so considered, objected that the bill was actually designed to divide and confuse proponents of a partisan legislature. The governor had recommended a return to partisanship, but had not mentioned the county

officials and the same stand was taken by the metropolitan press.[30] The supporters of the omnibus version of the bill were in large degree opponents of Governor Youngdahl and the charge that the bill was designed to forestall a change in legislative elections seems probable.

The bill was reported out by the elections committee with the recommendation that it do pass, the first bill to receive such a recommendation from a Conservative committee. It was extensively debated in committee of the whole. Impassioned speeches in favor of retaining nonpartisanship were made by Robert Sheran of the D. F. L., as well as by other members of the Conservative caucus. On February 25, Welch asked unanimous consent for the bill to be given immediate consideration. This was granted.

Oberg (one of the authors of H. F. 142) moved to limit the provisions of the bill to the legislature only. This failed, 52-71. The bill was then placed on final passage and was lost by the narrow margin of 62-64. On the voting on these two important roll calls, Conservative leaders opposed the Oberg motion and favored final passage. Liberal leaders voted "aye" on both roll calls. On final passage, fifty-five Conservatives and nine Liberals voted in opposition to the measure.

Among those supporting the measure on final passage were such Liberals as Carlson, Chilgren, Christie, Prifel and Shipka, and

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30 See, Minneapolis Star, January 7, 1947, p. 8 which described the two-party system as "so integral a part of American democracy."

such Conservatives as Bergerud, Dunn, Haeg, Hartle, Memmer, and Speaker Hall. It is particularly interesting that men from such "fence-straddling" districts as that represented by Christie and Bergerud should have supported the plan.

Opposition to the bill came from some, such as Floyd Flom, who would have voted for a bill that did not consider county officers at the same time, and from others, such as Clark, Iverson and Wanvick, who would not have favored any type of bill changing the status of legislative elections.

The 1949 session saw the introduction of four bills. H. F. 105 was introduced by P. K. Peterson, Oscar Peterson, Langley, Rutter and Flom (all Conservatives except Rutter). It died in the elections committee, as did H. F. 547, introduced by P. K. Peterson, Dickenson, Welch, Olson and Flom (all Conservatives except Curtiss Olson). H. F. 702, introduced for the Liberals by Hagland, Chilgren, Olson, Prifel and Mattson, was also pigeon-holed.

In the upper house, S. F. 727 (a companion bill to H. F. 702) was introduced by Marvin H. Anderson of Minneapolis and Thomas D. Vukelich of Gilbert and received a brief hearing in the elections committee where representatives of both the Republican and D. F. L. state organizations testified in its favor.[31] E. L. Johnson of St. Paul moved to recommend the bill for passage, but Henry Wagnener

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[31] Minnesota Labor, March 18, 1949; Minneapolis Tribune, March 15, 1949.

of Waconia moved to include county and municipal officers on the partisan ballot which Anderson considered as a deliberate effort to kill his bill. Since new material had now been offered for consideration, John A. Johnson of Preston (a former speaker of the House), moved to lay the bill over until the next meeting and this was seconded by Frank Dougherty of Fairmount. Henry H. Sullivan of St. Cloud (whose father had discouraged many efforts in a similar direction) spoke strongly against the bill. It was later reported back to the Senate with the recommendation that county and municipal officers be added to the partisan list and that the bill then be indefinitely postponed. There was no further consideration of the matter.

Recent Views on Partisanship

Party Platforms. The official platforms of the major political parties of the state have officially been on record in favor of party designation for the legislature since the 'thirties. The Farmer-Labor party definitely began to favor partisanship in the late 'twenties when the organized labor faction of the party began to believe that the farmer wing (the old Non-Partisan League) had been wrong in thinking that non-partisanship was favorable to reform efforts. The D. F. L. was very outspoken in the 'forties in favoring a return to the conventional system of election. Even so, the 1948 state platform of that party relegated the matter to last place in a long list

of favored "social and economic legislation".[32]

Republican party has not been quite so forceful in stressing the need for party designation, although it has long been on record in favor of it and in the late 'forties, with the "old guard" entrenched in the legislature and the official machinery in the hands of the disciples of Harold Stassen, party officials have been much more definite.

The 1946 platform of the party urged a "return to the former system" but it asked that county officials as well as legislators be included.[33] The practice of linking the two questions together has often been used as a method of neutralizing the effect of the proposal for a partisan legislature. In 1948, when the "Stassen-wing" of the party was more firmly in control, the recommendation concerning county officers was not included. Somewhat buried in a section called "Improvements in State Government" was a statement:[34]

> We recommend that the members of the Legislature be elected on the basis of party designation so as to give the people the advantages of party responsibility so inherent in our American system.

Other Views. In light of the fact that the strength and importance of a political party and a political party office is

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[32] 1948 Platform of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota, Section III-P.

[33] Republican Platform for 1946, Section 6.

[34] Statement of Principles of the Republican Party of Minnesota, 1948.

closely correlated with the number of offices open to the party, it is not surprising that party officials have generally viewed a nonpartisan legislature in particular, and nonpartisanship in general, with skepticism if not outright disapproval. In 1950, nearly all party organizations and divisions had taken a position against a nonpartisan legislature. The Republican State Central Committee and its chairman, Bernhard W. LeVander,[35] were on record with that view and the Minnesota Young Republican League had asked for party endorsements, with many members favoring the party label.[36] The Hennepin County Young Republican League had taken a strong stand in favor of party designation and announced that it would refuse to support any candidate for the legislature who did not endorse labelling. A statement by the League charged that elections are now dependent chiefly upon confusion and "avoidance of any controversial issues."

The essence of the League's argument was a follows:[37]

> If a Republican cannot be elected under the name Republican in a district then there is no reason why a Republican should represent the people of that district under the cloak of non-partisanship as is the case at the present time.

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35 Minneapolis Tribune, January 22, 1949; March 15, 1949.

36 Ibid., May 16, 1949; May 29, 1949, local section.

37 Ibid., February 21, 1950.

The D. F. L. State Central Committee and its chairman, Orville L. Freeman, had taken a definite stand[38] and had the Hennepin County Young D. F. L.[39]

The Democratic National Committee member from Minnesota, Byron Allen, was very strongly opposed to the nonpartisan legislature,[40] but the views of the Republican National Committeeman, Roy E. Dunn, who was also Conservative majority leader in the House, had never been made clear. Dunn has sometimes voted in favor of designation bills, but he has never thrown his considerable political weight behind the measures. Although a partisan legislature would almost certainly increase the strength and vitality of the Republican party, Dunn is in a particularly difficult position for at least two reasons: (1) many of the strongest men in the legislature (e. g. Claude Allen of St. Paul) upon whom he is dependent for cooperation and much of his own leadership power, are opposed to party designation and he can ill afford to incur the direct enmity of such men; and (2) the non-partisan legislature, with its premium on "name" candidates, has been a refuge of the "old guard" Republicans, whose leader, both in the legislature and in the party, has been Dunn; a partisan legislature

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38 Ibid., February 20, 1949; St. Paul Dispatch, March 9, 1949.

39 Minneapolis Tribune, February 27, 1950, local section.

40 Interview, Byron Allen, August, 1949. For the view of a D. F. L. legislator, see Rep. William E. Carlson, "Did You Forget Something?" in the State D. F. L. News, May, 1950, p. 2.

might very well lead to a further decline of "old guard" strength in relation to that of the Stassen wing.

Orville L. Freeman, speaking before a six-county D. F. L. jubilee at Bemidji in 1949, delivered the viewpoint of his party:[41]

> A political party performs the function of guiding the program to which it is pledged through the legislative process into law.
>
> In accomplishing this it keeps track of its members, insures their appearance at important committee meetings and lines them up to vote when a final decision is made.
>
> [The legislator with a party label] is a member of a team—and good teamwork is necessary to accomplish the program.

Instead of nonpartisanship resulting in independence of thinking and action, it leads to "irresponsibility and confusion."

The editor of the D. F. L. Park Region Echo of Alexandria stated that "This business of attempting to fool the voters has been going on far too long already,"[42] while the voice of the Duluth A. F. L. objected that the system "boomerangs against the interests of the people who like to vote on parties and platforms."[43]

A reunion held in the summer of 1949 by surviving members of the 1913 Senate, the group that had almost inadvertently created the nonpartisan legislature, "enacted" some laws they favored,

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41 Minneapolis Tribune, February 20, 1949.

42 Park Region Echo, cited ibid., March 2, 1949.

43 Duluth Labor World, cited loc. cit.

including reapportionment, a smaller legislature and a return to partisan election of law-makers.[44] Only one of six attending appeared to dissent.

The various units of organized labor had been on record in favor of a partisan legislature since about 1927. In 1950, the Minnesota Association of Cooperatives also took a definite stand in support of designation.[45] The Association argued that under nonpartisanship, the individual could vote intelligently only by knowing the personal views of prospective legislators, but that:

> . . . intimate knowledge of all candidates by each citizen is utterly impossible. For this reason alone, operating a state legislature without party designation and party affiliation of those who are elected is absurd and ridiculous. . . .
>
> The so-called non-partisan nature of the Minnesota legislature is simply a loop-hole in the system through which a legislator may represent himself as a liberal to those constituents who want him to be a liberal, and a conservative to those who want him to be a conservative.

Proponents of nonpartisanship were to be found chiefly among legislators and former legislators. Arguments that have been offered to the present writer run along the following lines:

1. Most legislators are practical men, serving as a community service. They are not politically ambitious and resent

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44 Minneapolis Tribune, July 18, 1949; see also the editorial in the St. Paul Dispatch, July 21, 1949.

45 Dispatch from the Minnesota Association of Cooperatives, The Minnesota Legislature and How it Works (1950), 22 pp.

being used by professional politicians for their own advancement. They want to spend their time aiding the interests of their districts and not in political maneuvering designed to aid a high-ranking office-holder.

2. Party leadership would be bearable if the party stood on a definite platform and would stick to it, but such is not the case. The party is only a collection of ambitious men seeking power. Furthermore, state politics is not like national politics--"ninety-nine percent of it" does not involve issues partisan in character. Under partisanship, the individual legislator would have to toe the line set down by the professional politician even against his conscience or the best interests of his district.

3. All districts do not have the same problems or interests. Some issues vary geographically. Nonpartisanship allows the individual legislator's views to be tailor-made to fit the unique needs of his own district. Furthermore, nonpartisanship is flexible enough to allow the legislator to change his views to fit the changing ideas of his constituents.

4. Independent thinking--right or wrong--is a healthy thing in a democracy and in a deliberative body.

5. While personal campaigns are common under nonpartisanship, they would not be eliminated by the use of the party label. Name

candidates and reelection on personal reputation rather than on politics is common on all levels of partisan politics.

6. Nonpartisanship has brought men to the legislature who have, for the most part, previously proved their competence through success in their chosen callings. The hack politician who cannot make any other kind of a living is not encouraged.

7. Nonpartisanship has aided in preventing the rise of a state boss or bosses in politics because it keeps the political party from being strong enough to make that possible.

8. Nonpartisanship has quite consistently represented a cross-section of the thinking of the people of the state.

9. An extension of the idea of nonpartisanship to state administrative, national, or large population center offices would be undesirable, since the individual is not well enough known under those conditions.

10. Nonpartisanship has preserved the democratic process in Minnesota and "has been the vehicle by which many qualified individuals have made a very substantial contribution to good government."[46]

The above views have been expressed by members of both the Conservative and Liberal Caucuses, just as support for party designation has come from members of both groups. In 1950, there

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46 Quoted from a letter to the present writer from a former House Conservative leader.

appeared to be a changing spirit among legislators. Whereas once nearly all members favored the status quo, an increasing number now seemed to question the system. A leading Liberal reported that while he had favored nonpartisanship when he entered the House, his views had definitely changed. A senator who had fared well under the system stated that he had long supported nonpartisanship but that now he "wasn't so sure."

In 1950, the views taken of nonpartisanship could be summarized by saying that the D. F. L. party, organized labor, many members of the cooperative movement, and the liberal wing of the Republican party all definitely favored abolition of the system, along with many of the newspapers in the state, including the Twin City Dailies. Opposition to the proposed change came chiefly from legislators themselves and from some members of the Conservative wing of the Republican party.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

S Summary of Arguments

The Case For Nonpartisanship. Basically, all arguments for a nonpartisan legislature have their sources in the following contentions.

1. The governance of a state involves only the application of principles of efficient business management.[1] The legislature should act as a board of directors for the state. Almost none of the questions coming before the legislature are political in nature and they should not therefore be settled upon a partisan basis.[2] Nonpartisanship is thought to work well for town, county, village and city government, and it should also work well for the state since the questions considered by the legislature are essentially the same, the primary difference being in the amount of territory covered.

2. Political party names are associated in the voter's mind with national party politics such as farm price supports and labor legislation. These matters are not directly concerned with state activities and ought not be the basis for selecting legislators.[3]

3. Blind allegiance to a party, which may well be inherited

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1. Supra, pp. 6, 31, 331-332, 380.

2 Pp. 17, 73, 91, 105, 331-332, 337, 380.

3 Pp. 30, 331-332, 380.

from one's father or grandfather, is an irrational basis for choosing the state's law-makers.[4]

4. Nonpartisanship allows legislators to be chosen for their honesty and fitness for the job. They need not be active in a political party nor subervient to the demands of a party boss in order to secure or retain a seat in the legislature. They need merely be good, respectable, well-known citizens of their communities. In fact, the system has brought many good men to the legislature who would never have been chosen under the traditional method since they would have been unwilling to become entangled in the ordinary processes of party politics.[5]

5. The individual legislator is able to vote on the merits of question with no considerations other than the best interests of his constituents.[6] Nonpartisanship encourages individual initiative and requires legislators to be made of sterling material since they cannot hide behind the decision of the party caucus but must be ready to stand on their own and to defend themselves alone. The system is much more flexible than partisanship, allowing the individual legislator to follow a voting pattern consonant with the unique requirements of his own constituency.[7]

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4 Pp. 31, 331-332.

5 Pp. 28, 30, 57, 90, 381.

6 Pp. 57, 71, 72, 76, 161, 336, 380.

7 Pp. 57, 71, 153, 335, 336, 380.

6. Legislatures do not usually divide on a party basis anyway. In Minnesota, the progressive-conservative split has often crossed party lines, as did the wet-dry issue. As a matter of fact, party platforms are vague and misleading as guarantees of what legislators will do, since they are merely a collection of slogans and cliches.[8] Furthermore, people do not hold parties responsible.[9] Presidential and gubernatorial candidates really run on personal, not party, platforms and individual personalities and well-known names are important in all types of elections.[10]

7. The leadership demands upon a legislature are usually exaggerated. Independence and freedom of thought and action are more important than coordinated action and the encouragement of behind-the-scenes bossism. Leadership should be ephemeral, passing from one individual to another according to who is the best informed on a particular matter.[11]

8. In the past, many party hacks, disappointed in efforts at more lucrative offices, have been shunted into the legislature as a means of placating them. The legislature is too important a body to be used for such purposes.[12]

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8 Pp. 29, 45, 55, 75-76, 161, 380.

9 P. 31.

10 Pp. 26, 198-199, 381.

11 Pp. 106, 337-338.

12 Pp. 90, 381.

9. The nonpartisan system insures that there will always be a majority candidate elected since only two individuals contest the run-off election. This is important in a state where third parties have been very strong.[13] (In double districts, a man may be elected without a majority, but this is much less unlikely under nonpartisanship than under the traditional system.)

10. Nonpartisanship reduces the effectiveness of lobbying before the legislature.[14] (This argument has been used frequently in Nebraska, but never in Minnesota. In fact, in the latter state some lobbyists, particularly the "drys", have preferred nonpartisanship, considering it a boon to their cause.)

The Case Against Nonpartisanship. Attacks upon the nonpartisan arrangement for the legislature have their sources in the following contentions.

1. In a democracy, government is never the mere application of business principles. While a great bit of the state's business is routine and non-political in nature, the important questions in each session usually rest upon basic philosophical differences and hence are partisan issues.[15]

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13 P. 25.

14 P. 339.

15 P. 30.

2. It is not true that national party activities are not a basis for choosing state officials. The philosophy one has of the role of government in the economy applies as much to the state as to the national government. Matters such as public welfare, public housing, labor legislation, taxation and many others can, and should be, coordinated between the national and state governments.[16]

3. Nonpartisan elections are popularity contests. Usually the voter does not know before election, during a session, or after it, how his representatives have voted or what their philosophies are. Without a party there is no standard of measurement and the policies supported by the candidate may be known only to himself. He is likely to campaign on the basis that he is of the same religious and ethnic background as a majority of his voters--a matter irrelavent to state question. On important issues, he is forced to be a fence straddler or loose his seat to someone who is. Furthermore, nonpartisan elections give a tremendous advantage to familiar names, particularly those of incumbents. While this contributes to a legislature with experienced men, it results in one that is relatively insensitive to changes in the public mood.[17] Such elections, in addition, are expensive and, since the candidate must seek his own financial support, not everyone who wishes can

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16 Pp. 358, 378.

17 Pp. 28, 29, 112-113, 121-122, 236ff, 358.

make the fight. In a partisan system, finances are handled largely as a staff function by the party organization.

4. The political party is the best institution we have to produce the responsibility to the voter that is needed in a democratic system of government. The party is interested in maintaining high quality personnel and in putting forth a program of action acceptable to the electorate since the organization has a "past to honor and a future to protect". Unlike the individual, the party cannot break promises with impunity, for all of its candidates will pay the cost of an error or of bad faith, not only in the next election, but in contests in the future as well. The party, furthermore, furnishes concerted action with definite goals in mind for each session. This is very important as government becomes an increasingly dominant factor in society and the economy. Nonpartisanship means galloping off in all directions with no consistent program and often with little accomplished in a given session. Without parties, there is neither responsibility nor leadership.[18]

5. Since it is always necessary to have some kind of organization where ever there is a group--e. g., wets and drys, Conservatives and Liberals--it would be better if the group were answerable collectively for its actions through the application of party labels.[19]

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18 Pp. 16, 29, 30, 58, 92, 101, 121-122, 161, 337, 338, 358, 378.

19 Pp. 30, 55.

6. Without parties, there may not be an "alert opposition" so important in democratic law-making bodies. This encourages a spendthrift approach to the public treasury. As a matter fact, the system forces a man to become a log-roller if he wants to keep a legislative seat, for that is the basis upon which his constituents judge him. Since he need not answer for the legislature as a whole, he need assume no responsibility for a large budget.[20]

7. Nonpartisanship makes it more difficult for the governor, elected on a partisan ballot, to carry out his party's promises since he has no dependable supporting group in the legislature.[21]

8. A political party group in the legislature is much more able to resist pressures than is the individual. It is not possible to bribe an entire party.[22] The "wets" realized this when they supported nonpartisanship originally and the "drys" defended it later for the same reason.

9. Nonpartisanship is not in the American tradition of the political process. Popular government "implies the existence of political parties".[23]

General Summary and Evaluation

Origin. While nonpartisanship in general was looked upon as a desirable improvement in government during the "efficiency and

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20 Pp. 27, 30, 53, 69-70, 102, 122.

21 Pp. 16, 161, 334-335.

22 Pp. 14, 54, 339-340, 358.

23 Pp. 12, 53, 54, 122, 358, 375.

economy" movement of the second decade of the twentieth century, the adoption of that method for choosing the Minnesota legislature took place under conditions that were almost farcical.[24] In an attempt to kill a bill providing for the nonpartisan election of county (and certain other) officers, a group of senators secured the adoption of an amendment extending the provisions of the measure to legislative contests.[25] Although it was expected that the amended measure would be promply buried in the House of Representatives, the bill was energetically (although somewhat surreptitiously) supported by liquor and brewery lobbyists who believed they could fight the increasing prohibitionist sentiment better if party labels were abolished.[26] With the support of other groups,[27] the bill passed the House easily. A conference committee deliberately "stacked" against the measure was unable to prevent its becoming law,[28] and the legislature became a nonpartisan body.

Organization. Organization has continued to be through the use of the caucus system.[29] Groupings in the House were first based upon the wet-dry issue, but since 1919, the two contending

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24 Supra, Chapter 1.

25 Pp. 11-14.

26 Pp. 14-19.

27 Pp. 15-16.

28 Pp. 19-23.

29 On organization, see Chapters II and III, supra.

groups have been the conservatives and those advocating change in one degree or another. The Senate (dominated by drys during the "temperance" movement) has always been organized upon the basis of economic views and, unlike the House, has been under conservative domination uninterruptedly.

Caucuses in the Senate are open to members only upon invitation--a courtesy that is extended to most members of that body.[30] Since the 1937 session, there has been no minority organization in the senate. Both caucuses in the House are open--a member is free to join either group or to transfer fromonne to another. The House has been characterized by a large middle-of-the-road group that has moved back and forth from one caucus to another depending largely upon which group was expected to win. This tendency was particularly apparent in the 1930's and had not disappeared as late as 1949.[31] Freedom to choose one's own caucus, a peculiarity of nonpartisanship, is not unknown in the Senate either. The 1925 session saw a change of majority caucus from moderate to arch-conservative with virtually no change in personnel--the switch being inspired by a general change in political outlook throughout the state.[32]

In both houses, the Conservative caucus has not met regularly--seldom meeting, in fact, except for organizational purposes.

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30 Pp. 159-160, 177-178.

31 Pp. 230-236, Table XII.

32 Pp. 105-106.

Usually this has meant one meeting per session. The Liberals, on the other hand, have met with a fair degree of regularity, especially in the House, since 1919. The senators of this classification had their own organization during the 'thirties, but before that, and after 1935, they have met with the House members. The Liberal Representatives have caucused from time to time during each session since the Non-Partisan League began the practice in 1919, with the exception of the 1927 and 1929 legislatures.[33]

Actual guidance of the Conservative group in the House has been through the use of a "steering committee" consisting of one member from each congressional district. This practice dates far back in Minnesota history but became accentuated in 1917.[34] The committee that year was an informal group selected so prevent a division of dry strength. Since that time, the official rules committee has actually functioned as the Conservative steering committee, except for 1933 and 1937 when the Liberals organized the House. Because of this, the rules committee has no minority membership. (This arrangement is a carry over from pre-nonpartisan days when the rules committee served as a majority party steering committee with no minority representation.)

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33 Chapters II and III.

34 Pp. 60-61.

When the Liberal caucus has been very small it has done without a steering committee, but one was organized on a congressional district basis in the 1949 session when the group was of sufficient size,[35] and the Liberals used the rules committee as their steering committee when they organized the House in 1933 and 1937. In the Senate, a steering committee selected on a congressional district basis has been used since 1931 when the appointive powers were removed from the Lieutenant-governor.[36] This Conservative group (the Senate Liberals have been too small to need such a committee) is an unofficial body that names the committees and distributes the patronage. During the session its members generally sit on most of the important committees, including the vital rules committee and the committee on committees.[37]

Committees and their chairmen were named by the Lieutenant-governor in the Senate prior to 1931. Since that time, upper house committees have actually been named by the informal steering committee (formally, by the committee on organization). It has been the practice to ascertain the wishes of the majority members and to give consideration to incumbents in making up the lists.

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35 P. 175

36 Pp. 119-121, 159.

37 See Table X.

Unlike Congress and some state legislatures, the minority does not assign members to its share of the seats, but is dependent upon the pleasure of the majority leadership. As a matter of fact, it is not customary in the Senate to inquiry as to the preferences of the minority members. Furthermore, there is no rule or tradition providing for any system for sharing committee seats. The number of minority members assigned is entirely discretionary with the majority.[58]

In the House, committees are named by the speaker, usually in consultation with the majority leader or leaders and after consulting all of the members as to their preferences. Again, however, the minority does not assign members to it s allotted seats nob is there any established practice regarding apportioning of the representation. (During the terms the Liberals organized the House, the same practice prevailed.) Since there has never been official recognition of the caucus, there is no recognition of a minority, per se, no of"minority rights" such as is common in many other states.[59]

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58 Pp. 120-121, 159, 177-178.

59 Pp. 80-81, 151, 158.

Concerning organization, it might be noted that the claim is often made that there was no clear Republican-Democratic split in the legislature just prior to the adoption of nonpartisanship. This was true. Party labels were overlooked in assigning positions on committees in 1911 and, to a lesser extent, in 1913. (although there was an almost perfect division on the speakership vote. The leadership group included a few Democrats at that time. Party lines broke down so badly that the "progressive" Republicans actually held their own caucus separate from other Republicans in 1913. In the 1911 session, the treatment of the minority (the de facto minority consisted of the "progressive" Republicans) was at least as inconsiderate as it ever has been under nonpartisanship.[40] This has been cited as evidence that the introduction of nonpartisanship merely officially recognized what had taken place in actual fact and that there was no real change in organization of the legislature after 1913. While there is some truth in this contention, it is essentially in error in that it assumes that the political circumstances in that period were well established and permanent in nature. Actually, the unusual situation evolved because of the fact that the two parties had temporarily become indistinguishable so

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40 Pp. 39-41.

far as political philosophy was concerned. Both parties contained wets and drys, both (although more particularly the Republican) contained progressives, conservatives and reactionaries. Even though American political parties are not known for philosophical cohesion, this situation could hardly continue indefinitely. With the rise of the Non-Partisan League in state political activities in 1918, that organization became a genuine "opposition" and since that time the state has had two parties with distinguish able viewpoints. It seems reasonable to assume that had the state retained the traditional type of legislature, party lines would have crystallized once more beginning with the organization of the Farmer-Labor party and the Minnesota legislature would today have a conventional party organizational system.

The Speakership and Other Legislative Leaders. The speakership underwent considerable change after 1913. While the presiding officer retained all of his appointive and other powers, there were changes in tenure and in the type of person who held the position. Prior to the adoption of the nonpartisan principle, no man had held the speaker's chair for two consecutive sessions since 1883. No one had ever served for more than four years. The general practice was for a man to rise to the speakership and then at the next election to move on to the Senate, to seek one of the higher elective offices, or to retire to private life. Since the speaker was ordinarily an active party man, five of them moved on to become lieutenant governors, two became governors, another made that fight unsuccessfully and others held various important political offices in the state administration.

The tenure and political future of the speaker changed after 1913. The first two nonpartisan speakers served but one term each due to a change in the balance of wets and drys, but the next, W. I. Nolan, set an all-time record byserving for six years (three terms) and this was equalled by his successor. Due to the changing demands of political expediency, the next four speakers served but one term each, after which Lawrence M. Hall again established a new record for tenure by occupying the dias for ten years. The old practice of using the speakership as a training ground for higher state administrative offices ceased with the adoption of nonpartisanship. Since comparatively few members of the legislature have been active politically, few speakers have been acceptable to either party as

potential material for a state office. Charles Munn, who became an active member of the Farmer-Labor party, was a notable exception when he moved on to the position of a railroad and warehouse commissioner. (W. I. Nolan became lieutenant governor and a congressman after three terms as speaker and was an active Republican, but he was primarily a product of the pre-nonpartisan days.) John Hartle, the 1949 speaker, is nominally a Republican, but is not an "active"; Lawrence Hall was nominally a Democrat when he entered the House, although he was later mentioned (perhaps not too seriously) as a possible Republican gubernatorial candidate. Probably the fact that the speaker now has no place to go except back home has changed the old pattern of leaving the House after achieving its highest honor.

Concerning the quality of nonpartisan speakers, nothing too definite can be hazarded. It is probably quite safe to say that there has been no improvement in over-all quality. Only two men stand out as being particularly able presiding officers and leaders: W. I. Nolan (1919-1923 sessions) and Lawrence M. Hall (1939-1947 sessions). The others range downward through mediocrity to a few who were mere front men with little or no personal ability. It is true that the Nolan and Hall periods covered eight of the eighteen regular sessions between 1915 and 1949 and the present system has yet to produce a man such as H. H. Dunn (1911-1912) in the speaker's chair (although H. H. Flowers, 1915 speaker, was later indicted in the investigation of the rural credits bureau), still there is no reason to say that the speakership is doing any more than holding its own, especially if one considers that the quality of legislators has been improving gradually almost everywhere in the United States in the last few decades.

Looking beyond the speaker, nonpartisanship has produced little in the way of able, imaginative leaders of men. This was true even during the depression, a period of stress when one might expect such men to come forward if they were going to appear at all. The Conservatives in both houses have been somewhat more fortunate in this matter than have been the Liberals. The Senate has had a number of men who were able organizers, politicians and directors of strategy, although they have not been men of broad vision who might have advanced into important positions in the business or political world. The same might be said for Conservative House leaders for the most part. Willis I. Norton, who dominated the House for more than a decade, was shrewd in his control, but no one would say that he was an imaginative or an inspirational leader (his period of history did not require it, of course). His successor, Roy E. Dunn, has demonstrated considerable organizational ability, but has had little opportunity to apply it positively since he has busied himself for two decades in fighting a rear-guard action for the cause of conservativism against the pressures of Farmer-Laborites and "Stassen Republicans".

Liberal leaders have been more noted for being "good Joes" than for leadership. This unfortunate fact was particularly felt during the years when Farmer-Labor administrations stood in need of assistance from legislators in enacting a program. Men such as George Lommen in the Senate have been able speakers, but the real work in a legislature is not done through oratory; many others have enjoyed the quiet respect of their fellow members; and many have felt a sincere, even fervent, belief in the cause for which they went to the

legislature; but in summary, it must be said that the Liberals in neither house have produced one outstanding leader.

While several men have passed throughthe legislature briefly on their way to state and national positions of trust, legislative leadership has not provided much material for such positions. Theodore Christianson, who moved from the chairmanship of the House appropriations committee to the governorship in 1925, was an outstanding exception. He had been a House leader for most of a decade. Another was Hjalmar Petersen, whose conscientious and diplomatic efforts as head of the 1933 House tax committee (which made the progressive income tax the basis of the Minnesota state tax system) were factors in Olson's choice of the Askov publisher as his running mate in the next election. (Perhaps more important considerations were Petersen's magnificently Scandinavian name, his residence in a small northern Minnesota village and his championship of the more conservative, rural wing of the Farmer-Labor party, but he could scarcely have been of much political value had he not first attracted attention by his work in the legislature.) Despite the failure of the legislature to fulfill its traditional role in this area, the state has not been wanting for able leadership. Beginning with Christianson, and including Olson, Stassen and Youngdahl, the state has been served by a series of governors who have been of definitely outstanding ability among mid-western chief executives. The Minnesota delegation in the United States Congress has likewise compared favorably with other mid-western states in recent decades.

Although the practice is by no means unknown in other legislative bodies, the Minnesota House has often seen candidates for the speaker-

ship (some of them successful) who were not members of the inner circle of their own caucus. This policy has been encouraged because of the importance of the members of the independent middle group who may freely choose the caucus to which they will (for organizational purposes) adhere. This factor has helped produce the candidacies of Carl Iverson in 1923, both Andrew Finstuen and Charles Munn in 1933, both George W. Johnson and Harold H. Barker in 1935, Barker again in 1937 and J. J. White in the 1937 extra session. Candidates designed to appeal to the middle-of-the-road group also have appeared in the Senate from time to time.[41]

Freedom of Action. The independence of the individual member of either house to make up his own mind in voting was noted immediately in the 1915 session of the legislature and caused a good deal of comment in the newspapers of the day.[42] Since there were no guideposts beyond the liquor question (except for specific personal commitments) in the 1915 and 1917 sessions, skeptics of nonpartisanship made much of the fact that the individual legislator was free to act as he pleased. This was decried on the grounds that (1) it enabled the legislator who had been elected with few commitments to vote in ways that might not coincide with the views held by a majority of his constituents; and (2) it thoroughly disguised the voting record of the individual since this could be known only by a compilation of roll calls--something that virtually no voter would undertake. Proponents of the system evidently held to the theory that a representative of the people is expected to use his own best judgement in

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41 This section represents an evaluation of Chapters II and III.

42 Pp. 53-55.

their behalf and that he is not sent to the capital merely to support a pre-stated set of proposals or beliefs upon which he was elected. The defenders of the nonpartisan principle made constant use of the argument that the legislator could not vote "fearlessly" or "independently" as he thought best without having to submit to the orders of a "boss" or "machine". It is interesting that the literature defending the system is lacking in a discussion of the question of political responsibility to the electorate.[43]

That freedom of action remained after the caucuses began to be organized on a broader basis than the single issue of temperance was indicated in the 1919 session when two Non-Partisan League members steered a semi-independent course despite what might have been expected by constituents who voted for them.[44] This type of behavior has come to be accepted; and is generally made respectable simply by arguing that the representative used his "best judgment" or "acted in the best interests of his district."

Crossing of caucus lines is a characteristic of the Minnesota legislature that was not uncommon prior to 1915, but which increased in degree beginning at that time and has continued to the present. Members who fail to go along with a majority of their caucus colleagues seldom incur displeasure, nor is an explanation generally expected (except for a few sessions when the Non-Partisan League made an earnest effort to bind its caucus).

Elections. Nonpartisanship has produced elections dealing but

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43 See, Chapter IV.

44 Pp. 79-82.

vaguely with issues.[45] It has encouraged "fence-straddling" and has given an advantage to "straddlers" as against candidates with a more definite program of pledges.[46] Ethnic background, religion, local reputation and a good "political name" have been important in elections.[47] The last factor has given the incumbent a considerable advantage, which in turn has led to longer tenure and more experienced legislators, but at the cost of reduced sensitivity to changes in public viewpoints.[48]

Legislative and political party election campaigns have been almost completely separated.[49] This has altered the basic organization of the party which no longer has the assistance of legislative office seekers. Financing of legislative campaigns is largely a personal matter. The Republican party by indirection--never overtly--aids needy Conservative candidates in attempting to ensure a Conservative legislature, but the Democratic-Farmer-Labor party has virtually ignored legislative contests (through the 1948 campaign).[50]

Newspapers have been of some importance in legislative elections because of the necessity for legislative contestants to get their names before the public frequently. This factor has carried less weight, however, than it appears to do in some municipal campaigns where the nonpartisan ballot is used, since in rural areas the

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45 On elections, see Chapter IV.

46 Pp. 199, 202-203, 206-209.

47 Pp. 224-227.

48 Pp. 236-243.

49 Pp. 187-188.

50 Pp. 187-190.

editors must compete with the fact that candidates are generally already known by reputation and in urban areas the newspapers tend to be more interested in the gubernatorial and national offices that are to be filled in the same election.[51]

The chief advantage of nonpartisanship as an election device lies in the fact that the two leading candidates almost always fight it out in the better publicized general election rather than in the primary where public interest is often low. Similarly, a legislator is elected by a majority (except in double districts, of which there are many), and not by a simple plurality.[52] (This has been particularly important in Minnesota, which was a three party state for a quarter of a century.)

Executive-Legislative Relations. It has been alleged that gubernatorial leadership, because of the absence of the party whip over the legislators, would necessarily be weak under nonpartisanship. In Minnesota, however, such leadership has proved not only possible, but very effective.[53] Under a system that chooses legislators individually and not upon a policy basis, leadership has gone to the chief executive largely by default. The governor is the only person elected who has a systematic program and is the one lawmaker who is truly under public surveillance.

The first chief executive elected after the adoption of nonpartisanship, W. S. Hammond, believed the governor should leave

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51 Pp. 227-230.

52 Pp. 196-197.

53 See, Chapter V.

policy formulation to the legislature, but he had good political reasons for taking such an attitude.[54] Beginning with Governor J. A. A. Burnquist, however, policy leadership evolved more and more definitely toward the chief executive. His task has not been easy without the availability of party machinery and he has had to resort to sundry techniques--such as appearing personally before caucuses and committees, leading protest marches, organizing "citizens' committees" to work for specific measures, writing newspaper columns, and appealing via the radio to the general public asking that pressure be applied against the legislature. Perhaps because the state has had a series of skillful, diplomatic governors, the legislation most needed from time to time has been pushed through and the tendency of the legislature to be lacking in comprehensive policy has hence had less of an impact.

Generally speaking, the less assertive governors have found more favor with the legislators, but have accomplished less in the way of a systematic program.[55] If the governor does not assume leadership, there appears to be no immediate substitue for him. If, because he lacks diplomacy and the ability to rally public opinion and attention, he is unable to lead the legislature, there is likewise no immediate substitute.[56] If legislation must be accomplished, it is almost imperative that leadership come from

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54 Pp. 259-261.

55 Pp. 259-261, 300-302.

56 Pp. 289-293.

the governor and it is possible for that official to secure the adoption of a comprehensive, well-oriented program, although the effort and diplomatic skill required probably is greater than that needed in states with conventional law-making systems.

Comparisons With Other States. Turnover in the Minnesota legislature, affected by the strong advantage held by the incumbent, is at a rate that is one of the lowest in the nation. Lack of experience, a factor that has plagued many other state legislatures, has not been a problem in Minnesota.[57]

In comparison with the only other nonpartisan legislature in the United States, that of Nebraska, there are many similarities and many contrasts.[58] In both states, the incumbent holds a strong advantage over other candidates; the number of holdovers from one session to the next is steadily increasing,[59] the legislator displays a relative independence from both party and governor; the legislature is relatively slow to reflect changes in public thinking; most legislators are not active in party affairs; legislative leadership has been a problem and not very satisfactory; and governors have been forced to use rather unusual techniques in order to bring pressure upon the legislature. There are important differences, however. The Nebraska electorate, in a homogeneous, relatively sparsely populated state, has less difficulty with the problem of knowing nothing about candidates, so common in Minnesota;

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57 Pp. 320-331.

58 Pp. 331-353.

59 Compare Table XIV and Table XVIII.

the Nebraska legislature is smaller, focusing attention more definitely upon the individual; the caucus is not used and hence there is no majority and minority; and the Nebraska rules of procedure are more modern and more truly nonpartisan in spirit.

Efforts to Repeal Nonpartisanship. Beginning with the first nonpartisan session in 1915 there has been dissatisfaction with the system and efforts have been made to return the legislature to a party basis.[60] Except for W. S. Hammond,[61] all governors have favored, in one degree or another, a conventional legislature.[62] Since 1917, bills have been introduced at almost every session to make the legislature a partisan body, but until 1947 they received little attention of a serious nature within the legislature itself.[63]

In recent years, repeal of nonpartisanship has received an increasing amount of attention within the legislature and among party officials. By 1950, officials of both parties, various interest groups and many legislators favored repeal. Opposition has come chiefly from conservative Republicans and from many of the legislators themselves.[64] Most law-makers have sought to protect their independent positions, but attitudes have been changing in recent years and the matter seems destined for further serious study by the legislature.

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60 See, Chapter VII.

61 Pp. 354-355.

62 Pp. 355-360.

63 Pp. 361-374.

64 Pp. 374-382.

Conclusions

The case for a nonpartisan legislature is supported by certain advantages to be found under that system. It has allowed some able men who would not otherwise have become entangled in political activity, men interested only in serving their communities and not in using the legislature to further personal ambitions, to become members of the legislature. Legislators elected under the present nonpartisan law generally hold their seats by a vote of a majority of those voting for the office. The system discourages choice by a mere plurality and it causes the two major contestants in a district to battle for the seat in the general, rather than the primary, election when public interest is at its peak. The system may also have helped prevent any tendency toward modern day bossism in Minnesota by keeping political parties relatively weak. Its principal contribution, however, has been to give the state an experienced legislative body, with rare need to depend upon novices in important positions. (It is rather ironic that this advantage has not been stressed in arguments favoring nonpartisanship.)

Many asserted advantages of nonpartisanship have not been proved in practice, however. The argument that the legislature is merely a business-like board of directors and that the state has few, if any, political questions, has been repudiated by the Republican-Non-Partisan League disputes after 1918 and the Republican-Farmer-Labor differences in the 'thirties. While there were no clear party divisions at the time the present system was adopted, important partisan questions have arisen in every session since 1919. The

independence of the individual and his right to vote on the merits of each question is over-balanced by the gross lack of responsibility to the voter. The distrust of the political party, implicit in all nonpartisan arguments, may have been well justified early in the twentieth century, but today the party is viewed as both a legitimate and a necessary part of the mechanism of democracy, particularly in the light of the necessity for government to approach systematically the numerous social and economic problems that have been assigned to it for solution since the great depression.

The greatest weaknesses of nonpartisanship have been the lack of a collective program, the lack of an expressive opposition at times, the absence of delineated issues in campaigns and their replacement by popularity contests to a greater degree than is found in partisan elections, the lack of responsibility on the part of both the individual and the leadership, and the relative insensibility of the legislature to changes in public attitudes.

The weaknesses of nonpartisanship, therefore, appear definitely to overshadow the advantages. Despite the imperfections of the American political party, it is the best vehicle available for insuring responsibility of the law-maker to the people, and for giving the citizen a mechanism through which he can register approval or protest. Since irresponsibility, together with callousness to changes in public sentiment, have been the greatest weaknesses of the legislature, and since both of these difficulties could be remedied to some extent by the use of party labels, it would be in the best interest of good government in Minnesota if the nonpartisan system, so far as it applies to the legislature, were to be abandoned.

The state of Minnesota is particularly fortunate in that it possesses one of the very best guarantees for democratic government --a genuine two-party system in its politics. Because Minnesota is not dominated by a single party, as is the case in many American states, it has witnessed peculiarly interesting election campaigns and the spirited battles have produced a series of singularly able chief executives. The two-party system serves to keep government alert, keen and ever seeking to improve itself. A state fortunate enough to possess such a system could very profitably avail itself of the opportunity to apply it to the legislative body. The abandonment of nonpartisanship would not mean the surrendering of the legislature by the conservatives and it certainly would not mean an end to Republican domination, for that party would continue to organize the legislature under most conditions just as it is able to elect the governor under most conditions. It would mean, however, that the legislature would more clearly reflect political balances within the state and would be more sensitive to protest voting which, under nonpartisanship, has met with frustration.

The problem of nonpartisanship should be considered separately from such other questions as that of nonpartisanship for county or municipal officers, reapportionment of the legislature, reduction in the size of the legislature, or the other unrelated items of contention. The matter should be approached singly and not in combination with other issues.

The state of Minnesota, in adopting nonpartisanship, launched into a desirable experiment (even though it was unplanned)--and in doing so demonstrated one of the advantages of the federal system

of government--but the experiment has been found wanting and it has not spread elsewhere (except, under special circumstances, to Nebraska). The state should not hesitate to admit the unsatisfactory results of the trial and need not feel anything but proud, either for having tried this unique system, or for finding it desirable now to abandon the practice.

THE NONPARTISAN LEGISLATURE

IN MINNESOTA

-by-

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Department of Political Science
at the University of Minnesota

University of Minnesota
Minneapolis
December, 1950

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pamphlet was written by A. W. Rankin and it concluded the series. Haines and Buell were followers of Henry George, ardent prohibitionists and progressives who wrote in a strongly opinionated, muckraking style. Buell and Rankin, like nearly all prohibitionists, strongly supported nonpartisanship. The pamphlets received considerable circulation and were effective aids to the reform movement. The election of 1910 turned out over fifty of the men most condemned by Haines and his record in the next election was still more effective. The booklet written by Rankin was much more objective, but less colorful in nature as it reflected the end of an era. A complete file of the booklets is available in the Minneapolis Public Library.

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Official voice of the Non-Partisan League. After League activities were absorbed by the Farmer-Labor party, the newspaper was renamed the Farmer-Labor Leader.

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Supports the D. F. L. party politically.

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During the second decade of the twentieth century, it was dry, progressive and Republican under the editorship of Jens K. Grondahl.

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During the second decade, it was wet, conservative and Democratic in policy.

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Evening counterpart of the Pioneer-Press.

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