

Solons Begin Work In Hectic Session

Capitol News Service
SACRAMENTO—The California Legislature opened its 1968 session here Monday—a session everyone had forecast would be bitterly partisan—and before the opening gavel even rapped it became apparent there would be nobody in white hats.

In a move unprecedented in recent years, there were opposition candidates for both Assembly Speaker Jesse M. Unruh (D-Inglewood) and Senator Hugh M. Burns (D-Fresno), president pro tempore of the state senate for the past 11 years.

Neither of the Republican candidates was successful, as expected. In the senate, the vote was 27-12 for Burns, against Senator Donald L. Grunsky (R-Watsonville), the GOP leader in the senate. Burns did not vote or it would have been 28-12.

In the assembly, a closer rollcall found the vote 41-38 for Unruh against Assemblyman Robert T. Monagan (R-Tracy), the Republican leader in the assembly.

PRIOR TO THE noon opening of the sessions, both Monagan and Unruh held press conferences. Monagan said the Republican caucus had voted to nominate him against Unruh because Unruh already had set the atmosphere of the 1968 session as a partisan one. Unruh charged the Republicans nominated Monagan and, to a man, voted for him because they had been goaded into it by Governor Ronald Reagan.

No one had expected the 1968 session would be anything except a partisan one. However, some had felt that, in keeping with the tradition, there might be a couple of weeks of "hail fellow, well met."

No other business than election of officers was conducted on the first day. A number of news releases were issued by members on bills they had introduced. But actually, only one bill was introduced. This was AB1 by Senator George Miller Jr. (D-Martinez) which would permit local school boards to have more freedom in setting curriculum for high schools. The same bill had been in a number of times before but never had made the grade.

WHILE UNRUH AND Monagan engaged in bitter exchanges, there was little said in the senate. But it's felt the bitterness in the upper house, though silent, may be significant in the future.

Reagan's office actually injected itself somewhat into the senate contest, where there are 20 Republicans and 20 Democrats. Earlier, Senator John F. McCarthy (R-San Rafael) had said he would vote for Burns. McCarthy, oldest Republican in terms of seniority, is a member of the powerful rules committee and had been Republican leader in the senate until December, when he was deposed, in favor of Grunsky.

McCarthy had been called into Reagan's office and asked about voting for a Republican, even though Reagan earlier had said he would leave the selection of officers up to the senate.

THE SIGNIFICANCE of the fact that eight Republicans voted for Burns was not known as yet but the general indication is that the governor will have a difficult time with his program in the upper house. Casting their votes with Burns were the following Republican senators: William E. Coombs, Rialto; Lou Cusanovich, Van Nuys; Richard J. Dolwig, Atherton; Milton Marks, San Francisco; Fred W. Marler Jr., Redding; McCarthy; John G. Schmitz, Tustin; and Jack Schrade, San Diego (also a member of the rules committee).

Ironically, Marks was elected to the senate last August in a special election and became the 20th Republican. One of the selling points in

his campaign was that he would give the GOP the chance to control the senate, but wound up voting for the Democratic leader.

To add to the irony of the senate situation, McCarthy not only voted for Burns for president pro tempore but he nominated him from the floor.

IN THE assembly, as usual, the action was a bit more hectic. When it was learned

Sunday that the Republicans would nominate Monagan for speaker, there was little doubt that the outcome would find a straight party-line vote. This was despite the fact there may be some Democrats who are not happy with Unruh and there are some Republicans who'd prefer someone other than Monagan as their leader.

But on this kind of a rollcall, there was real party solidarity.

Some of the drama was added because five members were late in attending, due to taking later airplanes in order to avoid the fog at Sacramento's new Metropolitan Airport.

As a result, the first rollcall on the speaker election was held when there were only 38 Democrats present and 41 were needed to elect Unruh. The first rollcall was held and the vote was 38-37 for Unruh, but this was three

short of the required majority.

THE VOTE was delayed through a parliamentary move until the absent members arrived.

To rub it in a bit, Assemblyman Kenneth Cory (D-Westminster) nominated a fellow Orange county legislator, Republican Robert E. Badham (R-Newport Beach) for speaker pro tem. Assemblyman Carlos Bee (D-Hayward) has

been speaker pro tem since 1959 and is a favorite of members of both parties. Cory's move was intended to embarrass Republicans, who wouldn't want to vote for a Democrat but wouldn't want to vote against Bee. Badham declined the nomination.

Thus the legislature has organized for another year—its first session in an election year—and it was expected to long and generally non-productive.

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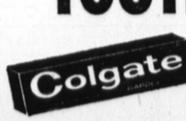
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