

## In Legislature

# 'Going home' fever spreading

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BOISE — "Going home" fever is beginning to spread among Idaho legislators, but it could be two or three weeks before the 1985 session is over.

This is the consensus as seen by this reporter after several days at the Legislature.

The ever-optimistic House Speaker Tom Stivers, R-Twin Falls, predicts the session could adjourn as early as Thursday but adds it could continue through Saturday.

Three eastern Idaho legislative leaders are not as optimistic. They include Senate Majority Leader Mark G. Ricks, R-Rexburg; Assistant Senate Majority Leader Vearl C. Crystal, R-Lewisville; and House Majority Caucus Chairman Linden B. Bateman, R-Idaho Falls.

Ricks and Crystal agree that the session could end as early as Saturday but would not be surprised if it spilled over into the following week.

Bateman picks March 16 as the likely adjournment date.

Rep. Walter E. Little, R-New Plymouth, House State Affairs Committee chairman and former majority leader, says the session again will run 75 days.

That would mean adjournment on March 20. Little, who is serving his 11th term, has been accurate in the past.

Igniting the spring fever is the lack of snow in western Idaho. Some farmers are beginning to start their

spring work this week in the Grandview area, and Boise has enjoyed spring-like weather most of the past two weeks.

The deadlock over education funding is the main stumbling block.

Ricks, Crystal and State Sen. Dane Watkins, R-Idaho Falls, member of the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee, say they feel the \$301.8 million for public education and \$87 million for higher education approved by the committee will meet with approval in the House and Senate. But many other legislators don't think this is true.

The budget would amount to \$583,375,300, said Ricks.

Bateman believes at least \$4.5 million should go to fund a career-ladder program for teachers.

Other eastern Idaho legislators, such as Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho Falls; and Reps. John O. Sessions, R-Driggs, and Reed Hansen, R-Idaho Falls, believe the funding should be higher.

Each new measure approved by JFAC is less than \$3 million higher than the ones the House and Senate rejected earlier.

Both are \$4-\$5 million below what Gov. John Evans says is needed just to maintain school and college programs. State School Superintendent Jerry Evans and educators call for much higher amounts.

Elsewhere on the legislative front, Sessions and Hansen were the only eastern Idaho state representatives to vote for a Department of Commerce

Even Stivers, who frequently is at odds with the governor, voted for it.

This lack of support from eastern Idaho comes in the face of backing by the Idaho Falls, Rexburg, and Blackfoot chambers of commerce, and by nearly all state chambers, for that matter. Despite the eastern Idaho lack of support, the measure handily passed the House 53-31 and would pass the Senate if it can hurdle the Senate State Affairs Committee.

Rep. Chad Chadbond, R-Idaho Falls, has encountered a string of defeats as a member of the ultra-conservative bloc. He led the fight against the Department of Commerce, was forced to withdraw his bill to permit tax credits to parents of children attending private schools, and lost his bill to transfer the state liquor store system to the private sector by a 55-28 vote only last Wednesday. Only Rep. Marilyn Stanger, R-Idaho Falls, supported Chadbond among eastern Idaho legislators in the House on the liquor issue.

Crapo, Ricks and Sen. Lee Staker, R-Idaho Falls, are among the eastern Idahoans who say they will vote for the Department of Commerce bill in the Senate.

All eastern Idaho legislators favor the 21-year-old drinking bill, the Clean Air Act that prohibits smoking in public places, and the Swan Falls water rights adjudication legislation but divide on reducing the 50-50 home exemption measure by half. However, all eastern Idaho senators

favored the home tax exemption reduction bill in their vote but it will get a mixed reception in the House.

Evans indicated to this writer he would veto it if it advances to his office. Most legislators say the Legislature could not override his veto on this non-partisan measure. This bill would result in more taxes for home owners and is aimed against city dwellers.

Crapo said he thought the water bills were among the most outstanding legislation to be passed in this session. He emphasized it will affect eastern Idaho farmers more than those in other sections of the state.

He and Hansen, former chairman of the Idaho Water Resources Board, applaud the \$800,000 appropriation to initially implement the legislation.

The bill to require corporate quarterly tax is meeting mixed reaction but it could be the so-called "going home" bill. It would provide \$8.6 million for each of the next two years and probably gives enough funding to education to overcome the objections of the school supporters.

Most legislative leaders believe that after the smoke has cleared for increasing educational funding, water rights, Clean Air Act, 21-year-old drinking bill, creation of a Department of Commerce and no general tax increase, and the defeat of lottery, liquor store transfer and private school tax exemption, this session may go down as an outstanding one considering the tight financial conditions. They could be right.