A PARTISAN LEGISLATURE

Voters may get a chance

By ODELL HANSON
Associated Press Writer

LINCOLN, Neb (AP) — Betting the family fortune on the outcome of a legislative bill can be hazardous, but odds are growing that Nebraskans next fall will get their first chance in four decades to make a major change in the state's lawmaking machinery

A bill submitting to voters a constitutional amendment providing for the election of legislators on partisan ballots, instead of nonpolitical ballots, came within one vote of the 30 needed for approval last year

At least two of the senators who voted against the 1973 bill have reversed their positions And still another senator who chanced to be absent for last year's showdown lists himself as a supporter of the bill

All of which suggests that the 1974 version of the bill will pass, possibly even comfortably

Senators who have changed their position—although not necessarily in favor of a partisan legislature—include Cal Carsten of Avoca and Orval Keyes of Springfield

Keyes said he now wants to "let the people decide "

"After all these years, perhaps the people should have a voice," he said "This nonpartisan body gets mighty leaderless once in a while—except for Terry," he added, referring to Sen Terry Carpenter of Scottsbluff

Carsten said he continues to favor the nonpartisan election of legislators, "but there is a question in my mind whether it is a decision we should make, or the public should make " So, he said, he will vote to put the issue on the ballot

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Sen John J Cavanaugh III of Omaha, a supporter of the bill, was absent for last year's showdown

And some senators who voted against last year's bill are keeping an open mind, Associated Press interviews have disclosed

"If I were voting today, I'd vote against it," said Sen Harold Simpson of Lincoln "But my mind is not closed, and I could be persuaded to let the people vote once "

The current version of the oft-considered proposition, again sponsored by Sen. Gerald Stromer of Kearned, has survived its test before the Constitutional Revision Committee on a 4-1 vote and awaits floor debate

Republican and Democratic parties for years have supported the change Efforts in 1964 and 1968 to bypass the Legislature and place the issue before voters by petition fell short Bills in the Legislature for the same purpose have failed repeatedly, but legislative opposition has steadily eroded The 1967 Legislature, for example, killed such a bill 26-14

The drive for partisanship won't end with approval of the pending bill, LB649, Stromer acknowledges

A newspaper poll last year indicated about two-thirds of Nebraskans oppose partisan election of their lawmakers And Stromer says that in his talks to various groups he has found repeatedly an erroneous impression that the effort involves doing away with the Unicameral or one-house system

"There is going to be a burden on both parties to overcome the opposition and explain the issue," he said

"Within the past five months I've had some concerns about the practicality of being ready for a vote "

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Still another concern has been voiced by Sen George Syas of Omaha, who opposed the bill last year and abstained when his Constitutional Revision Committee reported out the current bill

Syas noted that the proposed constitutional amendment provides for partisan election of state senators, but makes no provision for independent or petition candidates to run

This possible flaw came to his attention because of current concern about the problem of team election of governor and lieutenant governor where candidates are petition candidates

The late U S Sen George W Norris, father of the Unicameral Legislature, made the election of legislators on non-political ballots a part of the package He is presumed to have been influenced by his own experience with the political parties — he was elected both as a Republican and as an Independent — and the fairly widespread presence in that 1930s era of political machines.

One result of nonpartisanship has been the relatively infrequent division of the Legislature along party lines

Democrats, outnumbered by Republicans in the body, considered not too long ago developing a kind of Democratic caucus, headed by a sort of "minority leader " But they finally decided that without a power base to provide some "clout," this minority leader would be relatively ineffective

The body still has its members adamantly opposed to partisanship and submission of the issue

"I don't want any organization telling me how to vote," said Sen John Savage of Omaha "I feel I'm intelligent enough to decide how to vote without someone telling me "

"I'm a nonpartisan rabbit for sure," said Sen John Murphy of South Sioux City, another opponent Murphy said he is contemplating sponsorship of legislation under which a governor, in appointing members to boards and commissions, would be allowed to load these bodies with no more than 60 per cent persons of one political party

Some of these appointive groups "are getting way too lopsided," he said

Salary hikes may be buried in House

WASHINGTON (AP) — If President Nixon recommends a rumored substantial salary increase for members of Congress, plans now are to prevent a floor vote in the House by burying the issue in committee, junior Republican sources are saying

Under the pay statute, an increase would become effective 30 days after Nixon recommends it unless either House votes it down The salary hike, reliable sources have told various congressmen, would amount to 25 per cent over three years

The Senate, which last year went on record against a boost in the current salary of $42,500, traditionally does bring the matter to the floor for a vote

The House traditionally tries to avoid such a roll call, especially in an election year with all willing incumbents up for re-election

Mansfield doesn't want shortcuts on Watergate

By CARL P. LEUBSDORF
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — In the official Democratic response to President Nixon, Sen Mike Mansfield has rejected Nixon's call for a fast windup to Watergate investigations

He told the nation Friday night the Senate Watergate Committee may have to stay in business past its Feb 28 deadline to avoid jeopardizing Watergate trials and added the work of Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski must continue "for however long may be necessary "

"Whether it be months or years, there are no judicial shortcuts," the Senate Democratic Leader said as he rejected Nixon's contention in his State of the Union speech that "one year of Watergate is enough "

However, Mansfield said he doesn't think either Watergate or the threat of impeachment have crippled President Nixon's ability to govern

In contrast to Nixon's Wednesday night speech, delivered with full pomp and ceremony to a joint session of Congress and a packed gallery in the House chamber, Mansfield spoke while seated at his desk in his office at the Capitol

When he finished his 30-minute prepared remarks, the Montana senator answered 42 questions in 20 minutes from reporters

Unlike Nixon, Mansfield made a major point of the need for election reform, urging the President to join the Democrats in cleaning up what he called "the campaign financing mess "

He said "we shall not finally come to grips with the problem except as we are prepared to pay for the public business of elections with public funds "

Where Nixon vowed "to do everything we can to avoid gasoline rationing," Mansfield said he thinks rationing is necessary to meet the current situation

"Do you like standing in line to buy $2 worth of gasoline?" he asked "Do you like paying 50-55 cents a gallon for gas?"

He indicated he doesn't share Nixon's view that a recession will be avoided in 1974 as he warned of the need "to make certain that the (energy) shortage does not devastate the economy "

Declaring the Democratic-controlled Congress will push programs that will produce not only "a decent present" but "reach for a decent future," Mansfield listed tax and pension reform, health insurance and a minimum wage hike as major legislative goals

He called for cuts in Nixon's $304 4 billion budget, particularly in defense, and said next November's congressional elections will "test the record of the past two years "

Retail price controls lifted

WASHINGTON (AP) — Stores that handle about 25 per cent of the country's retail sales have been freed of price and wage controls, but officials said they foresee no sharp price boosts

Among those not affected are retail food stores, and Director John T Dunlop of the Cost of Living Council indicated that controls in that area are not likely to be lifted soon

"Certain food prices are expected to rise increasingly in the months ahead," he told a news conference, adding that retailers' profit margins may not be to blame

Stores removed from Phase 4 controls are those handling hardware, building materials, garden supplies, general merchandise, boats, recreational and utility trailers, apparel and accessories, furniture and home furnishings, and food and drink sold by establishments doing less than $50 million in sales yearly Only chain restaurants do more than that

In addition to food stores, controls remain in effect over retail stores of petroleum and its products, motor vehicles, parts and equipment and large eating and drinking estab lishments

Omahan killed in Interstate crash

OMAHA, Neb (AP)—An Omaha man was killed and three persons were injured early Saturday in a collision on the Interstate Highway near 49th Street in Omaha

Police said Harold Yost, 25, was dead on arrival at a hospital

The report said Yost was alone in a car going west in the eastbound lane It was in collision with an auto driven by Richard Hyneck, 23, of Omaha

Hyneck and a passenger, Cindy Rutherford, 26, of Bellevue, were hospitalized in satisfactory condition Another passenger in the Hyneck car was treated at a hospital and released

Another vehicle reportedly struck the Hyneck car from the rear after the accident The driver escaped injury

The death raised Nebraska's 1974 traffic fatality toll to 19, compared with 33 by Feb 2 last year

Experts fail to read tapes

WASHINGTON (AP) — The lawyer for presidential secretary Rose Mary Woods said Friday that experts who examined the 18-minute gap in a White House tape "in effect destroyed the evidence" on which they based part of their conclusion

"They were not actually experts on tape and tape recorders," said attorney Charles S Rhyne "They were accoustical experts They did not justify their conclusion for their so-called buzz theory which they spent 99 per cent of their time on "

Miss Woods, who has admitted in court she might have caused part of the erasure by accidentally pushing the record button while listening to the tape, testified Friday before the grand jury investigating the matter

The panel of six experts had told U S District Judge John J Sirica that the erasure was caused by someone pushing the record-erase button at least five and possibly nine times

"They worked for two months and produced two press releases," Rhyne said in an interview "They did not produce material to prove they had done anything they didn t hand in the usual kind of report you expect from experts (who) would have brought the scientific data to support their conclusions

$1 million grant for SUN project

LINCOLN, Neb (AP) — Funding for the University of Nebraska's SUN Project in the amount of nearly $1 million was announced Friday

SUN short for State University of Nebraska, is a concept which has been more than two years in the development It proposes to use educational television and other communications media to provide college-level courses for persons who otherwise could not take them

The long-awaited grant of $934,581 was approved by the National Institute of Education in Washington

Prison escapee terrorizes family

HIAWATHA, Kan (AP) — Robert Earl Fritz, 34, who escaped from a Nebraska prison in Lincoln Thursday, terrorized a farm couple near Hiawatha and fled in their car

The sheriff's office said Ruben Mellenbruch and his wife, Ethel, were bound at knifepoint and threatened by Fritz for four hours Thursday evening. Fritz had entered the house eight miles northwest of Hiawatha and waited for the Mellenbruchs to come home

He abandoned a prison pickup truck at the farm and left in the Mellenbruchs' sedan, taking nearly $300 in silver coins, $20 in currency, a 20-gauge shotgun and a 22-caliber rifle

Hiawatha is about 10 miles south of the Nebraska border and about 25 miles west of the Missouri River

The Buck Ends Here

By IVAN D.E. BEAUMONT

The Small Town Cafe

Mrs Wayne "Billie" Earith who operates the Small Town Cafe in Percival, Ia , says she enjoys her work and can put up with about any of the kidding from her customers

She's been doing both for five years

Billie opens the cafe at 6 a m , and closes the door at 4 p.m She has a steady stream of customers, but the coffee drinkers are the people who keep her on her toes

We've called the cafe several times for rainfall reports generally handled by Mones Zach or Dean Handy

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We've never patronized the cafe, but, Billie, we accept your invitation and will do so soon

Sam Kellogg, Jr , tried to get me over there one morning last summer and offered to buy my bacon and eggs breakfast. (Write that down, fellas)

The customers have a lot of fun at their morning coffee sessions "They wait until someone new comes in and then tell the same jokes over," Billie says

They also kid her about the quality of the coffee, the quantity and who's going to pay She has a sign on the counter "In God we trust -- others pay cash "

Well, they've got a new one to work on now — Larry Moyer He's the new Scimitar Shrine president and there's a picture of him posted at the cafe

Post this on the wall, fellas Larry bought a round for e-v-e-r-y-o n-e the other night after the shrine election at the Elks

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Dottie Farris, daughter of Mr and Mrs Bob Farris, 620 South Ninth Street, is a good-natured high-schooler who can tell you about a fairly common accident in homes involving pins or needles

Dottie had surgery at St Mary's to remove a needle lodged in her foot

Every homemaker with a sewing machine will tell you how pins or needles are found in the carpeting, in chair upholstery or on steps

Many pins the seamstress uses today are marked for safety The round shiny headed pin is still available, but popular today are the pins with the brightly colored heads

Needles lack that coloring to attract attention and as a result can be pretty painful when plunged into a foot

Best wishes for a speedy recovery, Dottie and get back on your feet soon

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Best wishes to Mike McCartan

The Mike McCartan family will be moving soon to Independence, Mo , where Mike has accepted a position with Wishbone, the company that makes the popular salad dressings

Mike has been with Morton House in Nebraska City for about 10 years His wife, Peggy, and family, will be missed They've been very active in the community

Mike is presently exalted ruler of the Elks and has put a lot of emphasis on youth programs during his year

A number of other employes at Morton House have been offered new positions with the Lipton company, but as yet no announcements have been made on job changes here

Eston Ahrens was promoted to a position with Wishbone about two years ago and moved his family there

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Let's hear it for the mayor

Last summer Ervin Rogers and I were among the spectators at a softball game at Steinhart park

It was a hot, muggy summer evening Cars drove past the ball field on the rock, dirt or dust road in the park

A cloud of dust covered the spectators and the children on the ball field

"Sure wish the town could finish that paving job around the park "

"Yeah, it's bad isn t it ' Erv answered

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Well, Erv is back on the City council now and he's the mayor of the town and he hopes something can be done about finishing that paving job (That ought to win anyone a lot of votes)

One of the nicest improvements was made a couple a years ago when the parks department paved the street south of the main diamond

That didn't change it from a drag strip, but it sure shut off the dust clouds

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Raising the family

I'm an expert in most things but one of the little problems at which I am particularly good, is controlling the kids while we're going down the road

How many times, mothers, can you count when the kids were fighting or shoving or picking at each other and you wanted to turn around and whack 'em all?

You know what would happen then "what'd you hit me for he (or she) started it!"

You can't win, moms, but you can learn from the King and Master of the house on the North 40

— Give 'em licorice'

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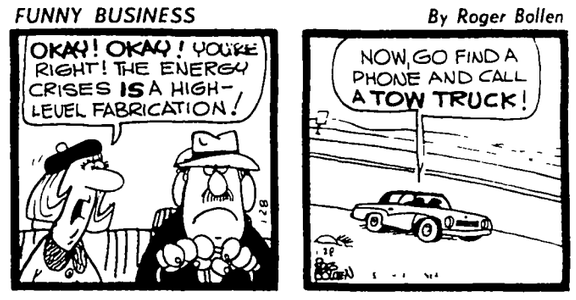
You don't believe that?

Okay, here's what you do buy a sack of the long licorice put a piece in your mouth and repeat this

"Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked If — Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, how many pickled peppers did Peter Piper pick?

If that doesn't wrangle a smile out of your kids (and slobbers down their chins), call your pastor

FUNNY BUSINESS *By Roger Bollen*



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