

LEGISLATIVE LORE

The Nebraska Solons Get Down to Business on Time

BILLS OF IMPORTANCE INTRODUCED

The Outgoing and Incoming Governors Agree On Reform Measures Needed

By our Staff Correspondent George W. Kline

The thirtieth session of the Nebraska legislature, heralded as the most important in the history of the state, has been organized. Committees are yet to be named in the house and senate, but the minute details of the machinery of the legislature has been perfected and both houses are grinding away at legislation.

After short but exciting caucuses Senator Saunders of Omaha was made president pro tem of the senate. B. H. Goulding of Kearney was made his chief clerk. Minor appointments were made from time to time.

D. M. Nettleton of Clay county won out in the speakership fight. He is a farmer well known in southwestern Nebraska. Clyde Barnard of Table Rock has been selected as chief clerk. Jesse L. Craig of Beatrice has been made first assistant. Adam McMullen of Gage, J. C. Hill of Imperial, Neb. Brown of Lancaster, Representative Harrison of Otoe, and J. W. Armstrong of Nemaha, with Representative Dodge of Douglas, were defeated as speakership aspirants, but are looked upon as house leaders. Good committees are conceded to them.

Trenmor Cone of Wahoo is regarded as the leader of the minority.

The first session of the legislature was held on New Year's day. On Wednesday the vote cast for state officials was canvassed. The complete list of Republicans, with the exception of Congressman J. L. Kennedy, was declared elected. Kennedy was defeated by Editor G. M. Hitchcock of Omaha, a Democrat.

Thursday afternoon Governor Mickey read his message. This document reviewed the affairs in the state and outlined many reforms. Governor-elect Sheldon expressed his views. The two executives agreed on railroad legislation, the need for a primary bill, called for an anti-pass measure, requested the suppression of the lobby and favored the reduction of freight and passenger rates.

Governor-elect Sheldon was sworn in. The other state officers are the following: Lieutenant Governor Hopewell, Secretary of State Junkin, State Treasurer Brian, Auditor Searle, Land Commissioner Eaton, State Superintendent McBrien, Attorney General Thompson and Railway Commissioners Winnett, Cowell and Williams.

Officials retiring to private life were J. H. Mickey; E. G. McGilton, lieutenant governor; A. Galusha, secretary of state; Peter Mortensen, state treasurer; Norris Brown, attorney general. Galusha and Brown have served one term, the others two. Mr. Brown will be elected United States senator January 15.

After the messages were read, Governor Sheldon and Mrs. Sheldon received the state officers and their wives at the executive mansion. Thursday night there was a reception for the general public. Incoming and outgoing state officers were in the receiving line.

After the inaugural ceremonies the legislature adjourned to allow Speaker Nettleton to make up the committees of the house and allow the senate committee on organization to outline the senate committees.

In the senate Senator Patrick offered a vigorous anti-lobby bill. It makes private lobbying a serious offense, punishable by fine or imprisonment. Several servant liability bills have been introduced. These are championed by the labor organizations. Senator King of Polk introduced an anti-pass bill. This forbids transportation in all cases except to actual employees of railroads, bona fide railway surgeons, attorneys or offi-

cial, ministers, indigent persons, traveling agents of the Y. M. C. A. or philanthropic workers. A fine of \$1,000 is prescribed for an infraction of the provisions of the bill.

Members of the legislature have a clear idea of their duties. There will be action from first to last. Thursday the house passed a resolution excluding lobbyists from the floor or corridors of that body. Men with pet measures must appear before committees or advise the lawmakers through the columns of the press. Heads of state institutions must not appear to advocate or urge appropriations.

Ex-Gov. John H. Mickey will speak in Sloux City January 13 at the Sunday afternoon men's meeting at the Y. M. C. A.

In the senate a number of veterans will direct legislation. Lancaster county is represented by Senators Burns and McKesson. Both have had thorough parliamentary training. Senator Wilson of Pawnee is a member with an enviable experience in legislation. Senator Saunders of Douglas is serving his third term. His colleagues, Senator Bibson and Senator Thomas, are second term men. Senator Wilsey of Frontier has served in the senate and in the house. Senator Epperson of Clay is a logical debater. Senators Ashton, Sackett, Root, King, Thompson and Aldrich are new members of unusual promise.

Railway rate legislation, a primary bill, an anti-pass law and a bill giving the railway commission full powers, will doubtless be passed within a short time. Freight and passenger rates will be reviewed at once and a policy adopted. The minority members have shown a disposition to assist rather than retard legislation of a reform nature, and there will be few partisan outbreaks, it is predicted.

A child labor law, a pure food law and indeterminate sentences for criminals have been suggested as reforms by the clubs and philanthropic organizations of the state.

Governor Mickey has moved his personal effects to his new home at 1730 C street, Lincoln, and Mr. Sheldon and family are occupying the governor's mansion.

THE STATE IS PROUD OF HIM.

Governor Sheldon a Fit Example for Boys of Nebraska to Follow.

George L. Sheldon is the first native born Nebraskan to be elected to the post of chief executive of Nebraska. Though barely thirty-six years of age, Governor Sheldon has already made his mark in affairs of state. From his youth he has been a close student of affairs, public and political. The home of George Sheldon has always been the farm upon which he was born in Cass county near the village of Nehawka. His early education was obtained in the Nehawka schools.

After he graduated from the Nehawka high school he went to the University of Nebraska, from which he was graduated with the degree of bachelor of arts in 1892. Then he went east to Harvard, where he took a three-years post-graduate course.

Mr. Sheldon's home life has been ideal. He married Miss Rose Higgins in 1895 at Roseville, Ill. Four children have been born to them, the youngest a boy sixteen months old, two girls four and seven years respectively and a boy, George L. Jr., who is nine years of age.

NAILS THE LID GOOD AND TIGHT.

Judge Cornish Tells Sheriffs What They Can and Can't Do.

The sheriffs of Nebraska must not charge the state more than 50 cents a day hereafter for boarding and rooming convicts between the time of their sentence and their delivery to the state penitentiary, nor can they ride about on passes and then charge the state for mileage. They must render an expense account for nothing but actual expenses incurred in traveling on official business. This is the opinion that Judge Cornish of the district court handed down in the case of John Power, ex-sheriff of Douglas county.

It has been the custom for years for every sheriff in the state to charge 70 cents a day for boarding convicts during the period named, and the decision of the court, if upheld in the higher tribunal, will mean the loss of thousands of dollars each year to the sheriffs of Nebraska. The loss will, of course, fall heaviest on the officers of the most populous counties.

OLD AND THE NEW

Sunset of Governor Mickey and Dawn of Governor Sheldon

BOTH TRIM CLOSE TO REFORM LINES

Sound Recommendations Emanate from the Departing and Incoming Executives

Governor Sheldon, in taking the reins of state, handled important affairs in a manner and style that stamps him fully equal to every emergency. In delivering his message he says:

"I am pleased to greet you upon this occasion. I appreciate beyond expression the confidence of the people of Nebraska placed in me at the last election. I appreciate deeply the high honor thereby conferred upon me and I wish to thank my friends throughout the state for the loyal and enthusiastic support they gave me during the campaign. I feel especially grateful for the assistance and support of the loyal Republicans and the independent voters who belong to other political parties than the one to which I have the pleasure of belonging and by which I was nominated."

A complete digest of the message is as follows:

The current expenses of the state must be kept within the income. It will not do to increase the public debt at this time.

It is urgently recommended that this legislature submit an amendment to the constitution so that the permanent school fund will not remain idly in the hands of the treasurer.

There is no good reason why a piece of real estate that is encumbered with a mortgage should be burdened with greater taxation than a piece of real estate of the same character that is not mortgaged.

Another amendment that is needed to the revenue law is one that will permit the reduction of bona fide indebtedness. Under the present law a man who is in debt is taxed for all that he owes. The debtor class of property holder should not be compelled to bear extraordinary burdens of taxation. At present the resident property holders pay a very much greater proportion of the city, town and village taxes, according to the value of their property, than do the railroads which have their terminals within the corporate limits. The railroads receive benefits from the cities, towns and villages and in return should pay their proportion of the city, town and village taxes.

It requires patriotism at times to support and maintain a stable government. The railway corporations, by their conduct, apparently lack that noble quality. It is not strange that their conduct has vexed a patient people. It is recommended that a joint resolution be passed memorializing congress to pass a law that will deprive a non-resident from enjoining the collection of a tax levied upon property within the state.

The presence of any kind of professional lobbyists during legislative sessions is neither needed nor desired.

It is expected that this legislature will pass such measures as will forever put an end to ring rule in Nebraska. It is to be hoped, therefore, that there will be passed not only an anti-pass law and a primary election law, but that there will also be passed a law that will prohibit professional lobbying.

It is recommended that the railroad commission be authorized by law to control telephone companies and regulate the rates thereof.

It is recommended that a law be passed prohibiting any railroad company from charging in the future any more between points within the state than were the charges on the first day of January, 1907.

Let a law clearly and simply defining the powers of the railroad commission be written so plainly that it cannot be misunderstood and with such deliberation that it cannot be set aside by the courts.

It is recommended that you deprive the railroad of the right to enjoin the enforcement of a rate made by the commission pending an appeal to the state courts.

It is further recommended that you pass a joint resolution memorializing congress to pass a law that will deprive common carriers from enjoining the enforcement of rates made by a state commission between points with-

in a state pending an appeal to the federal courts.

I sincerely believe that it will be for the best interests of the state that you give your immediate attention to the enactment of laws that will do away with professional lobbying, that will abolish the free pass nuisance and that will define the powers and duties of the railroad commission, so that the commission can get to work at once.

The people of Nebraska are to be congratulated upon the fact that they have become awakened and are determined to govern themselves. We have been elected to carry out a definite program. It is to be hoped that the new deal will be a just one, not even to the great corporations that have so strenuously opposed, and which probably will continue to oppose, the establishment of common justice in this state. Their rights must be protected, but when they abuse their privileges as they have done in the past they must be held to strict account. The welfare of our state demands that they must not be put out of business, but that they must be put out of Nebraska politics.

I realize fully that this reform movement is not a crusade against wealth, but rather a movement against graft and greed and abuse of power. Legitimate interests must be protected. Conspirators against the common good and violators of the law must be prosecuted. The law of the land must prevail.

I hope and trust that I shall have the loyal support and the wise counsel of the good citizens of this state. With the light of their intelligence, and with the wisdom that God may grant me, I hope and trust my administration may meet the expectation of the people of this state who have elected me.

Governor Mickey's Budget.

"The organic law makes it the duty of the chief executive to call the attention of each recurring legislative body to the general condition of the state's affairs and to make such suggestions and recommendations as in his judgment the needs of the public service require. In discharging this duty, I desire primarily to congratulate the members of this assembly on the exceedingly prosperous conditions which prevail in their respective districts—conditions of thrift and competence which have never been equalled in the history of the state. Without attempting an analysis of the cause it is apparent that a goodly heritage is ours.

"You are assembled at a time when history is being rapidly made. Never before has there been an era when the public conscience was so quickened to a sense of justice and when there was such a general demand for the purging of the inequalities which have been tolerated in our civil system. The time is ripe for improvement along ethical lines. Abuse of special privileges and opportunities must give way to justice."

The complete message of Governor Mickey boiled down is as follows:

Asks an amendment to the revenue law requiring railroads to report to the state board actual earnings within the state as one of the bases of assessment.

Advises that pruning knife be applied to estimates of state officers, and calls on legislators to protect the treasury from the threatened onslaught.

Wants age limit placed upon notaries public.

Suggests that national pure food law be supplemented by rigorous state law embodying the same features to prevent this state being made the dumping ground of conscienceless manufacturers.

Recommends that dairy inspectors be employed to supervise butterfat tests at creameries.

Believes small appropriation for representation at Jamestown exposition to be advisable.

Urges that all lobbyists, more especially those who are clamoring for more appropriations, be barred from legislative chambers and halls, and that no conferences save in public be permitted.

Strongly insists upon legislation that will reduce railroad freight rate abuses and operate against discrimination, and asks that the state commission be clothed with powers that will enable it to accomplish results.

Advises change of names for insane hospitals, that there be no distinction in the character of the patients received and that the state be conveniently districted so that each asylum shall receive the patients coming from its own district.

Enjoins legislature to make all ap-

LAST OFFICIAL ACT

At Eleventh Hour the Governor Pardons Mrs. Lillie

LEAVES AT ONCE FOR CALIFORNIA

Execution of Minister and His Wife Aided by Documents Effects Her Release

The last official act of Gov. J. H. Mickey was the unconditional pardoning of Mrs. Lena M. Lillie, who was serving a life sentence in the Nebraska penitentiary for the killing of her husband, which occurred four years ago at David City. After days of deliberation and a complete review of the evidence Governor Mickey declared that there were grave doubts of the woman's guilt and it was not clearly proved that she killed her husband.

There was a pathetic scene at the cell of Mrs. Lillie when the news was broken to her. She wept hysterically and expressed her gratitude in touching sentences, punctuated with sobs.

Governor Mickey issued the following official statement regarding the case:

"In the Lena Margaret Lillie pardon case, due notice as per statute of hearing having been given and hearing having been had and many affidavits setting forth new evidence in the case having been submitted and arguments made in the presence of the county attorney of Butler county, an open hearing and discussion of the case having been had and after many days of deliberation and study of the testimony as submitted to the courts and submitted at the time of the hearing for pardon I am clearly led to the conclusion that there is very grave and serious doubts of her guilt and am compelled in my own unbiased and sincere judgment to grant her a pardon.

"Lena Margaret Lillie is this day, January 3, 1907, at 12:20 p.m. granted a full and complete pardon."

Mrs. Lillie, in company with her father, left immediately for Los Angeles, Cal.

appropriations specific so that they cannot be juggled with as in instances

Asserts that governor should have absolute power to remove institutional heads, and that his action shall not be subject to review by any court or board.

Declares the free pass to be an unjust discrimination and subversive of the public weal, and recommends law with penalty for both party who issues it or solicits it.

Regards as important that party pledge on direct primary be redeemed, and insists that majority and not plurality should nominate.

Wants law amended so that governor can force county attorneys to act in criminal cases or be removed from office.

Recommends that shipment of liquor to dry towns be prohibited by law.

Declares parole law to be wise and beneficial, and vigorously defends his record upon pardons, commutations and paroles. He says that if laws are too liberal limit them.

Suggests that in view of the important legislation coming before the present session all bills on those subjects should be formulated and introduced by a joint committee.

Advises that the state ought to enact legislation that will prevent courts from setting aside just decisions for mere technical errors in pleadings, instruction and evidence.

Recommends submission of constitutional amendment increasing supreme court to five judges, to be increased to seven in the discretion of the legislature.

Recommends an adequate law prohibiting the employment of child labor.

Suggests that passenger rates be reduced to 2½ cents a mile, with thousand mile books at 2 cents flat.

The state library association closed a two-days' session which was considered to have been remarkably successful. With the exception of a fine address by Professor S. H. Clark of the University of Chicago, all the papers and discussions related directly to various phases of practical library work. The association voted to hold the next meeting in Omaha in October.