

Legislative Limelights...

Evans holds advantage after special session

BY BEN J. PLASTINO
Post-Register political editor

The Idaho Legislature, particularly the State Senate, performed so badly that it made Gov. John V. Evans look good.

Whether this situation will reflect on the upcoming legislative races, particularly in the Senate, remains to be seen, but it is a possibility.

Any conjecture the governor will call another special session or that he will veto the \$891,000 legislative staff appropriation, can be discounted. He could trim legislative funding but that's about the extent.

The governor sincerely felt he had to travel that extra mile to ask for funding for the 20,000 mothers and children on welfare, highway maintenance and improvements and changing the law for Medicaid payments. He was not as concerned for biennial budgeting but tacked it on at the urgings of the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry.

The governor is now in an advantageous position to say that if welfare clients do not get enough money or if highways are deteriorate and improvements are delayed that he did the best he could to get recalcitrant legislators to act and save money in the long run.

As those who have followed the legislative special session shenanigans know, lawmakers failed to act on Aid to Dependent Children and highway funding, Medicare law cost control changes and biennial budgeting. They funded their legislative staff to the tune of \$891,000.

The arrogant leadership graciously cut four positions from its 47-member staff but it is likely the governor may go farther and bring a cut that will compare with the 25 percent reduction he says his staff suffered.

These staff cuts, both in the governor's office and the legislative offices, could harm the state. Although it is easy to label them bureaucrats, most of those familiar with the operation of state government view these state employees as valuable. The way they administer rules and regulations and implement what the governor and Legislature has approved save this state thousands of dollars.

appears incumbents are difficult to unseat once they are elected. A survey indicates Republican control in both chambers but a slight chance for a Democrats control if a number of narrow races all fall their ways.

The Post-Register The political pulse

E-14

Idaho Falls, Idaho, Wednesday, May 21, 1980

The governor holds the strategic position because his term doesn't expire for two more years. Anything that happened in this session will be generally forgotten by the 1982 elections as far as the governor is concerned.

The situation is vastly different for the harassed legislators. What they did in the 1980 regular session and the recently completed special session will become a rife political issue.

Many Republicans have undoubtedly lost the support of the thousands on the welfare rolls and thousands more of their friends. In exchange, they also may have gained the backing of those who don't view state relief in a favorable light.

The session also revealed a bitter underlying feeling between the House and Senate leadership. In this regards, House Speaker Ralph Olmstead, R-Twin Falls, is praised generally as fair, even though deeply partisan.

Disinterested observers tab the two top Senate leaders, President Pro Tem Reed Budge, R-Soda Springs, and Majority Leader James Risch, R-Boise, as sincere but difficult to work with. Both face tough re-election fights in the general election.

The governor predicts the Democrats may gain control of the Senate and is hopeful the margin in the House will narrow to near an even standoff. Republicans control the Senate 19-16 and the House 50-10.

This writer feels there won't be many changes because it



Sitting pretty

Gov. John V. Evans looks happy at his desk in the governor's suite at the State Capitol, even though the Idaho Legislature special session rejected most of his proposals but in doing so placed him in favorable light as looking for the interest of the common people.