

M I N U T E S

LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURES AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE
OF THE
IOWA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

September 8, 1970

The Legislative Procedures and Facilities Committee of the Iowa Legislative Council was convened by the Committee Chairman, Speaker William H. Harbor, at 2:00 p.m. in the Speaker's Room, of the State House, Des Moines, on September 8, 1970. Members of the Committee present were:

Speaker William H. Harbor, Chairman
Senator Eugene M. Hill
Senator Elmer F. Lange
Senator Robert R. Rigler
Representative Dale M. Cochran
Representative Andrew P. Varley

Also present were Mr. Phil Burks, Senior Research Analyst, and Miss Diane Devin, Research Analyst, Legislative Service Bureau.

Chairman Harbor called for additions or corrections to the minutes of the July meeting. Minutes were approved as mailed to Committee members.

Chairman Harbor agreed that he would present an oral report to the Legislative Council on the following day concerning this Legislative Procedures and Facilities Committee meeting. He called for comments or suggestions from Committee members who had attended the National Legislative Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Chairman Harbor stated that with regard to a shortened work week, he had conversed with legislators from several states which have legislatures in session less than five days per week. He stated that although the attitudes were mixed, it appeared that more legislators favor a five-day work week. He added that it was suggested that one or two days of the five-day week might be devoted entirely to standing committee meetings. Senator Rigler commented that it may be difficult to convince the citizens of Iowa that a shorter work week is necessary.

Senator Hill stated that he had conversed with legislators from several states, including the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee of the Pennsylvania Senate, who stated that the Pennsylvania General Assembly is in session three days per week, but the Appropriations Committee often meets on days in which the General Assembly is not in session. Senator Hill expressed the belief that a shortened work week will allow more businessmen to serve in the General Assembly.

Representative Cochran commented that he had conversed

with legislators from Ohio who stated that the Ohio General Assembly convenes in session on Monday evening and recesses on Thursday noon. Representative Cochran added that it is anticipated that the Ohio General Assembly during the 1971 session will meet from Tuesday morning through Thursday afternoon. He reported that the state of New Jersey convenes in session on Monday and Thursday.

Representative Varley expressed reservations about recommending a three-day work week for the 1971 legislative session, but agreed that a four-day work week might prove satisfactory. Senator Hill suggested that if a five-day work week is continued, three days be devoted to floor debate and Monday and Friday be devoted to committee meetings. He added that committee meetings might also be held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Monday and Friday might be used for meetings of the Appropriations Committees, Governmental Reorganization Committees, and Ways and Means Committees. Representative Varley noted that attendance at committee meetings on Monday and Friday might present problems. He commented that if it is a goal of the Legislative Procedures and Facilities Committee to improve the standing committee system, poor attendance at committee meetings will not achieve the goal. He expressed the belief that if no legislative business is scheduled on Monday, more businessmen may be able to serve in the General Assembly. Senator Hill expressed support for Representative Varley's proposal. Senator Rigler expressed the belief that criticism of the General Assembly will result if the General Assembly does not meet for a five-day work week.

Chairman Harbor stated that decisions regarding the number of days per week which the General Assembly will convene in session must be made by the majority party and its leadership.

Chairman Harbor called for a discussion pertaining to possible changes in the amendment procedure. Mr. Burks briefly commented upon conversations with legislative service personnel from Connecticut who indicated that all bills receive a public hearing and the standing committees usually make significant changes in the bill so that the sponsor of the bill as originally introduced will be unable to claim credit for the bill.

Senator Rigler expressed the belief that restrictions on the filing of amendments should be adopted or should become an accepted custom in order to facilitate the functioning of the General Assembly. Senator Hill commented that the right to amend should not be unduly restricted, although he agreed that the presiding officer might rule more closely on the germaneness of amendments.

Senator Hill inquired about possible restrictions on filing amendments. Senator Rigler proposed that amendments be filed at least one day in advance of debate of a bill so that the amendment will be printed in the Journal. He noted that exceptions might be made for corrective amendments. Senator Rigler also suggested that a procedure might be developed so that amendments can be laid on

the table without tabling the entire bill. Senator Hill then observed that certain bills in the past have been debated under a gentlemen's agreement that remarks of individuals will be limited to a certain length of time. Chairman Harbor noted that any suggested rules changes will be discussed at the majority party caucus prior to discussion before the Rules Committees. Senator Lange agreed that any rules changes must be reported out of the Rules Committees. Senator Lange noted that requiring amendments to be filed at least one day prior to debate on the bill, may preclude filing amendments to amendments.

Chairman Harbor suggested that encouraging the chairmen of standing committees to provide agendas outlining the bills which will be discussed at the committee meetings will help to strengthen the committee system.

Representative Varley suggested that unanimous consent might be required to allow an amendment to be filed on the day on which a bill is to be debated. Senator Rigler suggested that the consent of the committee chairman or the sponsor of the bill might be required, or suspension of the rules might be required, to file an amendment on the day a bill is to be debated. Senator Hill suggested that individually sponsored bills might be made committee bills before being reported out by a standing committee.

Senator Lange agreed that although the ideas discussed at the Committee meeting will require implementation by the majority party, the ideas discussed by the Legislative Procedures and Facilities Committee should be presented to the Legislative Council for discussion. It was agreed that the Legislative Service Bureau will prepare a report outlining the discussion of the Committee for presentation by Chairman Harbor at the Legislative Council meeting.

Discussion followed relating to the functions of the Budget and Financial Control Committee and whether the Budget and Financial Control Committee's functions can be adequately performed by the Legislative Council and the standing committees.

Representative Cochran suggested that more study should be given to bills by subcommittees of standing committees, and each subcommittee assigned a bill should meet at least one time. Senator Rigler agreed and suggested that each individual subcommittee member might be required to sign a written recommendation relating to the bill. Representative Varley agreed that subcommittees should study bills more thoroughly before reporting back to the full standing committee.

Chairman Harbor suggested that the committee system might be strengthened if the number of committees on which a member serves were reduced. Senator Hill observed that the number of standing committees might also be reduced. Representative Cochran suggested that each member might serve on only three standing committees. Chairman

Harbor suggested that standing committee chairmen might be appointed only to the standing committee which they chair. Senator Hill commented that a committee chairman might be limited in his scope of activity if he were only assigned to one committee and suggested that he might be appointed to one other standing committee. Senator Hill added that separate committee clerks are needed for each standing committee.

Senator Lange commented that the concensus of opinion of the Legislative Procedures and Facilities Committee appears to be that the committee system needs to be strengthened so that the standing committees will more thoroughly study and perfect each bill before it is reported out for floor debate. The Committee agreed.

Senator Rigler suggested that allowing all bills reported out of standing committees to be placed on the calendar presents problems. He suggested that a committee might be appointed to which all bills reported out of committee might be sent for placement on the calendar. He added that the Committee might function similar to the Rules Committee in the United States House of Representatives.

Representative Cochran noted that it is difficult for members of the General Assembly to study at their desks and suggested that better utilization be made of the space behind the legislative chambers so that office space or desks might be provided for use by members of the General Assembly.

The Committee adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

DIANE DEVIN
Research Analyst