

Idaho Legislature finishing

The Idaho Legislature, nearly always in an adversary role to a governor, strives for adjournment on the same note this year.

The first half of the 45th session, according to most veteran political newsmen and observers, has demonstrated an even more hostile attitude by the Legislature toward the governor than most in recent years.

Perhaps the role of a governor and legislature is one that encourages such a situation, especially when the two are of opposite parties, as is the case this year.

The legislative branch has always been jealous of its prerogatives and strives to achieve an identity by opposing a governor on many pieces of legislation. It's the same story of separation of powers between the executive branch as represented by Democratic Gov. John V. Evans, and the legislative segment, portrayed by the Republican controlled Legislature.

Even when the governor and Legislature were of the same party, as happened for 20 years before Democrat Cecil Andrus became governor six years ago, there were bitter fights, though both the governor and Legislature were Republican. At present, the Republicans control the Senate 19-16, the House by an overwhelming 50-20.

Want to serve

The 105 men and women who sit in the

Legislature generally wanted to serve the state as best as they know how. The laws they grind out have a profound effect on people, whether they know it or not.

For example, elimination of the written driver's test is one. Elimination of the vehicle inspections last year was another. That's not mentioning the various tax laws and hundreds of other regulations.

Generally, some 1,200 pieces of legislation are introduced, and about half becomes law each session. This year, the volume is greatly reduced because of the 1 percent initiative funding.

It takes a peculiar type of person to serve in the Legislature.

True, he enjoys sitting behind the mahogany desks in the ornate marble-tinted Capitol. He often has secretarial help, is frequently a guest of dinners and other functions and certainly enjoys prestige as a state senator or state representative.

He is frequently the target of abuse, however, and incurs the derision of voters on how he votes. On the other hand, he also is an object of adulation and commands respect for his views.

Improve life

The lawmaker, however, has the satisfaction of trying to do something to improve the quality of life in Idaho.

In recent years, most Idaho legislators

have wanted to serve for as long as they can be re-elected. Unfortunately, the more capable ones feel they can't sacrifice that much time.

Rep. Ronald Lechelt, D-Idaho Falls for example, only wanted one two-year term, and attorneys who have been among the most proficient have voluntarily stepped out after brief services. They have included Sen. Orval Hansen, R-Idaho Falls; Sen. Ray Rigby, D-Rexburg; and Reps. Terry L. Crapo, R-Idaho Falls; Eugene Bush, R-Idaho Falls, and Grant Young, R-Rigby.

As of now, Sen. Richard A. Egbert, D-Tetonia, is dean of the Legislature, with 29 years service.

Most legislators admit they have had less this session than in the past because the 1 percent syndrome placed a damper on new programs and new funding.

Most legislators get impatient after about 70 days, and Saturday was the 71st day. Records show sessions have run between 55 and 89 days, with 65-70 days about average.

Routined day

For its reputed glamour, a legislator's day is rather routine, especially at the start of the session.

He arrives about 8 a.m. or shortly thereafter and attends a major committee meeting. Some are even at their desk earlier to read their mail, make telephone



East Idaho legislators

BOISE — Eastern Idaho state representatives gathered for an informal chat during a break in House session. From left are Reps. Gary Paxman, R-Idaho Falls; Elaine Kearnes,

R-Idaho Falls; C. Wendell Miller, D-Idaho Falls; Melvin Hammond, D-Rexburg; John O. Sessions, R-Driggs; and Linden B. Bateman, R-Idaho Falls.

Idaho lawmakers sling lingo

Idaho lawmakers sling lingo in discussions at Legislature

Story and photos

by

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A neophyte lawmaker at the Idaho Legislature is lost during the first few days and maybe the first few weeks because there is a peculiar language that is used.

If the freshman legislator is confused, it is even more bewildering to those who watch the general sessions and the committee meetings.

They will hear a language that is peculiar to the ordinary citizen, but spelled out in a 39-page booklet by the House and a 68-page manuscript in the Senate.

Such phrases as "thirteenth order," "tenth order," "concurrent resolution" and "point of privilege" seem a little complex, but not to the lawmaker who must follow protocol.

One of the most confusing points is the consecutive order followed by the Senate and House.

Here they are:

First order, call to order; second, prayer; third, reading and corrections of the legislative journal; fourth, reading of communications; fifth, presentation of petitions, resolutions and memorials; sixth, report of standing committees; seventh, report of special committees; eighth, consideration of messages from the opposite house; tenth, motions and consideration of petitions, resolutions and memorials; eleventh, first reading of bills; twelfth, second reading of bills; thirteenth, third reading of bills; fourteenth, amendments; and fifteenth, miscellaneous.

Of course the tenth to the fourteenth order are the most frequent phrases used.

Unanimous consent

When one asks for unanimous consent from the presiding officer, it's for the purpose of saving time from a formal roll call vote. When it appears in a motion, it means all members of the body are in agreement.

Most frequent use of unanimous consent is to stop the full reading of a bill, as required by the Idaho Constitution.

A dissident member, for example, can delay sessions to get legislators to vote on his bill by objecting and requiring a full reading.

This has been used from time to time, but

not much in recent sessions. It is used mostly in the closing days, when the legislators are impatient to adjourn and go home.

Here are the terms most frequently used:

Joint resolutions: Legislation passed by both houses proposing an amendment to the Idaho Constitution.

Joint memorial: A petition or representation addressed to whoever can do what the memorial asks, in most cases in U.S. Congress.

Concurrent resolution: Legislation whose subject matter would not properly constitute a statute.

Tabling or lay on the table: A motion which postpones action on a piece of legislation indefinitely. It takes a two-thirds affirmative vote for reconsideration.

Reconsideration: A member on the prevailing side who can ask that the decision on a bill vote be considered. This is not possible on an amendment.

Consideration of general order: A process where bills already introduced are amended.

Point of personal privilege: A special recognition requested to introduce dignitaries, guests or other matters aside from the usual legislative process.

Paring: Allowing a legislator going to be absent to link his vote on a bill with another in opposition.

Desks

Legislators not in leadership are given first choice on desks they wish to choose, based on seniority in service. The leadership is assigned the rear desks closest to the aisle.

And that's just a few of the peculiarities of the Legislature, but it gives one an idea.

A first timer needs to serve a few weeks before he can make his way around, as is understandable.

And, oh yes, the leadership is assigned office rooms and staff help.

In committee or general sessions, all remarks must be routed through the presiding officer, even in asking or answering an opponent. This gives the presiding officer control at such sessions.

session in adversary role

calls, dictate letters, prepare for debates and perform other sundry tasks before committee meeting.

Major committees generally meet in the

mornings, the minor ones in the afternoon. There have been less committee meetings this year than in the past except for the important ones, such as Joint Finance

Appropriations, House Revenue and Taxation, Senate Local Government and Taxation and the State Affairs Committee of each chamber.



Touch of beauty

BOISE — It isn't all work for Gov. John V. Evans as he takes time out to greet Jill Hall, Idaho Falls, Idaho's Junior Miss, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Zane Hall. In a recent trip to the Legislature, she also spoke briefly to the Senate and then the House.



Democratic Leaders

BOISE — House Democratic leaders are sitting from left, Reps. Patricia McDermott, Pocatello, House minority leader; Ron Harlow, Lewiston, assistant minority leader; and standing, Marion Davidson, Bonners Ferry, caucus chairman.