

Eastern Idaho Legislators Glad To Be Back



THESE ARE candid shots taken of Idaho legislators, most of them from East Idaho of the 1970 session which came to a grinding halt Saturday evening after 55 days. Upper left, from left are State Sens. W. Fisher Ellsworth and J. Marsden Williams, both Idaho Falls Republicans; top center, State Reps. Helen McKinney, R-Salmon, and Aden Hyde, R-Idaho Falls; top right, Democrat Sens. J. Cecil Sandberg, Blackfoot; Richard Egbert, Teton; and Arthur Murphy, Mullan; center left, State Sens. Ray W. Rigby, D-Rexburg, and John F. Evans, D-Malad, Senate assistant minority leader and minority leader, respectively; center bottom, State Reps. Harold Snow, R-Moscow, assistant majority leader; and William J. Lanting, R-Hollister, speaker and bottom right, State Reps. Russell Fogg, R-Idaho Falls; S. Albert Johnson, D-Pocatello; and Kurt L. Johnson, R-Idaho Falls. (Post-Register Staff Photos)

STATEHOUSE SIDELIGHTS . . . *Wednesday Mar. 11 1970*

Gubernatorial Hopefuls Maneuver For Position

By Ben J. Plastino
Post-Register Staff Writer

The picture for the 1970 political elections appears to have cleared up somewhat after the Idaho Legislature shuddered to a stop last Saturday evening after 55 days of wrangling and haggling.

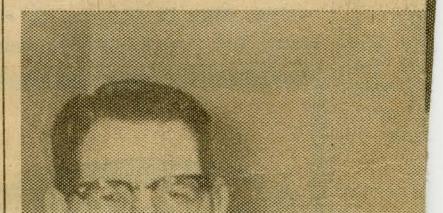
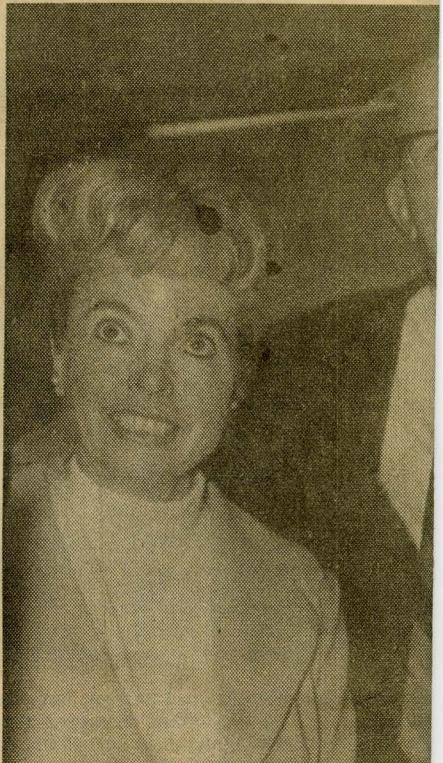
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as such, if he were a candidate, he would by far be the most formidable candidate as he could attract the strong support of both the liberals and conservatives.

Perhaps the weakest of the top candidates, Lloyd Walker, Twin Falls attorney, former state party chairman, formally announced his gubernatorial candidacy. In the eyes of many, he will have a long way to go to

running the statewide gubernatorial race in 1966. But either he or Ravenscroft could win if they could capitalize on the considerable dormant antipathy against Gov. Don W. Samuelson if he should win the nomination. Against Smith, they might be the underdogs.

It now looks like Andrus and Ravenscroft will battle for the Democratic nomination, with Walker a slim possi-



The picture for the 1970 political elections appears to have cleared up somewhat after the Idaho Legislature shuddered to a stop last Saturday evening after 55 days of wrangling and haggling.

The political conjectures of this writer of about a month ago have been fairly well borne out in the rapid fire developments of the past week.

First, State Sen. Ray W. Rigby, D-Rexburg, the assistant Senate minority leader, pulled out officially, and this is no great surprise.

His withdrawal, if it can be called that, because he never did issue a formal statement that he was a gubernatorial candidate, saddened many leading Democrats, particularly from East Idaho.

Rigby has the deep respect of virtually every legislator at Boise on both sides of the aisle.

Many Democrat leaders, perhaps most of them, felt he was the strongest candidate they could offer on their ticket.

Rigby is not only a top flight legislator in the eyes of his colleagues and veteran political observer but he also appears to be viewed as neither an extremist to the left or right.

most formidable candidate as he could attract the strong support of both the liberals and conservatives.

Perhaps the weakest of the top candidates, Lloyd Walker, Twin Falls attorney, former state party chairman, formally announced his gubernatorial candidacy. In the eyes of many, he will have a long way to go to even get on the ballot, much less get the nomination.

To get on the ballot, a candidate must receive at least 20 per cent of the party convention votes.

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As of now, the two leading candidates are two veteran legislators. They are State Sen. Cecil D. Andrus, D-Lewiston, a liberal and the party's nominee in 1966; and State Rep. Vernon F. Ravenscroft, D-Tuttle, a conservative.

Regardless of their philosophy both are extremely knowledgeable of state government and state issues. They each have a host of friends, financial backing and the desire to become governor.

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The Republican battle has for all practical reasons dwindled to a two-man affair.

Samuelson had admitted he will seek re-election and will soon announce his formal candidacy.

Eldon W. (Dick) Smith, Rexburg, former Madison County two-term state senator and State Board of Education member, is expected to announce his candidacy in about a week.

The only other announced candidacy is Ed Whittaker, a little known Marsing school teacher, who isn't expected to get more than a handful of votes at the party convention if he should go through with his intention.

In the opinion of this writer, the Republican gubernatorial primary race may be a scorcher, depending on what sort of campaign is waged.

Smith is a state figure and has been exposed to considerable publicity. As a State Board of Education member, particularly as chairman, he waged a verbal duel with Samuelson over funding for higher education. He also served as chairman of the Idaho Wheat Commission.

Samuelson, of course, has alienated the education and conservation people, plus the large segment who believe he has tied himself too closely with the mining and timber interests.

At the same time, Samuelson is making lots of points in speaking to many groups, it seems several times each week. His rough hewn features of simplicity come through effectively to the average Idahoan who is not well informed on things political but who is the one who decides the election.

Samuelson will be difficult to beat and no one knows this better than Smith. But a smart opponent can exploit Samuelson's rather vulnerable record.

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Oh yes, Lt. Gov. Jack M. Murphy has virtually ruled himself out. He has told many of his friends privately, including this writer, he likely will sit this one out. He has an expansive livestock venture which is taking all of his time, and more. He indicates he will seek re-election.

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The jigsaws for the other races are falling into place. All of the present elective state officials will seek re-election. Already State Treasurer Ruth Moon, Democrat, has announced. Most, however, are expected to have opposition.

Democrats are looking for a formidable candidate to oppose U.S. Rep. Orval Hansen in the Second District. Dale Higer, Caldwell Democrat, is expected to challenge U.S. Rep. James A. McClure, Republican in the First District.

But prospects and conjectures on these other races are for another story.



Home After Grinding 1970 Session

