

REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURES AND  
FACILITIES COMMITTEE OF THE IOWA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
SUBMITTED TO THE IOWA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

December 15, 1971

The Legislative Procedures and Facilities Committee at its meeting of December 9, 1971 considered the following subjects and took actions as indicated:

1. The Committee recommends that the Legislative Service Bureau provide a service to legislators similar to the "Hawaii short form bill". This service allows legislators to request the Bureau to draft a bill proposal, in lieu of drafting the total bill, which would outline the objectives of a proposed bill, contain a summary of the proposed bill, and list all sections of the Code of Iowa which would be affected by the proposed bill. The legislator could use the bill proposal for his own information, to present to a committee when seeking committee sponsorship, or to present to constituents in lieu of a bill draft as a report to them that he did seek committee sponsorship or endorsement. Such a procedure might save much time in staff work, printing costs, and reduce the number of bills introduced. It would not prevent any legislator from requesting a bill draft if he desires one.

2. The Committee recommends that the leadership of the Senate and House seriously consider establishing a schedule whereby either the entire morning or entire afternoon of legislative days be devoted to committee meetings, with each committee allowed to spend more time than is presently allocated for committee work. It is suggested that the General Assembly continue to convene each morning for the purpose of introduction of bills, receiving reports, and carrying on the normal housekeeping functions and then move to consideration of bills or committee meetings, depending upon whether a morning or afternoon committee schedule is established.

Committees should establish definite agendas and provide better and more uniform internal procedures. It is hoped that the following objectives would be accomplished through the recommended procedures:

a. Better committee work would be accomplished, which would reduce the time required for consideration of bills on the floor of each house.

b. People who would be appearing before committees would be able to depend upon a time certain for a meeting which would make it more convenient for legislators and interested persons and thus provide for the exchange of more useful information.

c. The two houses of the General Assembly would be able to coordinate their work schedules better and the use of joint committees would be improved. One house would hopefully not have to wait for the membership of the other house to attend a meeting.

d. Staff would be able to depend upon a time certain for a committee meeting and not waste time while waiting for committee meetings to start. It would be easier for the person who drafted a particular piece of legislation to be present when the committee considers the legislation and any proposed amendments and participate with the committee in reviewing legislation or drafting amendments.

e. More time in committee meetings would allow the committee to consider all legislation at one time which have as their objectives similar results.

3. The Committee recommends that the Legislative Council give careful consideration to the establishment of a legislative compensation commission. Such a commission would be composed of citizens who are not members of the General Assembly and its purpose would be to study and recommend levels of legislative compensation and expenses for members of the General Assembly.

4. The Committee recommends that the House and Senate Committees on Rules consider an amendment to Joint Rule 12 which would provide for the use of a free conference.

5. The Committee recommends that the House and Senate Committees on Rules consider an amendment to Joint Rule 12 which would allow the General Assembly to instruct a conference committee through the use of a resolution.

6. The Committee recommends that orientation conferences for new legislators should be continued, strengthened, and be subject to greater planning. Consideration should be given to holding an orientation conference for more than one day during the first week in January prior to the convening of the first session of the General Assembly. It appears that expenses could be provided for new legislators and they would receive salary compensation since their annual salary is payable during the first six months of the year they are serving in a General Assembly.

7. The Committee recommends that the Legislative Council consider including within the next Legislative Service Bureau budget a sum of money to be used for hiring expert consultants on an hourly basis to review or assist in the drafting of legislation of a technical nature. It is contemplated that the amount of money required would not exceed \$5,000 for the biennium, with the use of such services being made primarily prior to and during the first session of a General Assembly. Expert consultants would be contacted prior to a legislative session and their assistance requested when the Service Bureau feels it has reached the point in a bill draft where an expert in the field would be needed either for the technical drafting or review of the draft. In many instances experts would be contacted prior to the drafting. The Bureau would continue to build the basic format of the bill. Possible fields where experts would be helpful include unemployment compensation, workmen's compensation, tax law, probate law, judicial procedure, insurance law and other technical areas.

8. The Committee recommends that the Legislative Council organize and consider interim activities prior to the close of a legislative session in order that the period between the close of a session and the first interim meeting of the Council can be used by the Service Bureau for preparation for interim studies. It is believed that much time can be gained by this procedure. The Committee also recommends that the legality of holdover Legislative Council members and new members of a Council by virtue of legislative positions, acting as the Council, be explored in order that a Legislative Council can act during the first session of a General Assembly between the time of convening and the appointment of the official Legislative Council.

9. The Committee considered the use of split sessions of the General Assembly and is of the opinion that there presently exists enough constitutional and statutory authority to provide for the use of split sessions when and if such a procedure is needed. The Committee considered but took no action upon the establishment of deadline procedures for the General Assembly as contained in House File 57, presently pending before the House. The Committee does believe, however, that recommendations relating to standing committee meetings will aid the General Assembly to improve its efficiency and help to meet deadlines regardless of how such deadlines may be established.

Speaker William Harbor  
Chairman  
Legislative Procedures and  
Facilities Committee