

Legislative limelights . . .

# Stubborn Legislature to give Evans trouble

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From early rumblings on the political front, the Republican controlled 1980 Idaho Legislature is going to present something of a problem to Democrat John V. Evans.

In many respects it will be a replay of the 1979 session, which hewed a tight conservative line and sought to implement the 1 percent initiative, the effects of which pleased hardly anybody.

**The Legislature's main task in the coming session is to bring refinement to the 1 percent tax limitation. This can come about mostly because more information will have been received on the financial impact. Last session, the legislators, like everybody else, were groping in the dark on the initiative's probable effect.**

Most political observers agree the legislators turned in a fine performance implementing the 1 percent tax initiative, in view of the meager information with which it had to work. The coming session should give the committee a better handle.

Elsewhere on this page ap-

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pears an interview with Rep. Doyle C. Miner, R-St. Anthony, chairman of the House Appropriation Committee, who gives what appears a fairly accurate assessment of what is going to happen in the 1980 session.

Miner is in a strategic position to know as he holds probably the most important committee chairmanship in the House. He also is a staunch conservative who is representative of most Idaho voters but not of the right wing. At times, he even shows a moderate strain.

**Miner predicts no sales or income tax increases — and even more significantly — no concession to the local units of government, especially cities — for local tax option powers. This could become the most bitterly fought issue in the Legislature and one in which Evans threatened to call a special summer session.**

Miner did acknowledge, however, there is a chance for increased highway funding, either through an increased gasoline tax or vehicle registration. This should not encounter as much opposition, as the tax rightfully is paid by the

vehicle owners who use the highways.

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**Setting the total budget will present no problem, but snarling over the bones on how the revenue pie will be cut will furnish the most fireworks.**

Miner predicted about a 9 percent increase in the total budget of \$331 million, which should place it near \$360 million. He observed correctly this will not even offset the anticipated inflation growth of 12 percent or more which means there will need to be more belt tightening.

Evans, of course, holds a strategic position because his term of office doesn't expire until 1982, or three more years, while all of the 105 legislators — 70 state representatives and 35 state senators — face reelection tests soon after the session adjourns in late March. The 1980 primary this year falls on the fourth Tuesday in May, moved up from the first Tuesday in August date of recent years.

**In view of this situation, the Legislature is certain to become highly political as compared with the 1979 affair. The lawmakers know, however, the less they spend, the more popular they become in eyes of the voters. Maybe that sums up the coming Legislature as well as anything.**