

This dissertation has been
microfilmed exactly as received

69-17,334

KOLASA, Bernard Daniel, 1938-
THE NEBRASKA POLITICAL SYSTEM: A
STUDY IN APARTISAN POLITICS.

The University of Nebraska, Ph.D., 1960
Political Science, general

University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan



Bernard Daniel Kolasa, 1938-

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

THE NEBRASKA POLITICAL SYSTEM: A
STUDY IN APARTISAN POLITICS

by

Bernard Daniel Kolasa

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College in the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Political Science

Under the Supervision of Dr. A. B. Winter

Lincoln, Nebraska

November, 1968

TITLE

THE NEBRASKA POLITICAL SYSTEM: A STUDY IN APARTISAN

POLITICS

BY

BERNARD DANIEL KOLASA

APPROVED

DATE

A. B. Winter, Associate Professor (Chairman) November 7, 1968

Jack W. Rodgers, Associate Professor November 7, 1968

Raphael Zariski, Associate Professor November 7, 1968

John Braeman, Associate Professor November 7, 1968

Campbell R. McConnell, Professor November 7, 1968

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

GRADUATE COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

PREFACE

It is with some apprehension that I approach this analysis of the Nebraska political system. To master such a broad topic is difficult under any circumstances, but in the context of limited time and exposure, this task becomes vulnerable to a number of pitfalls. One can be criticized for having failed to become sufficiently sensitized to the environmental influences or for applying standards operable elsewhere but not necessarily applicable within the particularist milieu of the Nebraska political system.

Six years of exposure to the Nebraska political system is not long enough perhaps to counter the above criticisms. But the time period has provided more than a casual contact with the state's people and institutions. I have attempted to be objective in the treatment of the material. Any criticisms that have been made, or are considered as such by the reader, have been advanced in a spirit of constructiveness. The decision to remain in the state is perhaps further evidence of my interest and concern as well as a demonstration of the spirit of constructiveness.

To acknowledge personally the hundreds of people whose cooperation has contributed to this study is

impossible. Party leaders and lobbyists who responded to a questionnaire and/or a personal interview provided a great deal of the data for the study. The Senators of the 1967 session of the Nebraska Legislature were most solicitous of their time in granting interviews with the author as well as taking time to complete a questionnaire. Former Governors Val Peterson, Robert Crosby, and Frank Morrison were kind enough to take time out of their busy schedule to discuss the role of the executive in Nebraska. To these people, named and unnamed, the author owes a large debt and can but express his grateful appreciation of the efforts in his behalf.

For clerical and technical assistance the author would like to acknowledge the following: Mrs. Albert Welsch and Mrs. Peggy Culwell (typing); Miss Norma Caha (maps and charts); and Miss Marilyn Schlaphoff (editing and proofreading). For aid in tabulating the results of the questionnaires and technical assistance in data processing aspects of the study, the author acknowledges the efforts of Mr. Richard F. Thomasson. Dr. Robert Sittig and Mr. Eric Carlson of the University of Nebraska Political Science Department provided assistance in various aspects of the study. Dr. Jack W. Rodgers and Dr. Raphael Zariski, as the Reading Committee, made numerous constructive comments. The impetus for the study came from

Dr. A. B. Winter who, as major adviser, has seen the study through from its beginning. His criticisms and comments have served to correct many weaknesses of the study. Any errors of fact or interpretation that remain are the sole responsibility of the author.

B.D.K.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION, CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, AND HYPOTHESIS	1
II. PERCEPTIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT: PHYSICAL FACTORS	22
III. THE ENVIRONMENT--DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL FACTORS	43
IV. PERCEPTIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT: INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS	70
V. POLITICAL CULTURE AND TRADITION: MYTHS, MOVEMENTS AND MEN	139
VI. CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION: POLITICAL PARTIES AND INTEREST GROUPS	216
VII. DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES: THE LEGISLATURE	309
VIII. DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES: THE EXECUTIVE	386
IX. OUTPUTS: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	458
APPENDICES:	
A. PHYSICAL FACTORS: SUPPORTING DATA	504
B. DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL FACTORS: SUPPORTING DATA	521
C. POLITICAL PARTIES AND INTEREST GROUPS IN NEBRASKA: SUPPORTING DATA	551
BIBLIOGRAPHY	571

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
IV- 1.	Constitutional and Statutory Change in Nebraska 1914-1966	124
IV- 2.	The Initiative and Referendum Measures Enacted in Nebraska 1914-1966	127
VI- 1.	Party Index--Legislative Seats: 1901-1935	246
VI- 2.	Republican-Democratic Strength Summarized: 1910-1966	249
VI- 3.	Individual Party Activity (IPA)	263
VI- 4.	IPA Breakdown by Party	265
VI- 5.	Level of Party Activity	265
VI- 6.	MPA by Position and Party of Respondent . .	266
VI- 7.	Encouragement of Party Members to Run . . .	269
VI- 8.	Frequency of Efforts Toward Legislative Recruitment	270
VI- 9.	Affirmative Response Toward Legislative Candidacy	271
VI-10.	Success of Persons Responding Affirmatively Toward Legislative Candidacy	272
VI-11.	Voter Awareness of Candidate Political Affiliation (Democratic Respondents) . .	273
VI-12.	Voter Awareness of Candidate Political Affiliation (Republican Respondents) . .	274
VI-13.	Party Attitudes Toward a Partisan Legislature	282
VI-14.	Reasons for Favoring a Partisan Legislature	284

Table	Page
VI-15. Reasons for Opposing a Partisan Legislature	285
VI-16. Party Leaders Perception of the Role of Nonparty Groups in Legislative Elections	293
VI-17. Relative Measure of Nonparty Group Influence (Party Leaders' Assessment) . .	294
VI-18. Nonparty Groups and Legislative Recruitment	295
VI-19. Lobbyists' Political Affiliation	299
VI-20. Lobbyist Attitude Toward a Partisan Legislature by Political Affiliation . .	306
VII- 1. Non-Personal Influences in Candidacy Decision	312
VII- 2. Groups Most Helpful in Campaign	313
VII- 3. Group Support Essential in Re-election Bid	314
VII- 4. Age of Nebraska Legislator Upon Election .	321
VII- 5. Educational Level of Legislators: Nebraska and Selected States (Percentage)	323
VII- 6. Occupation of Legislators: Nebraska and Other States (Percentage)	324
VII- 7. Religious Affiliation of Nebraska Legislators	326
VII- 8. Ethnic Background of Nebraska Legislators .	326
VII- 9. Length of Service: Nebraska (1937-1967) and Other States (1925-1935)	327
VII-10. Length of Service of Senate Members Meeting in 1950	329
VII-11. Turnover of Nebraska Legislators	329

Table	Page
VII-12. Political Experience of Nebraska Legislators	331
VII-13. Candidates in Legislative Primaries in Nebraska (1938-1960)	334
VII-14. Lobbying Techniques: Type and Frequency of Use	372
VII-15. Lobbyist Assessment of Interest Group Success	378
VIII- 1. Occupational Background of Nebraska Governors	407
VIII- 2. Political Experience of Nebraska Governors	415
VIII- 3. Executive Vetoes in Nebraska 1937-1966	430
VIII- 4. Executive Vetoes by Governor 1937-1966	431
IX- 1. General Revenue of State and Local Governments, By Source, Ten Plains States and U.S., 1963	461
IX- 2. Origin of General Revenue of State and Local Governments, Ten Plains States and the United States, 1957 and 1963	462
IX- 3. Percentage of State Taxes by Source, Ten Plains States and U.S., 1963	463
IX- 4. Personal Income and State Taxes per Person, Nebraska and Selected States, 1967	465
IX- 5. Per Capita Expenditures of State and Local Governments, Total and Selected Functions, 1963	466
IX- 6. State and Local General Expenditures per \$1,000 of Personal Income, Total and Selected Items, 1963	467
IX- 7. State Government Appropriations, Nebraska	469

Table	Page
B- 1. Population Growth of Nebraska	525
B- 2. Nebraska Urban/Rural Population Classification	526
B- 3. Nebraska's Urban Population by Classification According to Number of Inhabitants 1890-1960	527
B- 4. Population Distribution 1930-1960	530
B- 5. Summary of Population Characteristics in Nebraska 1870-1960	531
B- 6. Foreign Born in Nebraska by Country of Origin 1870-1960	533
B- 7. Age of Nebraska Population Compared to National Average (Percent)	536
B- 8. Male-Female Ratio (Males per 100 Females) .	536
B- 9. Farms, Acreage, Value, Tenure of Operator: Nebraska 1960-1964	537
B-10. Number and Tenure by Year Operator Began Operating Farm, 1964	539
B-11. Age of Farm Operator by Tenure, 1964 . . .	540
B-12. Farm Characteristics by Economic Class, 1964	541
B-13. Industry Group of Employed Persons, 1960 (over 10,000)	542
B-14. Number and Percent of Employees in Different Types of Manufacturing 1958-1963	544
B-15. Income of U.S. and Nebraska Families, 1959	545
B-16. States of Origin of Native-Born Nebraskans 1870-1940	546

Table	Page
B-17. Church Membership in Nebraska 1870-1952 . . .	548
B-18. Median School Years Completed, 1960	550
C- 1. Distribution and Return by Respondent	553
C- 2. Distribution and Return by Legislative District	554
C- 3. Lobbyist Questionnaire: Distribution and Return	564

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure		Page
I- 1.	A Political System	14
II- 1.	The Great Plains	23
VI- 1.	Republican and Democratic Party Organization	232
VI- 2.	Party Index 1910-1966 (Governor Vote) . . .	240
VI- 3.	Party Index 1910-1966 (Governor Vote, Non-Presidential Years)	241
VI- 4.	Party Index 1910-1966 (Minor Office Vote) .	242
VI- 5.	Party Index 1910-1966 (Minor Office Vote, Non-Presidential Years)	243
VI- 6.	Party Index (National Offices Won)	244
VI- 7.	Party Index (State Offices Won)	245
VI- 8.	Measure of Party Activity in Legislative Elections	261
VII- 1.	How a Bill Becomes a Law	344
VII- 2.	Cartoonist's View of Lobbying in Nebraska .	375
VIII- 1.	Political Persuasion of Counties--Vote for Governor, Non-Presidential Years, 1902-1934	412
VIII- 2.	Political Persuasion of Counties--Vote for Governor, Non-Presidential Years, 1938-1966	413
A- 1.	Topographic Regions of Nebraska	505
A- 2.	Great Soil Groups in Nebraska	506
A- 3.	Agricultural Utilization of Land in Nebraska	507

Figure	Page
A- 4. Leading Counties with Cropland in Corn--1962	508
A- 5. Leading Counties with Cropland in Wheat--1962	509
A- 6. Leading Counties with Cropland in Sorghums--1962	510
A- 7. Leading Counties with Cropland in Oats--1962	511
A- 8. Leading Counties in Hay Production--1960-1962	512
A- 9. Leading Counties in Cattle--1962	513
A-10. Leading Counties in Hogs and Pigs--1962	514
A-11. Annual Average Precipitation (1939-1960)	515
A-12. Topography of Central Nebraska with Overleaf A, Soil Groups and Overleaf B, Rainfall and Irrigation	516
A-13. Nebraska Population Loss 1930-1940	517
A-14. Nebraska Population Gain 1930-1940	518
A-15. Nebraska Population Loss 1930-1960	519
A-16. Nebraska Population Gain 1930-1960	520
B- 1. Comparison of U.S.-Nebraska Percentage Population Growth by Decades 1860-1960	522
B- 2. Age of Nebraska Population (Percentage of Total by Age Group) 1890-1960	523
B- 3. Nebraska: Value Added by Manufacture by Industry Group 1958-1963 (in millions of dollars)	524

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION, CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, AND HYPOTHESIS

Nebraska: One of Fifty

Introduction

To the uninitiated the name Nebraska still brings to mind pioneers, Indians, homesteads, and farmers. To those with at least a passing interest in history, William Jennings Bryan, Populism, Progressivism, and Republicanism will strike a responsive chord. The more knowledgeable person probably will recognize George W. Norris and unicameralism.

Beyond these terms and names, most probably vague, Nebraska means little to one with no personal contact with it. This can be said of many of the fifty states, but to a greater degree of those which, like Nebraska, have neither economic, social nor political power with which to influence, modify, or perhaps change the course of events beyond their restricted state boundaries.

This is not to say that these states have not from time to time managed to exert a wider influence through some extraordinary personality or movement. Many great

men, representing economically and politically weak states, have made vital contributions to the national welfare and progress. Nebraska has had its share of men of vision and principle whose leadership has helped to mold the character of America. Nevertheless, the state does not and cannot command the attention states like New York and California receive. Some even question the contribution the larger states make and see the state as an anachronism of a federal structure ill-suited to the needs of an urbanized, industrialized society.¹

Role of the States

It is only within the last decade or so that political scientists have turned their attention to the states and have more closely examined the political behavior of these creatures of American federalism. Debate over the role and powers of the state vis-à-vis the national government dates back to the founding of the Republic, but too often only as a polemical weapon to thwart the powers of all government or to serve some vested interest. Only rarely did the debate involve a genuine concern for the continued political viability of

¹For a critical treatise on federalism, see William Riker, Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1964). Professor Riker argues that federalism has been an effective weapon in frustrating majority government, and that federalism in the United States is unique in fostering racism.

the state.

Some see little or no hope for the survival of the junior partner of American federalism as an independent political entity. In the context of today's rapidly changing and diminishing world, the state is seen as an inefficient, unnecessary, and outmoded governmental body. The day is anticipated when the state will evolve into an administrative arm of the national government. Necessity demands that problems be attacked within their entire economic and social boundaries instead of the present legal and political limits which provide for only partial solutions at best because of jurisdictional restrictions.

Many, while agreeing that to a great extent the states are on their way to becoming administrative arms of the national government, do not see this as inevitable. In many cases the "decline" of the states is due, to a large extent, to their inaction and refusal to adjust to changing conditions. The vacuum created by their inaction has been filled, through the force of public opinion, by the national government. Continued inaction in the context of an ever-growing urban, industrial society will only increase the influence and activities of the national government. But an alternative does exist for the states to retain an identity beyond, and independent of, the national government. The states must realize the "facts of life" and take imaginative and dynamic steps to cope with the

problems of today and tomorrow. The future for the states in the American federal system is not at all bleak granted that the efforts, both singly and cooperatively, which they make are adequate to meet the needs and demands of the times.²

The States as Political Laboratories

One must hasten to add that if the states are to be independent, viable political entities, there is need for adaptation, modification, and experimentation to achieve dynamic, imaginative, and determined courses of action.

Almost every text on state government lists as an argument in favor of federalism that of the state serving as a political laboratory.³ The argument runs that American democracy is not a stable, fixed condition, but rather ever-changing, developing, and continuing within the context of a maturing political society. The state provides an advantageous environment in which creative steps can be undertaken, steps which may change, modify or alter the character of American democracy. Leaders, who are trained and gain political experience on the state level, often

²John M. Gaus, "The States Are in the Middle," State Government, XXIII (June, 1950), 138-142.

³W. Brooke Graves, American State Government (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1953), p. 17.

put their knowledge to use on the national level. Social legislation, first enacted on a state level, may be adopted nationally after its benefits and workability are proven. Various institutional devices, highly successful on the state level, may provide new direction and adaptation in other governmental entities. In this way the states provide a useful function and play an important role in the changing and developing state of American democracy.⁴

The role of political laboratory, however, has not been developed to a great degree. In the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth centuries the needs of government were relatively simple and thus there was little demand for innovation. During the post-Industrial Revolution era of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth, the judicial doctrine of substantive due process hindered any innovation the states might attempt by restricting the scope of the state's police power. Justice Holmes protested this restrictive interpretation and spoke more than once in favor of permitting the states to experiment in meeting the emergent exigencies of the twentieth century.

. . . there is nothing that I more deprecate than the use of the 14th Amendment beyond the absolute compulsion of its words to prevent making of social experiments that an important part of the community desires, in the insulated

⁴Lynton K. Caldwell, "Laboratories for Democratic Government," State Government, XXIII (April, 1950), 76-80.

chambers afforded by the several states, even though the experiments may seem futile or even noxious to me and to those whose judgment I most respect.⁵

With the demise of substantive due process in the late 1930's, states were freer to use their police powers to break new ground in governmental institutions and approaches. The record has not been particularly effective in strengthening the argument of the states as political laboratories. Many states serve to perpetuate long-established anti-democratic tendencies or fail to keep pace with the changing and developing American democratic character. The reapportionment record of state legislatures aptly points up one area of state failure. In many cases, states are the epitome of status quo, tradition-bound governmental operations which bear little resemblance to the "laboratories of American democracy." Thus, while preserving the best of the past, they also perpetuate the outmoded, inefficient, and unnecessary, compounding and extending the problems of the present and future.

On balance, the states are neither wholly laboratories for American democracy nor stout guardians of the past, but a mixture of both. Though tarnished, the

⁵Alfred H. Kelly and Winfred A. Harbison, The American Constitution (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1955), p. 701.

states still provide fertile ground for examination from the aspect of their possible contribution to the welfare of the entire body politic, even if the result is only a lesson in what not to do.

Nebraska As a Political Laboratory

If the states, then, continue to provide the researcher with valuable insights into the operation of the body politic, the question arises as to what contribution Nebraska might offer to this end.

Despite its small population, essential homogeneity, and rural-agricultural orientation, Nebraska has provided its share of men, ideas and movements which have made an impact upon the national scene. In politics, William Jennings Bryan and his brother Charles, and George W. Norris are probably the best known. The state was the hotbed of Populism in the 1890's adding a powerful impetus to the national reform movement dating back many years and continuing through the Progressive and New Deal eras.⁶ Nebraska was one of the early states to enact such electoral and procedural changes as the direct primary, initiative, referendum, and nonpartisan election of judges

⁶James C. Olson, History of Nebraska (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), p. 230.

and educational officials.⁷ Nebraska possesses the nation's only complete state-wide public power system.⁸ The state has made vital contributions in men, institutions, and philosophy to the cultural heritage of the country.⁹

Probably Nebraska's most important single contribution as a political laboratory, because of its uniqueness and yet general applicability to other governmental entities, has been its nonpartisan, unicameral Legislature operating since 1937. Not since Vermont abandoned its unicameral Legislature in 1836¹⁰ had the

⁷ Nebraska was one of three states which provided for the primary system in city elections in the last decade of the nineteenth century. The voters of the state adopted the initiative and referendum in 1911, and nonpartisan election of judicial and educational officials dates back to 1909, but because of judicial veto, party labels for these offices were not eliminated until 1913 and 1917 respectively. (Addison E. Sheldon, Nebraska: The Land and The People [Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1931].)

⁸ For a more detailed look at the public power story, see Robert Firth, Public Power in Nebraska: A Report on State Ownership (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962); University of Nebraska, School of Journalism, Public Power in Nebraska, Depth Report No. 2 (Lincoln: By the Author, 1963).

⁹ For a glimpse of some of the individuals in the arts, education, business as well as political fields whom Nebraska has produced, see Olson, op. cit., pp. 354 ff.; J. R. Johnson, Representative Nebraskans (Lincoln: Johnsen Publishing Co., 1954).

¹⁰ G. Theodore Mitau, State and Local Government: Politics and Processes (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), p. 45.

one-house chamber been in existence on a higher than local level until the voters of Nebraska provided for their unicameral Legislature in the election of 1934.

The Unicameral,¹¹ adopted at the height of the Depression and the political career of George W. Norris, was the source of much debate and writing in the two and one-half decades following its adoption. But the Unicameral received little consideration as a legislative tool to be adopted in preference to the dominant bicameral system. With the 1962 reapportionment case, Baker v. Carr,¹² and subsequent cases, the unicameral idea received new impetus and numerous states took a more detailed look at the unicameral device and its operation in Nebraska. For most this was a perfunctory glance and there were few serious attempts to follow Nebraska's example. The reasons are varied and complex. Nebraska has a small, largely homogeneous population, is still basically agriculturally oriented and thus offers few lessons for the more populated, industrialized states. The long tradition of bicameralism probably played a large part in the rejection

¹¹The term "Unicameral" has become popularized in Nebraska to the extent that the adjective has become a noun and is used in the same way as Congress or General Assembly to denote the state's legislative institution. In this study, when capitalized, Unicameral will be used to refer to the Nebraska legislative institution.

¹²369 U.S. 186, 7 L.Ed. 2d 663, 82 Sup. Ct. 691.

of the unicameral idea no less so than the fact that unicameralism would result in substantial unemployment of many active politicians. Added to this is the lack of detailed research on the Nebraska Unicameral as a political institution--the executive-legislative relationship, the role of political parties and interest groups, the leadership structure, and so forth.

Though the Unicameral has not brought about the undesirable results anticipated by many and has found general acceptance among Nebraskans,¹³ it has not demonstrated it is patently superior to the bicameral system. As a procedural legislative institution, the Unicameral has found acceptance; as a political legislative institution, the Unicameral continues to draw criticism. The nonpartisan feature has to many become so closely identified with the unicameral device that many Nebraskans believe a one-house chamber and the nonpartisan election of its members are inherently complementary. This belief has no doubt played a part in the less than enthusiastic reception unicameralism received during the "new look" following the reapportionment cases.

Potentially, then, the Nebraska political system provides a number of areas of governmental institutions

¹³Roger V. Shumate, "The Nebraska Unicameral Legislature," Western Political Quarterly, V (September, 1952), 512.

and approaches which might be applicable to other state political systems as well as perhaps the national political system. The first step in determining the degree of applicability would seem to be an exhaustive study of the Nebraska political system. Many questions which are at present unanswered need to be thoroughly researched.

Except for legislative mechanics, very little substantive research on the nonpartisan, unicameral Legislature has been done. What is necessary is a more detailed examination of the role of interest groups and political parties within the legislative arena. In the absence of a party structure, the usual assumptions about the legislative-executive relationship may not be applicable and thus there is need to determine just what factors are operative in the interaction of these two branches of government.

In short, before one can venture any assessment of Nebraska as a political laboratory, one needs to have a full and comprehensive knowledge of the state's political system. Such a task has hardly been begun and this study should not be viewed as accomplishing this feat. But it is hoped that the present study will be at least a ground-breaking effort and that further research will be undertaken to narrow the gap of knowledge surrounding the operation of the Nebraska political system. Only when this gap is filled can one hope to assess satisfactorily

the role of Nebraska as a political laboratory and the applicability of such governmental innovations as a nonpartisan, unicameral Legislature.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

A Political System Analysis

A systems analysis approach will be utilized as the framework for this study.¹⁴ The systems approach has received a great deal of attention in recent years and has undergone some modifications since first appearing. It is not contended that the framework for this study is original or in any way a contribution to the theory of systems analysis. The author has merely utilized the insights of others in this area as a framework. This approach was adopted for a number of reasons.

A systems analysis approach most clearly illustrates the "big picture" of the governmental process. A more proper perspective is provided for viewing a particular political system, as Nebraska, by showing all the significant variables that are operative. A systems analysis emphasizes the dynamic and continuous quality of the

¹⁴The works largely relied upon for this framework include David Easton, A Systems Analysis of Political Life (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965); Herbert Jacob, "Dimensions of State Politics," State Legislatures in American Politics, ed. by Alexander Heard (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), pp. 5-36; Marian D. Irish and James W. Prothro, The Politics of American Democracy (4th ed.; Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), pp. 6-21.

governmental process, the interaction and interdependence of numerous factors, to permit a fuller and more sophisticated appreciation of the governing process. In addition, a systems analysis aptly points up the inherent connection of the system with the society in which it operates. Much as an individual is largely patterned by his environment, so too is a political system the prisoner of its environment. An understanding of the environment is essential to grasping the pattern of behavior of a particular system.

Such a systemic view of the political process has several important characteristics. It emphasizes the dependence of governmental institutions on societal characteristics. It reveals many of the intervening variables between social conditions and governmental decisions. It helps us place each political and governmental institution in the full context of the environment in which it operates.¹⁵

The characteristics of a political system are schematically presented in Figure I-1. It is accepted that there is a segment of activity, called political actions, which is identifiable and separate from the sum total of human activity.¹⁶ This segment, designated a political system, is a whole, that is, it can be differentiated from other activities even though it is dependent upon, and patterned by, these various other activities which taken as a whole can be called the environment.¹⁷ Finally, the

¹⁵Jacob, op. cit., p. 8.

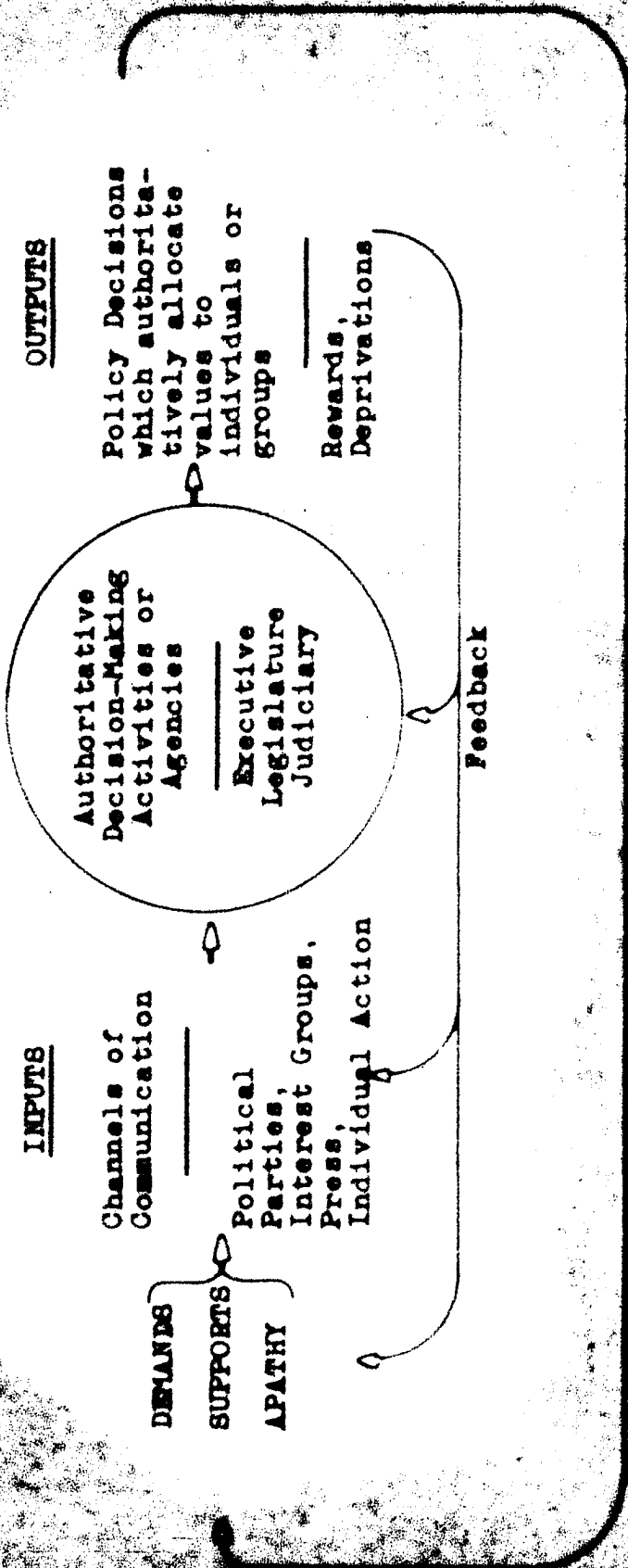
¹⁶Irish and Prothro, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁷Ibid.

FIGURE I-1

A POLITICAL SYSTEM

A POLITICAL SYSTEM



Feedback

Source: Herbert Jacob, "Evolution of State Policies," in *Evolution of American Politics*, ed. by Alexander Heard (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1957), p. 23.

various elements of the political system are interdependent, though this is not to say that each is equally significant or important. Yet, "the performance of each part is to some extent a function of the performance of the other parts."¹⁸

Logically it would seem appropriate that one begin by examining the environment from which the system arises and within which it operates. The environment consists of factors within the same society but falling outside the realm identifiable as political actions, as well as those which lie outside the given society itself. The former, or intra-societal factors as Easton defines them,¹⁹ would include economic, cultural, demographic, and social factors. In Nebraska such factors as the demographic character of the population, the basis of the state's economy, the political culture and tradition including such movements as Populism and Progressivism, the religious and social cleavages within the state, would be a few of the pertinent aspects that pattern the intra-societal Nebraska system or environment.

The extra-societal environment would be those systems which fall outside the Nebraska society, such as the national political system, the political systems of .

¹⁸Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁹Easton, op. cit., pp. 21 ff.

neighboring states, and even the international political system, though the latter's effect is probably tangential at best in reference to Nebraska.²⁰

Main emphasis in this study will be placed on the so-called intra-societal environment since it most directly affects the operation of the Nebraska political system, and has the most significant influence on its operation. The extra-societal environment is important, of course, but for the purposes of this study need not be elaborated. The bounds which are set upon the Nebraska system by the national political system, for instance, are similar to those placed on all the political systems of the various states. The constitutional, statutory, and political limitations imposed by the national system are similar between the states and need not be considered in the specific context of this study beyond an appreciation of their existence and operation.

The core of the political system is the agents and/or agencies that determine who gets what; those who make decisions which authoritatively allocate rewards and/or deprivations to individuals or groups.²¹ The agents and their activities are probably the most familiar;

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ The designation of outputs in terms of "rewards" and "deprivations" is taken from Irish and Prothro, op. cit., p. 12.

the executive, legislative, and judiciary who through their functions of law-making, rule-making, application of rules, and settlement of disputes in effect determine rewards and deprivations--the outputs of the political system.²²

The impetus or need for these decision-making functions arises from many quarters. At the highest level perhaps are the members of the society as a whole who make demands upon the decision-makers. It is these demands which necessitate the carrying out of the decision-making functions, and constitute the inputs of the system.²³ These demands are generated, however, within the political system itself as well as outside (as when administrators ask for a certain law to increase their efficiency or make their job easier). The double feedback line of the diagram (Figure I-1) indicates this intra- and extra-political system demand structure.

The "support" input indicates those attitudes and behavior which provide acceptance of the system. This could be termed the amount of consensus that is demonstrated or the degree of legitimization that has been built up for the system. This input is important because it aids in the decision-making process, and in the feedback process either works to further solidify the

²²Ibid., pp. 13 ff.

²³Ibid., p. 10.

over-all acceptance of the functioning of the system or to erode this support level.

The input of "apathy"²⁴ is added to provide for the existence in any political system of a minority which is indifferent to politics. Apathy is different from support as it denotes a neutral stance whereas support has a more positive connotation. The level of apathy appears important because it determines the degree to which the decision-makers have freedom of action independent of public opinion or concern. How closely the decision-maker must "keep his ear to the ground" would be tied to the apathy factor.

The linking between the demands and the decision-makers is provided by the various channels of communication. The most direct link is individual action as personal communication with the governor or a legislator, or group action as a demonstration, march, or a picket. The more common avenue of approach is through the institutions of political parties and interest groups. These serve to translate the general demands into more specific ones which the decision-makers can convert into authoritative decisions. Because of the complexities and multitude of demands in the context of a representative

²⁴The explicit recognition of apathy is added to the model by Irish and Prothro, though Easton provides for this in his "support" concept.

concept of government, "middleman" channels of communication have evolved. In democratic systems, parties and interest groups emerge as the most salient of the "middlemen."²⁵

The outputs--rewards and/or deprivations--in a political system such as Nebraska's can be classified into three categories: taxation patterns; expenditure patterns; and regulatory activities.²⁶ It is in this context that the outputs of the Nebraska system will be considered, particularly taxation and expenditure patterns. What the government does, the character of the rewards and deprivations, is tied to how money is raised and how it is spent. And conversely, the stimuli being applied to the decision-makers through demands are tied to what government does. The interdependence of demands, governmental programs, and taxation is a fact of life demonstrating the circular quality of the governmental process and the

²⁵The general lack of interest in the population in most governmental issues contributes to this dependence upon middlemen in demand articulation. Only a few issues either interest or are grasped by the populace as a whole. Part of this may also be due to the representative concept, the idea that men are chosen to represent the people. It is their job to acquire the knowledge and interest to cope with these governmental issues. The citizen is to approve or disapprove the way the representative accomplishes this; that is, to ensure the decision-maker is satisfactorily coping with the issues.

²⁶Jacob, op. cit., pp. 9 ff.

interaction of the numerous variables.

Thus, decisions which emerge themselves become grist for the decision-making mill as the continuous process revolves. Through feedback, both within the political system and outside in the environment, decisions pattern the continuous inputs process. Decisions affect the environment, becoming the basis for new demands as well as strengthening or weakening the support inputs (or increasing or decreasing apathy). As the demands and supports are altered, so too are the channels of communication in responding to the new stimuli and this in turn is reflected in the decision-making structures. Within the political system, decisional feedback patterns the decision-making structures, channels of communication and demands and supports as well. Thus, within and without, the dynamic governmental process is ever in motion, ever-changing, ever-active as the diverse variables act and interact.

The Hypothesis Stated

The main hypothesis of this study is that an examination of the various elements of the political system will reveal a pattern of political behavior of the state's institutions and decision-makers which reflects a low level of political partisanship. The political style of the state can be called apartisan, though this does not

denote a complete lack of political partisanship in the operation of the state's political system. What is meant is that political parties, and all that the structure and operation of a party system includes, play a small role at best in the decision-making processes of state government in Nebraska.

The various environmental factors, some in a positive manner and others in a negative way, have combined over time to create an atmosphere conducive to apartisan political behavior. This behavior has in turn affected the channels of communication and decision-making structures and the feedback resulting from the apartisan milieu has worked to strengthen and legitimize this. Thus, support for the apartisan political behavior has been the net result.

CHAPTER II

PERCEPTIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT:

PHYSICAL FACTORS

Introduction

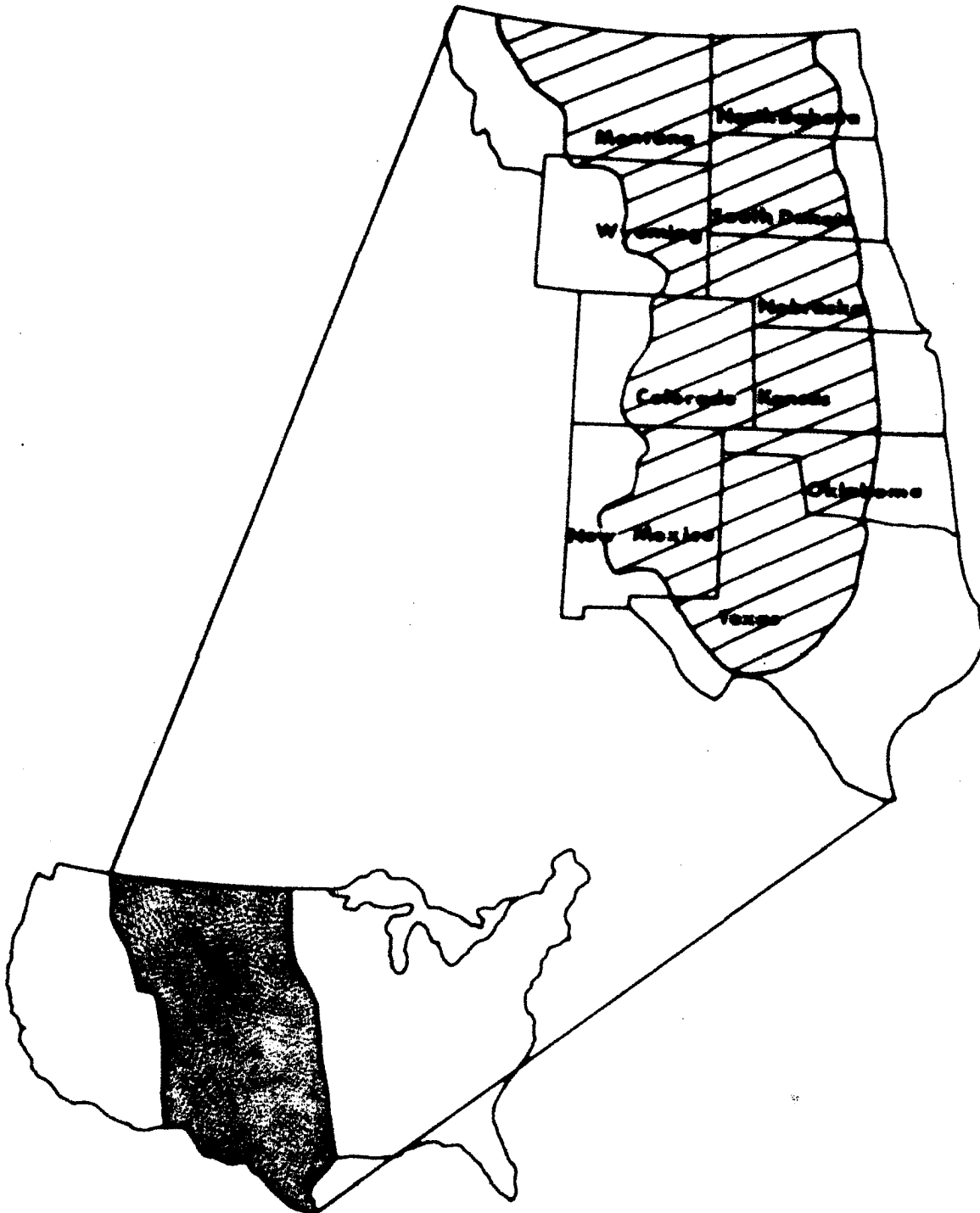
Nebraska geographically falls in the center of what is called the Great Plains region of the United States. As such it shares certain topographical and climatic conditions with neighboring states as well as having its own distinctive physical features which separate it from the states surrounding it. This chapter will view the physical aspects of the Nebraska environment as the first step in drawing the environmental framework of the state's political system.

Settlement of the Great Plains

Exploration of the Great Plains dates back to the last of the fifteenth and early part of the sixteenth centuries when Spanish explorers branched out from Mexico in search of gold and precious jewels. Settlement in the area dates back to the early 1600's with the establishment of Santa Fe about the same time as Jamestown on the East coast.¹

¹Walter Prescott Webb, The Great Plains (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1931), pp. 85 ff.

FIGURE II-1
THE GREAT PLAINS REGION



Source: South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service, "Why Be Concerned?" Extension Circular No. 645 (Brookings: By the Author, 1966), p. 1.

The next two centuries saw incursions into the area on the part of French, Spanish, and English trappers, traders, explorers, missionaries, and soldiers of fortune. The Spanish established a string of settlements in eastern Texas as a check to French intrusions, but these settlements were a failure as far as permanent settlement was concerned and were merely military outposts. With the removal of French influence after the French and Indian War in 1763, the Spanish for the most part abandoned these outposts. With the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the Americans made their first serious entrance into the area of the Great Plains.²

The first thirty years of the nineteenth century produced a bustle of exploratory incursions by Americans into the newly acquired territory. From the official explorations of Lewis and Clark, Zebulon Pike, and Major Stephen Long to the traders and trappers who roamed through and across the area, the first American impressions were recorded.³ These impressions were far from favorable, the early explorers being firmly convinced that the area was completely uninhabitable except by the nomadic and savage Indians found there. It was from these

²James C. Olson, History of Nebraska (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), pp. 29 ff.

³Webb, op. cit., pp. 140 ff.

early explorers that the term "Great American Desert" came to be applied to the area of the Great Plains. Zebulon Pike expressed it in this way:

These vast plains of the western hemisphere may become in time as celebrated as the sandy deserts of Africa; for I saw in my route, in various places, tracts of many leagues where the wind had thrown up the sand in all the fanciful form of the ocean's rolling wave, and on which not a speck of vegetable matter existed.⁴

Major Long noted in his report:

In regard to this extensive section of country, I do not hesitate in giving the opinion that it is almost wholly unfit for cultivation, and of course uninhabitable by a people depending upon agriculture for their subsistence. Although tracts of fertile land considerably extensive are occasionally to be met with, yet the scarcity of wood and water, uniformly prevalent, will prove an insuperable obstacle in the way of settling the country.⁵

From this and other reports it is evident that people generally accepted the idea that water and wood were necessary concomitants of a thriving agricultural civilization. This was natural because their past experiences were based wholly upon the Eastern humid-area culture where wood and water were plentiful. The absence of such in abundant quantities was viewed as a fatal blow for agricultural pursuits.

Thus, it is not surprising that in the middle of the nineteenth century the Great Plains served only as a

⁴Ibid., p. 155.

⁵Ibid., pp. 156-157.

trail for settlers on their way to the West Coast where trees and water were plentiful and their experience in a humid civilization would be of benefit. The Plains remained largely unsettled until the 1870's and 1880's when all available land in humid areas had been taken up and the railroads, whose continued growth and future profits depended upon settlement, began their immigration program.⁶

Nebraska in the Great Plains

The Land

Occupying an area of 77,227 square miles, Nebraska slopes gently upward from east to west rising in elevation from 825 feet to 5,424.⁷ Though designated a plains state, Nebraska does possess several areas of rather rough terrain notably, the hills area in the northeast, southwest, and northwest.⁸ (Appendix A, Figure 1 depicts the topographic regions of Nebraska.)

Nebraska is one of ten states which make up the Missouri watershed, the river running along the eastern

⁶Olson, op. cit., pp. 161 ff.

⁷N. D. Searcy and A. R. Longwell, Nebraska Atlas (Kearney, Nebr.: Nebraska Atlas Publishing Co., 1964), p. 1.

⁸Ibid.

boundary of the state.⁹ The most important subdivision of this watershed is the Platte River which cuts across roughly the middle part of the state from Scottsbluff in the west to Plattsmouth (just south of Omaha) in the east.¹⁰ The north-south Platte River division has been politically as well as geographically significant in the state's history.¹¹ The Platte River served as a magnet for settlement of the state. Transportation routes, first the pioneer wagons moving west, then the transcontinental

⁹George E. Condra, James Olson, and Royce Knapp, The Nebraska Story (Lincoln: University Publishing Co., 1951), p. 33.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Political significance of the division dates back to the territorial and statehood days. The rivalry apparently grew out of the struggles between Omaha-Iowa interests and Bellevue over the site of the territorial capital which was felt would determine the site of the transcontinental railroad. The political squabble continued into the statehood period resulting in the compromise to locate the capital at Lincoln, a paper town built in the middle of what were thought to be valuable salt deposits. (Olson, op. cit., pp. 83-91, 149-156.) The North-South Platte and Omaha-outstate rivalry, established in the early settlement period, continued throughout Nebraska history and continues to have relevance today. It was manifested in a number of ways. Up to 1961, the Congressional districts followed east-west rather than north-south lines respecting this division. The United States Senators have traditionally reflected this division, one coming from north of the Platte, the other south of the river. The influence of the press is evident in this division as well with the Omaha World-Herald influential in the area north, while the Lincoln Journal and Star enjoys significant circulation to the south. (Harvin E. Stromer, "Congressional Redistricting in Nebraska--1961" [unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1962].)

railroads, and finally the interstate highway system, followed the path of the Platte. Because of the natural attraction of water, settlement evolved around or near this natural resource and it is no coincidence that many of the larger towns are situated on or near the Platte.¹²

Nebraska possesses some of the best soil groups in the world and this accounts for the large percentage of land area in farms.¹³ There are five great soil groups present in Nebraska. The most fertile is alluvial and is found along the various rivers in the state, particularly the eastern boundary, the path of the Platte, and in the south central Republican River area.¹⁴ The prairie soils are also very fertile and conducive to growing corn. In Nebraska these soils are found in the extreme eastern part of the state.

Chernozem soils are adaptable to small-grain production and are in the drier climate of eastern and central Nebraska. In the driest area are found the chestnut soils, which cover the western part of the state. Though they are fertile, limited rainfall restricts their use and erosion due to blowing is common.¹⁵

¹²Searcy and Longwell, op. cit., p. 23.

¹³Ibid., p. 5. Appendix A, Figure 2 illustrates the various major soil groups found in Nebraska.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

A large portion of north central and western Nebraska is composed of sandhills which are conducive to hay crops and grazing. This is the large ranching area of the state, site of expansive ranches and small towns widely separated. In the counties of this region, the sale of livestock and livestock products accounts for over 90 percent of the value of all agricultural products sold.¹⁶

Nebraska's land utilization varies throughout the state, ranging from general farming in the eastern part of the state to hay and livestock raising in the western sector (Appendix A, Figures 3 through 10). Generally it can be said that corn is most prevalent in the northeastern part of the state. This area is also the main producer of hogs and pigs, which are tied to corn production since the latter is used in feeds. The extreme northeastern corner of the state leads in cropland planted in oats. The wheat area can be classified as running along the southern tier of counties beginning in the west and generally decreasing as one moves toward the east.¹⁷ Sorghums are most important in the two tiers of south central counties, the area hard hit by the drought of the 1930's. Sorghums need less moisture than corn and have largely

¹⁶Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 50, 52, 56, 71.

replaced corn production in this area which suffered the largest percentage of corn failure during the Depression decade.¹⁸ Hay production is significant along the north central tier of counties reaching down to those in the middle of the state, and the leading cattle counties fall into this same general area.¹⁹

The Climate

One of the characteristics of the Great Plains is the extremes of temperature and precipitation, though the former is more predictable than the latter. That it will be cold in winter and hot in summer is all but a certainty as is the pattern of stiff winds.²⁰ Nebraska shares these temperature and precipitation extremes common to the larger plains area.

The cyclical pattern of "wet" years and "dry" years is an established pattern in Nebraska. About one-half of the state receives twenty inches of annual precipitation or more, the mean being 22.84 inches varying from 27.74 inches in the east to 17.93 in the western part

¹⁸Arthur C. Schmieding, "Geographic Patterns of Failure of Wheat and Corn in Nebraska, 1931-1952" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1954), pp. 117 ff.

¹⁹Searcy and Longwell, op. cit., pp. 62, 70.

²⁰Webb, op. cit., pp. 17 ff.

of the state.²¹ During periods of dry years this may be drastically reduced as in the decade of the 1930's, for instance, when all but one year was below normal in precipitation. Conversely, between 1900 and 1910, all but one year was above normal.²² The bulk of the precipitation falls between April and September and is brought by southerly winds from the Gulf of Mexico.²³

In winter, temperatures as low as 20 to 30 degrees below zero Fahrenheit are common and in the summer 100 degrees above zero Fahrenheit is not unusual. Temperatures at most stations in the state reach 90 degrees or more between thirty to sixty days of the year.²⁴

In summer, the dominant wind is southerly, averaging twelve miles per hour, but higher velocities are not uncommon. The winds generally reach their peak after noon and are calm in the morning and evening.²⁵ The western part of the state is subject to a warm wind blowing down from the Rockies which can bring temperature increases as drastic as 20 degrees per hour.²⁶

²¹Olson, op. cit., p. 12.

²²Searcy and Longwell, op. cit., p. 11.

²³Ibid. See Appendix A, Figure 11 for the annual precipitation average between 1939 and 1960 for the state.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 13-14. ²⁵Ibid., p. 14.

²⁶Ibid., p. 13.

The average growing season varies from 130 days in the northwest to 170 days in the southeast. Since the bulk of the precipitation falls during the growing season a generally favorable agricultural condition exists, though year-to-year variations in precipitation and dates of killing frosts cause havoc with crop yields.²⁷

Variation and unpredictability characterize the general climate of Nebraska, "typical of the interior of large continents in the middle latitudes, exhibiting light rainfall, low humidity, hot summers, severe winters"²⁸

Natural Resources

Nebraska is not blessed with an abundance of natural resources, but is fortunate to have one of the largest underground water supplies in the country. Mineral resources are limited with oil and gas amounting to 75 percent of the state's mineral production.²⁹

The availability of underground water deposits added to surface supplies has permitted the development of irrigation projects, hydroelectric power, and recreation facilities in the state.³⁰ About one-half of the water

²⁷Ibid., p. 15. ²⁸Olson, op. cit., p. 12.

²⁹Searcy and Longwell, op. cit., pp. 8, 87.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 8-9.

used comes from the underground water system and over 95 percent of the municipalities in the state derive their water supply from this source.³¹

Nebraska ranks third in the United States in irrigated lands with approximately three million acres. Though irrigation was practiced in the state in 1867, impetus for a large-scale effort came during the drought of the 1930's. The greatest concentration of irrigated land is along the Platte River.³²

Numerous man-made reservoirs have been built in Nebraska; those along the Platte are used primarily for irrigation and power generation, with flood control being the prime purpose for others in the state. These reservoirs, like Lake McConaughy on the Platte and the Lewis and Clark Dam on the Missouri, are being developed as recreational areas as well.³³

Commercial production of oil is a recent phenomenon in Nebraska, the first well being drilled in 1939. Today the state has over 2,000 producing oil wells, in over 350 fields covering sixteen of the state's ninety-three counties. Except for Richardson county in the extreme southeastern corner of the state (site of the first well), the wells are located in the southwestern area of the state.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., p. 48.

³³Ibid., p. 90.

particularly in the southern part of the panhandle of Nebraska.³⁴

Natural gas is produced on a smaller scale with about sixty wells producing about twelve billion cubic feet of gas annually.³⁵

Physical Factors and the Environment

Introduction

The influence of physical factors upon the environment cannot be lightly dismissed because of the connection between physical factors and economic and social factors. The presence of large deposits of coal in Pennsylvania and iron ore in Minnesota, for instance, patterned the economic development of the two states. The soil and climatic factors of Iowa are responsible for the economic investment in corn production in that state. Other factors are, of course, important, but the physical milieu does affect the nature of the other factors.

The midlands area of the United States, the Great Plains, is influenced by the physical factors as any other area. This area of the country, however, has been the source of differing interpretations concerning the influence of physical factors in its development. Because of the differing nature of its characteristics--relatively

³⁴Ibid., p. 87.

³⁵Ibid.

flat, low level of precipitation, generally treeless--the Great Plains area was not one of the early areas of settlement. Some of the generalizations concerning the physical characteristics of the Great Plains area, particularly the one concerning the uniqueness of the Plains, seem relevant to an understanding of Nebraska, part of which falls into this area.

The Uniqueness of the Plains³⁶

The broad expanses of land approximately between the 98th and 110th to 120th meridians from Canada to Mexico and encompassing parts of ten states make up the Great Plains area. The area possesses certain general characteristics which make it a unique section of the country. To a large extent this uniqueness is based on physical factors; namely, broad expanses of relatively treeless land with precipitation generally inadequate to support a humid-type civilization.³⁷

Because of the physical limitations, the area was bypassed by the early settlers in favor of locations further west where the topography and climate were more similar to that the settlers experienced in the East. Coupled

³⁶This discussion is based largely on Walter Prescott Webb, op. cit., and Carl F. Kraenzel, Great Plains in Transition (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955).

³⁷Webb, op. cit., pp. 3 ff.

with the adverse appraisals of the explorers who saw the area as a vast desert, the Plains were largely a passageway between East and West. The Homestead Act and the colonizing policies of the railroads were chiefly responsible for the settlement of the Plains in the period 1870-1890.³⁸

Settlement and growth of the area was hampered by the humid-climate ideology. Because of the physical restrictions, practices and institutions which the settlers brought with them from the humid civilization were inadequate to meet the exigencies of the Plains. Accustomed to adequate rainfall, the settlers were faced with a climate that yielded less than normal rainfall more years than not. Dependent upon trees for fencing, housing and fuel, the settlers were at a loss in the relatively treeless environs of the Plains. In short, the past experience of the settlers was a poor guide for adjusting to the new environment.

If successful adjustment was to be made, recognition of the limiting factors of the Plains was first necessary to permit adaptation, modification, and innovation in all areas of endeavor--farming methods, governmental institutions, legal guides, technological developments. Only when these adaptations and innovations were made was survival possible in the Plains environment.

³⁸Kraenzel, op. cit., pp. 127 ff.

Among the adaptations and innovations which evolved were "dry farming" techniques, new riparian laws, irrigation practices, and windmills to cope with the precipitation problem. The lack of trees resulted in barbed wire fencing, the "soddy" and "dug-out" home. Technological advances in farm equipment made it possible to take advantage of the short growing season and plant large areas quickly.³⁹

Thus, the Great Plains was a problem area which because of its uniqueness demanded unusual responses. In some areas these were made quickly, in some slowly, and in others not at all. The response to the Plains environment patterned the degree of success that was achieved in settlement and development within the area.

The history of the white man in the Great Plains is the history of adjustments and modifications, of giving up old things that would no longer function for new things that would, of giving up an old way of life for a new way in order that there might be a way. (Author's italics.)⁴⁰

The history of the Plains is seen as a survival, survival of the native races (the Indians), of the native plants and animals, of the early American stock (the American of English or Scotch and Scotch-Irish descent), of the rural life, and of the public domain. But it is the

³⁹Webb, op. cit., pp. 270 ff.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 507-508.

innovations, rather than the survivals, that mark the character of the Great Plains today.⁴¹ But the need for more innovation continues.

Adaptations need to be extended to all levels of public and private service institutions--schools, hospitals, churches, cooperative business enterprises, banking and all types of Main Street business. Agriculture can not carry the burden of adaptation all by itself.⁴²

For civilization to survive and thrive in the Plains three basic traits are necessary--reserves, flexibility, and mobility. These traits need to become ingrained in all forms of activity, especially in the more vital and costly institutional patterns of the region. The institutional patterns imported from the humid regions must acquire one or several of these traits in order to function effectively in the Plains situation and to give the region the stability that is sought by people elsewhere.⁴³

Nebraska and the Great Plains

The demarcation line of the Plains region is not a sharp, distinct boundary. The movement from the prairie plains of the Midwest into the Great Plains is a gradual one in some areas and more distinct in others. Whether one accepts the 98th meridian as the general demarcation line, as Webb contends, or the 100th meridian,⁴⁴ there is

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 508-510.

⁴²Kraenzel, op. cit., p. 323. ⁴³Ibid., p. 324.

⁴⁴In 1878 Major John Powell of the U.S. Department of the Interior concluded that non-irrigable farming could

no question that Nebraska is divided between the prairie and plains region.

Examination of the relevant physical factors of the central portion of Nebraska reveals that a sharp, distinct line does not exist between the prairie and plains regions. The topography in this area is dominated by the Sandhills in the north (interspersed with smaller plains regions) and Loess hills and Plains in the south (with a narrow river lowland band running through).

The prairie soil group line extends as far as the 100th meridian in the north but recedes to the 98th meridian as it bends in the middle of the state and then extends back to the 100th meridian at the southern boundary of the state. Patches of sandhill soil are found in the dominant prairie soil area in the southern half of this central portion of the state.

The twenty inch rainfall line generally follows the 100th meridian from north to south though it bows in the middle of the state to about the 99th meridian. Even though the rainfall line falls around the 100th meridian, the leading areas in irrigated land stretch to the east as far as, and beyond, the 98th meridian.⁴⁵

not be carried on west of the 100th meridian due to the fact of inadequate rainfall (less than twenty inches annually). (Olson, op. cit., p. 5.)

⁴⁵Appendix A, Figure 12 (with overleaf) depicts these relevant physical factors in the central portion of the state.

Thus, it would appear that the central portion of the state (the area between the 98th and 100th meridians) is a transitional area between the prairie region east of the 98th meridian and the plains area west of the 100th meridian. Within this transitional area, the physical factors are those of both the prairie and plains, some areas possessing the more dominant characteristics of the prairie (particularly in the central sector) and others the characteristics of the plains (especially in the northern and extreme southern portions).

That this prairie-plains environment has been the basis for numerous problems is also an established fact. The adverse physical factors, especially west of the 100th meridian, played a significant role in the growth and decline cycle of the state's population and economy. The boom periods, usually accompanied by a "wet years" cycle, resulted in a tremendous agricultural expansion, generally an over-expansion particularly in those areas possessing the restrictive physical factors.⁴⁶ When rainfall fell off or a depression set in, retrenchment was the policy. Though the entire state suffered, it was in

⁴⁶In the decade of the 1880's, for instance, there was a tremendous expansion within the state as rainfall was most abundant throughout most of the period. The population more than doubled, twenty-six counties were organized and agricultural production soared in all areas. (Olson, op. cit., pp. 203 ff.)

and along the marginal areas that the greatest setbacks were noted.⁴⁷ Physical factors were not the whole story, but they certainly contributed to a large degree.

With the advance of scientific knowledge, plus bitter experience, certain concessions were made to cope with these restrictive physical factors. Conservation and irrigation policies were instituted, scientific advances in farming techniques and new crops were adopted (substituting sorghums, for instance, for corn since the former need less moisture than the latter), larger farms were utilized to cope with the presence of less fertile soils and the drier climate (particularly in the western areas of the state).⁴⁸ These and many other adaptations permitted some semblance of stability in an area where

⁴⁷Population changes are, of course, not the whole story, but are an indicator of the growth/decline cycle. Appendix A, Figures 13 and 14 reveal this pattern in the population loss between 1930 and 1940, the greatest concentrations being in the southcentral portions of the state. Appendix A, Figures 15 and 16 portray the longer period, 1930-1960, and again this pattern is noted. In this latter period gains are made in the populated areas of the east, along the irrigated Platte River region, and in the extreme southern corner of the panhandle, the area of the oil boom of post World War II era. In all other areas, particularly in the central area, losses are recorded.

⁴⁸The Kinkaid Act of 1904 was an attempt to recognize the need for larger land areas to make settlement economically feasible in the sandhills areas of Nebraska. The standard quarter-section homestead was inadequate to sustain a family and larger tracts were necessary to encourage settlement. (Olson, op. cit., pp. 268 ff.)

marginal physical factors created a thin line between success and failure. Governmental participation in the economic realm, particularly in the 1930's, was also an extremely important factor in bringing about this relative stability.

While the stability is relative, an appreciation of the limiting physical factors has provided the necessary technological and scientific advances to cope with the limitations to a degree; at least when the downward cycle comes, complete disaster is not the result.

CHAPTER III

THE ENVIRONMENT--DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL FACTORS

Demographic Factors

Population Growth

The state's rapid growth in the period 1870 to 1890 began to level off in the decade 1890-1900, and since the turn of this century, Nebraska has experienced a stable population growth.¹ Although the state has followed the national growth/decline pattern, Nebraska's rate consistently has been below the national average, both in times of growth and decline. The most damaging period was the decade of the 1930's when Nebraska's population declined -4.5 percent from the previous decade compared to the national average of +7.3 percent (down from +16.2 percent for the previous decade). Only North and South Dakota experienced a greater population decrease than Nebraska during this decade.² In terms of numbers, the state

¹Appendix B, Figure 1 graphically portrays the state's percentage growth compared to the national average.

²U.S., Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States 1966 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 13. Cited hereafter as Statistical Abstract.

in 1960 had only a little over 30,000 more people than in 1930 and about 350,000 more than in 1890 or about a 32.8 percent rate of growth in that seventy-year period (compared to the United States rate of 184.8 percent).

Emigration took place from thirty-five counties [during the decade 1890]; these were not confined to any particular section, but were scattered all over the state. . . . In general, we may say, that by the beginning of the twentieth century, the population tended to become stabilized in relation to its rapid growth during the three preceding decades.³

This stable growth continues to the present day and it is only in the last decade that the state is showing some signs of emerging from the stagnant growth pattern. The devastating effects of the Depression decade accentuated the stability factor of Nebraska's population growth evident since 1900.

Population Distribution

The national pattern of increasing urbanization of the population distribution is reflected in Nebraska, but again at a less rapid pace. Statistically the United States became urban in 1920 when for the first time more than half of the population were classed as living in urban areas.⁴ In 1960, Nebraska for the first time had more

³Kieve Stubenhaus, "Origins and Growth of the Nebraska Population 1870-1900" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1935), p. 97.

⁴Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract, p. 15.

people living in urban as opposed to rural areas. A closer look at the urban factor reveals a steady growth of the large metropolitan areas (Omaha and Lincoln), an increase in the 10,000 to 25,000 class cities and a general decline of cities below 5,000 persons.⁵ Cities above 25,000 comprised 67.0 percent of the total urban population in 1890, 59.8 percent in 1930, and 65.1 percent in 1960. The 10,000 to 25,000 class represented 13.5 percent of the total urban population in 1890, 16.0 percent in 1930 and 16.1 percent in 1960. The 5,000 and less group represented 19.4 percent in 1890, 24.2 percent in 1930 and only 18.8 percent in 1960.

One other factor demands examination in considering the distribution of the state's population--the ratio of rural-farm, rural-nonfarm, and urban.⁶ There was a sharp decline in the rural-farm population between 1930 and 1960 and a corresponding rise in the urban population in the thirty-year period. The rural-nonfarm category⁷ maintained a steady, though small, increase throughout the period. Thus, while there was a great exodus from farm to city,

⁵See Appendix B, Tables 2 and 3.

⁶Appendix B, Table 4.

⁷The Census Bureau defines this category as all that remains after the rural-farm population is noted. Generally it can be said that this category includes all towns with a population of less than 2,500 not situated near a larger urban area.

there was also a substantial movement to the small towns of less than 2,500 population. A recent study of population trends in this period indicates just such a movement.⁸ The county by county study showed that in 1930 in seventy-four of the state's ninety-three counties, a majority of the people lived on rural farms and in six additional counties the rural-farm inhabitants constituted a plurality. Only two counties contained a majority of rural-nonfarm inhabitants. An urban majority predominated in five counties and constituted a plurality in six others. In 1960, however, the rural-farm majority counties were down to twenty-eight with a plurality in four others. The thirty-year period saw the urban majority counties go from five to twenty with a plurality in six additional counties. The rural-nonfarm jumped from two counties in 1930 to twenty-seven in 1960 with a plurality in four other counties.⁹

Thus, while there was little change in the number of inhabitants in Nebraska in 1930 and 1960, there was a vast redistribution of the population within the state.

What seems to emerge from an examination of the population distribution of Nebraska is a pattern of

⁸Edmund D. Hinkle, "Changing Patterns of Population Distribution in Nebraska 1930-1960" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1963).

⁹Ibid., pp. 15-16.

substantial decline in farm population with a corresponding rise in urban inhabitants. Accompanying this is a rise, or at least a stability of growth, of towns of 2,500 to 10,000 residents. In the context of Nebraska's urban pattern this indicates a decline of farms, a significant rise in metropolitan areas, a rise in large-size cities, a decline in middle-size cities, and a rise in small towns.¹⁰

In 1930 the large majority of counties in which the rural-farm population constituted more than half of the total population is impressive. However, by 1960 the move to villages, towns, and cities rendered numerous and distinct changes in the classification of Nebraska's inhabitants. Migration to the towns and cities was prevalent. The dynamic growth of counties in which the larger cities are located emphasizes the national trend toward urbanization.¹¹

Population Characteristics

An examination of the major population characteristics from 1870 to 1960 reveals three main trends:¹²

(1) the state has been and continues to be overwhelmingly

¹⁰Outside of Omaha and Lincoln with a metropolitan population of 374,771 and 155,272 respectively in 1960, there are only nine other cities above 10,000. One is just over 25,000 (Grand Island, 25,742), three are over 15,000 (Hastings, 21,412; Fremont, 19,698; and North Platte, 17,184), and the remaining five average around 13,000. Thus, the 2,500 to 10,000 category can be classed as middle-sized in Nebraska. (Population statistics from Nebraska Blue Book 1966, pp. 542-550.)

¹¹Hinkle, op. cit., p. 83.

¹²Appendix B, Table 5.

white; (2) the state has been and continues to be largely native-born; and, (3) the state has gradually gone from a male society to a point where females outnumber males.

The non-Caucasian minority has never been significant in numbers. The Negro in 1960 represents just over two percent of the total population. The Indian has not been a significant factor in any part of the state's history. Thus, the population has consistently been predominantly white.

The white population of the state has largely been native-born over the years. Even at the height of immigration in 1890, the foreign-born represented less than twenty percent of the total population.¹³ The largest influx of immigrants--about sixty percent of the total--arrived before 1900 and consisted almost entirely of North Europeans who settled in rural areas of the state. The South European influx occurred after 1900, comprised about seven percent of the foreign-born population, and settled largely in the cities.¹⁴ The heavy Northern European flavor of immigrants to the state over the years, and particularly the predominance of the Germans and Scandinavians, is apparent.¹⁵

¹³John P. Wenstrand, "A History of Population Trends in Nebraska as Shown by the United States Decennial Census Reports 1860-1940" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1945), pp. 20 ff.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Appendix B, Table 6.

Nebraska has emerged from a young, male frontier society to an older, numerically dominant female society. The age of her population has steadily grown older by the decade since 1890 at a rate faster than the national average.¹⁶ This, coupled with a declining rate of persons under twenty years of age, leaves the state with a high proportion of elderly persons. Though some reversal of the trend is noted for the last decade, the state ranks third in the country in persons over sixty-five years of age, this category comprising almost twelve percent of the total population.¹⁷

The male-dominated frontier society has gradually given way to a society in which females outnumber the males. Nebraska reflects the national trend of the increase of the female population.¹⁸

Conclusion

The brief survey of demographic statistics reveals a relatively stable population growth of aging inhabitants predominantly white, native-born who have moved off the farms into urban and small town environments. This pattern

¹⁶Appendix B, Figure 2.

¹⁷N. D. Searcy and A. R. Longwell, Nebraska Atlas (Kearney, Nebr.: Nebraska Atlas Publishing Co., 1964), p. 24; see also Appendix B, Table 7.

¹⁸Appendix B, Table 8.

has been somewhat arrested in the last decade, but the question as to whether any new trend is permanent must await at least the 1970 population census.

Economic Factors

Agriculture

Nebraska has been, and continues to be, heavily dependent upon agriculture as the foundation of its economic system. But the character of agriculture has changed vastly over what it was sixty, as well as thirty, years ago. Agriculture today is characterized by large, commercial farms, a high degree of mechanization and greater use of hired help. The small family farm is rapidly disappearing from the Nebraska as well as United States scene. Between 1930 and 1964 the number of farms decreased from 129,458 to 80,163 while the percentage of land area in farms increased from 91.0 percent to 97.5. The average size of farms increased from 345.4 acres in 1930 to 596.2 acres in 1964. Thus, while there are 38 percent less farms today than in 1930, seven percent more of the land area is in farms, and the farms are just under 25 percent larger on the average than in 1930.¹⁹

The changing character of farming today compared to 1930 is evident in the proportion of tenancy which has

¹⁹Appendix B, Table 9.

steadily declined from a high of 52.8 percent in 1940 to the 1964 figure of 30.5 percent. Tenancy has been high in the past in Nebraska, but the downward trend of the last few decades is marked. Nevertheless, even though tenancy is declining, of the tenants in 1964 in Nebraska, over 70 percent had begun operation since 1950 and 30 percent since as recently as 1960.²⁰

Correlating tenure and tenancy with age we find that the tenants' average age is consistently younger than that of the other classes of tenure of farm operators.²¹

Thus, it seems plausible to conclude that the young man who does go into farming enters the occupation as a tenant and either is successful enough to become a part or full owner of his farm, or turns to another vocation. The declining percentage of tenancy in number of farms and acreage of farm land seems to indicate that the latter is more common than the former. The high percentage of recent tenure by tenant operators coupled with the overall declining tenancy rate would also support the contention that farm sons are not taking over the family farm and thus the aging farm father either rents the land or sells it to adjacent, expanding farm enterprises.

²⁰ Appendix B, Table 10.

²¹ Appendix B, Table 11.

In any case, the typical farmer of today owns a large-scale commercial farm which is ever expanding and increasing in value, and is an individual of mature years. Generalizations about occupation and age would point to the Nebraska farmer as an individual with a pro-business bias and a conservative political outlook. There is nothing in the economic statistics to indicate that the farmer of today should behave in other than a status quo, conservative manner.

Industry

Over one-fifth of the employed population of the state work in agriculture, and only about twelve percent in manufacturing.²² Of the total number of employees in manufacturing, however, over forty percent are employed in the food processing category.²³ Thus, industry in the state is more precisely termed agro-industry since a large percentage is of the food-line variety.²⁴

Some diversification, however, is slowly taking place with the percentage of employees in agricultural associated industries slowly diminishing, though the

²²Appendix B, Table 13.

²³This includes meat slaughtering and processing plants, poultry dressing plants, dairies, canned and frozen food, grain mills, and bakery products.

²⁴Appendix B, Figure 3.

agro-industry emphasis is still strong.²⁵

The localization of industry in the state is also striking with the large metropolitan areas, Douglas (Omaha) and Lancaster (Lincoln) counties containing 29,519 or 45.4 percent of total employees, and 693 or 43.0 percent of the total establishments.²⁶ Of the total 117 establishments employing more than 100 persons, 69 or 58.9 percent of these are located in the two counties. This also points up the "smallness" of Nebraska industry with just over seven percent of the total establishments employing more than 100 persons and just over 70 percent employing less than 20.²⁷

Industry in Nebraska, then, tends to be small, associated in some way with agriculture and located in the more urban areas of the state with the two large metropolitan areas of Omaha and Lincoln dominating in number of establishments and employees.

Usually a single city dominates the manufacturing in one county, such as Columbus in Platte County, Fremont in Dodge County, Beatrice in Gage County, and Lincoln in Lancaster. A particular type, or one or two industries, often dominate the manufacturing in any city.²⁸

²⁵Appendix B, Table 14.

²⁶U.S., Bureau of the Census, 1963 Census of Manufactures, Vol. III, Part 28, p. 10.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 11-13.

²⁸Searcy and Longwell, op. cit., p. 76.

Wealth

Family income is on the rise in Nebraska as elsewhere in the country. In 1960 the median family income figure for the state was \$4,862 compared to only \$2,829 a decade previously. Nevertheless, about a quarter of the families are making less than \$3,000, the presently established subsistence level figure (26.1 percent compared to the national average of 21.4 percent).²⁹ This is somewhat misleading since the total percentage is raised considerably by the rural income and the latter does not include rent-free homes and products of the farm which are consumed by the family rather than being sold. Taking only the urban families, the figure is 15.5 percent compared to the national average of 16.4 percent.³⁰ However, the rural percentage for all of the United States under \$3,000 is 33.7 percent whereas in Nebraska this figure is 38.5 percent. Thus, while there may be some distortion in the large percentage of total families under \$3,000 because of the larger rural population, the higher percentage of rural families compared to the U.S. with less than \$3,000 income indicates that incomes are somewhat low in the state. A closer look at the rural breakdown indicates

²⁹U.S., Bureau of the Census, 1960 Census of Population, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 226-227.

³⁰Ibid.; see also Appendix B, Table 15.

that it is the rural-nonfarm grouping which is primarily responsible for the disparity between Nebraska and the United States. For the rural-farm category the percentage of families earning less than \$3,000 is 47.1 for the U.S. and 46.1 in Nebraska. The corresponding figures for rural-nonfarm are 28.9 and 31.5 percent.³¹ This ties in with previous statistics on the growth of towns under 2,500 and the large percentage of people over 65 years of age.³² The older, retired people, living on fixed incomes, tend to settle in the small towns of Nebraska close to the rural farm area in which they have lived and worked.

Migration into as well as out of a small town is significant to its population. It is, however, the older farm residents from the surrounding territory for whom the town holds most appeal. Perhaps they have envied the town life which they have viewed for a number of years. The town's attraction is not necessarily economic; older residents may simply prefer to retire there.³³

Conclusion

This brief survey of economic factors indicates that Nebraska's economy revolves around agriculture and the industry which does exist is dependent upon agriculture to a great extent. Family income is below the

³¹Ibid.

³²See Appendix B, Tables 3, 4, 7, and 15.

³³Hinkle, op. cit., p. 66.

national average but there is not a great disparity between the rich and the poor. The lower income average is due in great part to the large proportion of elderly people who seem to be concentrated in the small towns of the state.

Social Factors

Nativity

As has been noted, the Nebraskan is generally a native-born citizen, and though immigration has played a vital role in the development of the state, the foreign-born influence may well be over-played. From the early period of settlement the native-born have been quite dominant and the native settlers have had a distinct northern U.S. character. The states of origin of native-born over the years reveal that the northern states have contributed the bulk of settlers.³⁴ The pattern of settlement began first with the older, more distant states (Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Iowa) and gradually the closer states, and finally in more recent times, states adjacent to Nebraska (Iowa, Kansas, South Dakota). But the dominant northern flavor of the native-born is evident throughout.

With regard to the native-born population it was noted that they were, to a very large

³⁴Appendix B, Table 16.

extent, northeastern in character; Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York having furnished the bulk of the native immigrants to Nebraska between 1870 and 1890. Southern states contributed only a small number of natives; and few migrants came from Western states.³⁵

Thus, a distinct regional basis of native-born settlers is established and this regionalism contributes to the homogeneity factor of the Nebraska population. The backgrounds of the settlers were alike in many ways--they came from the same geographical area, they utilized similar farming techniques, they were acquainted with the same political institutions, and no doubt many had experienced similar misfortunes and came to Nebraska in search of a new start or better economic opportunities. The social institutions which they built were patterned on previous experience, experience based largely on a great deal of similarity.

Ethnic Factors

One source of diversity in a society is the influx of individuals from differing cultures, races, and mores. The United States as the "great melting pot" is said to be a prime example of diversity through the immigration of vast numbers of people representing differing races, languages, customs and creeds. In Nebraska, the

³⁵Stubenhaus, op. cit., p. 95.

ethnicity factor has perhaps been over-played, at least to the extent that it contributes to diversity. As has been noted, the foreign-born have been a minority of the state's population, and with the exception of the statehood period, at no time did they represent more than twenty percent of the population. Nevertheless, a minority of twenty percent can represent a vital source of diversity. This does not seem to be the case in Nebraska due to the character of the immigrant and the social system in which he found himself.

The pre-1900 immigrant to Nebraska was Northern European--Anglo-Saxon or Teutonic. The Anglo-Saxon found a great deal with which he was familiar, language being not the least. The German and Scandinavian found language a barrier, yet this was mitigated by the social system into which he was thrown. Nebraska was an agricultural society, and the immigrant of this era was a farmer, and settled on the available farm land. Ethnic colonies existed, but the cohesiveness and inclusiveness of the "ethnic ghetto" in the agricultural context is not as great as in other environments. It was not always possible to get land where your neighbor was of the same ethnic background, or to trade in the nearby town with a shopkeeper who spoke your language, or to send your child to school where the language and mores of your culture were

exclusively taught. These diffusion and dispersion factors rapidly broke down ethnic exclusiveness and speeded the assimilation process.

In some cases the ethnic factor was lessened by the fact that the immigrant arrived in Nebraska as the last of a number of stops and after having been in America for a time, rather than coming directly from the old country. A study reveals that the early Czech settlers to Butler county, Nebraska did not come directly from Europe, but "it is interesting to note that many had been in America for some time."³⁶ Other studies have indicated that the typical settler to the Middle West arrived after a series of stops along the way in older, established areas.³⁷ The Butler County study would seem to indicate that immigrants as well followed the pattern of "hop-scotching" to their final destination. Thus, some foreign immigrants arrived in Nebraska partly Americanized, or at least having been exposed to the American culture, and for them the need for the security which ethnic exclusiveness provides was not as great.

³⁶Clarence J. Kubicek, "The Czechs of Butler County 1870-1940" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1958), p. 12.

³⁷James P. Shannon, Catholic Colonization on the Western Frontier (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957).

The post-1900 immigrant still had a large Northern European bias--the Germans predominated--but an influx of Central and Southern Europeans was noted. But unlike the earlier immigrant, the post-1900 one tended to settle in the urban areas, and thus the bulk of Italians, Yugoslavs, and Poles are found in Omaha rather than in the rural areas. Here is found the more typical pattern of the "ethnic ghetto" culture so familiar in the East.³⁸ But in numbers, this new wave of immigrants was quite small and the Northern European domination--Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic--continued even after 1900.

The foreign-born inhabitants of Nebraska came, for the most part, from northern Europe. The German migration to the State was the largest of all the other nationalities that were represented, having ranked first for each of the four census reports included in this study. Germans predominated in seventy-four out of a total of ninety-one counties in 1890.³⁹

In 1870, 25% of the total population was foreign born while by 1890 the highest point in numbers of foreign born was reached, 202,244; this was a little less than 20% of the total population. . . .

The foreign born immigration to Nebraska was heaviest before 1900 when almost 60% of the immigrants arrived. Those early settlers consisted almost entirely of North Europeans and for the most part, lured by the prospect of free

³⁸For a detailed study of this phase of immigration in Nebraska, see Alphonse T. Fiore, "History of Italian Immigration in Nebraska" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1938).

³⁹Stubenhaus, op. cit., p. 95.

or cheap lands, settled in rural areas and adopted the farming practices of the native white.

The immigration from South Europe occurred after 1900 and consisted principally [sic] of Italians, Yugoslavs, and Greeks. These, together with other South Europeans, are hardly 7% of the foreign born population and settled almost entirely in the cities.⁴⁰

Religion

As throughout the so-called "Bible-Belt" of which Nebraska is a part, Protestantism is the dominant religious influence. For the most part, Catholicism or Judaism in the state was the religion of the immigrant-- the Irishman, the southern German, the Czech, the Italian, the Pole, and the Russian. Today Catholicism finds its greatest numerical strength in the metropolitan Omaha area and in rural counties with a high percentage of Catholic immigrant backgrounds.

A 1956 study by the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A. reveals that in 1952 a total of 53.4 percent of the state's total population reported membership in some church compared to 49.2 percent for the United States.⁴¹ Protestants constitute 69.7 percent of the total church membership (compared to 53 percent for the

⁴⁰Wenstrand, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

⁴¹National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., Churches and Church Membership in the United States, Series C, Nos. 27, 28 (Nebraska).

nation), and make up more than 50 percent of total church membership in all but nine of the state's ninety-three counties (the Roman Catholics constitute more than 50 percent of church membership in these nine counties).⁴² The dominant Protestant denominations are the Methodists (16.2 percent) and the three Lutheran denominations (25.2 percent), which together make up close to half of the total Protestant church membership.⁴³

The Protestant dominance in 1952 is a continuation of a trend set in the early years of Nebraska's settlement.⁴⁴ Thus, as it was in the past, Nebraska remains today a Protestant state--more church-going than the nation, and more Protestant than the nation. The predominance of Protestantism has significant implications in the social and political life of the state. In early frontier life, the Church was the social institution and because of the prairie-plains environment functioned as a socio-political as well as a religious institution. Social and ethical questions extended into the political realm and the temperance issue is but one example of the influence of the churches' social teachings. It was Methodism, as the primary sect in Protestant Nebraska, which generally exerted leadership, and continues to do so

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Appendix B, Table 17.

today, in the realm of social questions.

The old-line British-American denominations with Calvinistic background--Baptists, Disciples, Congregationalists, Methodists, and Presbyterians--belong in a tradition in which it was taken for granted that the active church participant assume responsibility for the life of the community as well. Those ethnic groups which came from a Lutheran tradition had no such background of presupposition and in addition were more likely to associate primarily with each other because of the language factor.⁴⁵

Thus, if the church itself is no longer the social institution it once was in rural, frontier Nebraska, the influence of its ethic is still important in the interaction of its members in day-to-day societal relationships. If the influence of the Methodist Church in Nebraska is no longer what it once was, this does not mean that the influence of Methodism is insignificant. The influence of the church--all denominations--is today most notable through its individual members and the role of the church in the behavioral pattern of these individuals cannot be completely discounted.

Education

From the aspect of quantity, Nebraska ranks high in the educational level achieved by its inhabitants. The typical Nebraskan has completed 11.6 years of school

⁴⁵Victor Obenhaus and Widick Schroeder, "Church Affiliation and Attitudes Toward Selected Public Questions in a Typical Midwest County," Rural Sociology, XXVIII (March, 1963), 45.

(compared to the national median of 10.8 years) and 17.4 percent of the population twenty-five years old and over have had some college experience compared to the national average of 16.5 percent.⁴⁶ In almost every category, Nebraska ranks above the national average.⁴⁷ The national average of illiteracy⁴⁸ is 8.3 percent, but only 3.6 percent in Nebraska. Only five states have lower illiteracy percentages than Nebraska--Utah, Iowa, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.⁴⁹ One interesting variation in the educational statistics is that of a higher percentage of white female Nebraskans than the U.S. average who have attended college and correspondingly lower than U.S. percentage of white male Nebraskans who have had some college work (18.0 and 15.5 percent for females in Nebraska and the U.S. respectively and 17.0 and 19.4 percent for males).⁵⁰ Looking more closely at this category the low percentage of Nebraska rural farm white males to females (5.9 percent to 15.2 percent) seems largely responsible for this difference. The female is more dispensable than

⁴⁶U.S., Bureau of the Census, 1960 Census of Population, Vol. I, p. 207; Vol. I, Part 29, p. 150.

⁴⁷Appendix B, Table 18.

⁴⁸Defined as a person twenty-five years old or older with less than five years of schooling.

⁴⁹Bearcy and Longwell, op. cit., p. 38.

⁵⁰U.S., Bureau of the Census, 1960 Census of Population, Vol. I, pp. 207, 260.

the male in the farm environment both as a helper and eventual operator and consequently can more easily enter the college realm than the rural farm male. It is possible, though difficult to document, that daughters are sent to college as a means to widening the limited marital prospects available in the rural environment (farm and nonfarm).

The vitality of localism is perhaps best illustrated in the continuing controversy over school district reorganization. During the 1964-65 school year, Nebraska had 2,701 school districts which gives it the distinction of leading the country in this statistical category. Progress toward reorganization has been steady (in 1949 there were 6,700 districts), but opposition continues and the attitude of keeping education "small and close to home" is pervasive. The Class I, or elementary schools only, districts make up over 85 percent of the total number of districts, but account for only 15 percent of the total number of children attending schools.⁵¹

Higher education is concentrated in the prairie sections of the state (roughly the eastern third of the state) which contain seventeen of the state's twenty-three institutions of higher learning enrolling 85 percent of the total college student population. If one were to

⁵¹Searcy and Longwell, op. cit., p. 35.

include on the prairie side two institutions which are located approximately on the prairie-plains dividing line, just over six percent of the students are enrolled in institutions in the plains area of the state.⁵²

Conclusion

The catalogue of statistical data on the demographic, economic, and social characteristics of the Nebraska population reveals a number of conclusions. First, homogeneity emerges as a salient factor. This is not to say that there is no heterogeneity, but that those factors which diversify the character of a population--race, religion, ethnicity, occupation, wealth--are not present in Nebraska to the degree which would permit characterization of the population as heterogeneous. The essential homogeneity of the population is not a recent phenomenon, but rather the continuation of a trend established at the time of settlement. Though the character of homogeneity has changed over time and some factors have been more significant at one time than at another, the population has been subject to a minimal number of divisive influences which would act to break down the homogeneity.

Second, from the aspect of political behavior, the statistical data reveal few indicators which would negate

⁵²Ibid.; Clarence E. Lovejoy, Lovejoy's College Guide (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), pp. 285-287.

generalizations about a conservative, status quo bias of attitude and action on the part of the typical Nebraskan. The commercialization of agriculture coupled with governmental participation has produced a more business-oriented individual than did the subsistence agriculture lacking any governmental control of fifty years ago.⁵³ Whether the commercialization of agriculture or stability provided by governmental action is the more significant factor is debatable, but the fact remains that the farmer of today has lost a great deal of the radicalism of the past. Though economic factors do not explain everything, the economic structure of Nebraska could hardly lead to a prediction of expectant political behavior along other than conservative lines. Generalizations based on occupational status would lead in this direction (small labor group and large percentage of service and business occupations), as would age factors (aging tends to produce a shift toward Republicanism and greater consistency in partisan political orientations).⁵⁴ The religious factor would point in the direction of conservatism as would the population distribution factor (growth of suburban areas and continued

⁵³ Edward Higbee, Farms and Farmers in an Urban Age (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1963), pp. 99 ff.

⁵⁴ John Crittenden, "Aging and Party Affiliation," Public Opinion Quarterly, XVI (Winter, 1962), 648-657; "Aging and Political Participation," Western Political Quarterly, XVI (June, 1963), 323-331.

substantial staying power of the small town, with less than 2,500 population).

Finally, the data do not provide a picture of an environment where political parties would be expected to be active and effective. The lack of significant divisive influences would point in the direction of a structure where the party role of forging alliances and coalitions among diverse and competing factions would be minimal and consequently the necessity for party participation and organization as a unifying force would be reduced. In a sparsely populated environment, the role of parties as candidate recruitment organs may be diminished as informal, personal interrelationships play a larger and more effective role in identification and decision-making by the voter.⁵⁵ This may also contribute toward diminishing the need for party financial support since the candidate is already known to a great percentage of the potential electorate through normal day-to-day contacts. In sum, a much less than advantageous environment exists for the

⁵⁵The hypothesis of a correlation between urbanization and two-party competition has been advanced by a number of political scientists including V. O. Key, Jr., and Heinz Eulau. Phillips Cutright, "Urbanization and Competitive Party Politics," Journal of Politics, XXV (August, 1963), 552-564, argues that urbanization is positively associated with competitive party voting behavior. This thesis is also substantiated in a study of Kansas by Earl J. Reeves, "Ecological Change and Political Competition: The Case of Kansas" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1962).

organization and operation of an effective and viable party structure.⁵⁶

Demographic, economic, and social factors, however, do not provide a complete picture of the environment and in themselves might give a distorted picture. It is necessary now to turn to the institutional factors, which could substantially modify the picture of the environment as seen through the demographic, economic, and social factors.

⁵⁶This analysis must be qualified somewhat in view of the state's growing urbanization. The homogeneity is least striking in the metropolitan areas and some of the larger cities in the state. It is also here that party competition and activity appears greatest. Nevertheless, the growing urban pattern is fairly recent (it is only with the 1960 census figures that Nebraska became an "urban" state), and though persons live in an urban area, their attitudes do not necessarily reflect those of an urban culture. Because of the factor of recent migration, it would not be illogical to conclude that many of the urban residents retain attitudes more compatible with that of the farm and small town. Also it would follow that the influence of heterogeneity in the urban environment would need time to break down individual patterns established in a homogeneous milieu. Thus, it would appear that although the homogeneity factor of the state's population is breaking down, it is still a more influential force than the developing heterogeneity.

CHAPTER IV

PERCEPTIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT:

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

Introduction

The institutional factors must be considered in developing the Nebraska political environment. Institutions are important and do affect the behavioral patterns of individuals who operate within these institutions. Though institutional patterns can be deceiving when isolated from other factors, they must be examined as they provide the structural basis within which, and upon which, the other factors operate. In this chapter the organic law of the state will be examined--its historical development, and an analysis of the present Nebraska Constitution which includes the institutional framework of Nebraska government. In addition, the electoral procedures in effect--the direct primary, nonpartisan ballot, voter registration laws, and the initiative and referendum--will be examined.

The Constitution

Introduction

The Nebraska Constitution is relatively short compared to many state constitutions, though it is about

three times longer than the U.S. Constitution.¹ The basic organic law remains the document adopted in 1875 as amended, the most extensive changes taking place in 1920 with the adoption of 41 amendments recommended by the Constitutional Convention of 1919-20.² Since 1920 the document has been amended sixty-one times, fifty-three of these occurring since 1952. The frequency of amendment in the last fifteen years has led to moves to call a new constitutional convention, but to date this proposal has made little progress.³

¹The U.S. Constitution runs about fifteen pages in the Nebraska Blue Book compared to forty pages for the Nebraska Constitution.

²For a detailed chronicle of the last constitutional convention in the state's history, see Nebraska, Journal of the Nebraska Constitutional Convention 1919-20, 2 vols.

³Bills have been introduced in almost every session calling for a constitutional convention, but have generally died in committee. Bills were introduced in the legislative sessions of 1947, 1949, 1951, 1955, 1957, 1959, 1961, 1963, and 1967. The best recent showing for a constitutional convention proposal was in the 1961 session when the bill reached General File only to be indefinitely postponed by a 22-20 vote. The proposal had the support of the Republican State Chairman and the executive secretary of the Democratic State Central Committee, but failed despite this bipartisan support. (Nebraska, Legislative Journal of the State of Nebraska, Seventy-second session, p. 1486; A. B. Winter, "Constitutional Revision in Nebraska: A Brief History and Commentary," 40 Nebraska Law Review 590 [June, 1961].)

Historical Development

Territorial Period.--The history of the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 is well-known and need not be repeated here.⁴ Suffice it to say that the Act created the territories of Kansas and Nebraska and provided for the slavery question by applying the doctrine of popular sovereignty. The constitutional framework which governed territorial Nebraska from 1854 to 1867 was the same basic law which had its origin in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 and had been carried through as each new territory had been created. The executive and judicial officers were appointed by the President of the United States, the legislature popularly elected in a simple scheme of government. The first territorial legislature adopted the civil and criminal code of Iowa in toto, and completed the framework of government for the Nebraska territory.⁵

Numerous attempts were made to secure statehood, but each time met defeat at the hands of the anti-state forces in Nebraska. In 1860 the voters defeated, 2,094 to 2,372, a statehood proposal passed by the legislature.⁶

⁴James C. Olson, History of Nebraska (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), pp. 70-80.

⁵Ibid., p. 91.

⁶Addison E. Sheldon (ed.), Official Report of the Debates and Proceedings in the Nebraska Constitutional Convention 1871, Vol. III (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1907), pp. 473-475. Hereafter cited as Debates.

Republican control of national government led to the passage of an enabling act in 1864 and the Governor proceeded to issue a call for the election of delegates to meet and frame a constitution. The election revolved around delegates pledged to draft a constitution and those pledged to adjournment without framing a document. The anti-state forces, led by the Democratic party, were successful in electing a majority and the convention adjourned without drafting a constitution.⁷

Statehood and the Constitution of 1866.--On

February 5, 1866 a resolution was introduced in the legislature calling for submission of a constitution to the electorate for its approval or rejection. The constitution was prepared by persons unknown to this day and swiftly conducted through legislative channels, so swiftly that members never saw a printed copy of the bill.⁸ "The constitution had not been printed for the use of members of either house, no amendments had been permitted, and in the lower house it was not even referred to a committee."⁹ The constitution was narrowly approved by the voters, 3,938 to 3,838 and on March 1, 1867 Nebraska was admitted

⁷Ibid., pp. 479-487.

⁸Ibid., pp. 488-495.

⁹Olson, op. cit., p. 130.

into the Union as the thirty-seventh state.¹⁰

The 1866 Constitution was a strange mixture of territorial and state governmental organization with a few changes from territorial organization as were necessary. The framers hoped to meet the financial argument, which had been prominent in the defeat of earlier statehood moves, that state government would greatly increase the financial burden on the state's citizens. Keeping government as simple as it had been decreased the effect of the financial argument, but the narrow victory for the constitution leads to the conclusion that even this failed to make adoption overly attractive to the voters.

The chief care of the compilers of the constitution of 1866 was to make it a passport to statehood; and so they craftily contrived that it should resemble the territorial organic act as closely as practicable. The judicial system for the state was the exact counterpart of that of the territory; there was no change in the number of members of the legislative houses; the number of executive officers was not increased, and their salaries were kept down nearly to the old beggarly level . . .¹¹

The Constitution provided for four executive offices with minimal annual salaries: Governor, \$1,000; Secretary of State, \$600; Treasurer, \$400; and.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 131; for a more complete account of the various attempts for statehood, see Sheldon, Debates, Vol. III, pp. 473-495.

¹¹Addison E. Sheldon, Nebraska: The Land and The People (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1931), p. 101. Hereafter cited as Nebraska.

Auditor, \$800. Legislative apportionment and judicial districts were retained as they were under territorial government with the provision that no change could be made before 1875. There were no provisions as to counties or railroads, public debt was limited to a total of \$50,000, and amendment to the constitution could be achieved only by convention upon a favorable vote of the people. The document was brief, providing for a simplified, economical, and skeletal governmental organization. Had it not been for the severe restrictions imposed on reapportionment, salaries, executive offices, and amending process, the brevity of the document would have been a desirable asset.¹² As it was the document was inadequate to the needs of the state at the time of its adoption, and with each passing year its shortcomings compounded the problems created by the state's growth and development. Almost immediately after its adoption in 1866, a move was underway to amend the provisions of the constitution.

The Constitution of 1871.--The question of a constitutional convention was passed by the Legislature in 1869 and submitted to the people in October 1870, receiving

¹²Addison E. Sheldon (ed.), Nebraska Constitutions of 1866, 1871, and 1875, Nebraska Historical and Political Science Series, Bulletin No. 13 (Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, 1920), pp. 6-202. Hereafter cited as Constitutions.

a favorable vote of 3,968 to 979. The Legislature provided for the election of delegates and the convention sat from June 13 to August 19, 1871. The constitution, however, failed to receive majority approval in the September 1871 election by a margin of 7,986 to 8,627.¹³

The 1871 Constitution bore a close resemblance to the Illinois Constitution of 1870, the so-called "Granger" Constitution. The influence of the Granger movement on the drafters of the Nebraska document was marked as evidenced by its provisions for regulation of railroads and restriction of local governments in providing financial aid to corporations. Under the constitution, the constitutionally elected offices were expanded to include a Lieutenant Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Attorney General, and Commissioner of Public Lands and Buildings. Salaries were increased, the Governor receiving \$3,000 per year, the Lieutenant Governor twice that of a Senator, and the rest of the executive officers \$2,000 per annum. Reapportionment of legislative and judicial districts was permitted every five years, state debt limit was raised to \$250,000, and county organization and government were provided. Provision for amendments required majority approval by two succeeding Legislatures

¹³Ibid., p. 3; Sheldon, Debates, Vol. III, pp. 496-502; Olson, op. cit., pp. 185-188.

followed by majority approval of the electorate while a constitutional convention required majority approval of the electorate after passage by two-thirds of both houses of the Legislature.¹⁴

The provisions relating to corporations and railroads were the most important changes in Nebraska's constitutional development, as well as a major cause for the document's defeat. Provision was made for submission by railroad companies to the state auditor of yearly reports on receipts from passenger and freight service and other matters as the Legislature may provide. No railroad could consolidate with a parallel or competing railroad. "And the legislature shall from time to time pass laws establishing reasonable maximum rates of charges for the transportation of passengers and freight on the different railroads of the state."¹⁵ Stock watering was prohibited and, in the area of eminent domain, the constitution provided that "the fee of land taken by railroad tracts, without the consent of the owners thereof, shall remain in such owners, subject to the use for which it was taken."¹⁶ And finally, "the legislature shall pass laws to correct abuses and prevent unjust discrimination and extortion in the rates of freight and passenger tariffs on the

¹⁴ Sheldon, Constitutions, pp. 6-205.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 156.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 12.

different railroads in this state¹⁷

Severe restrictions were placed on the governmental subdivisions of the state in respect to aiding corporations. Financial aid or loan of credit was prohibited and purchase of stock of a railroad or private corporation not exceeding 10 percent of the subdivision's assessed valuation was subject to three-fifths approval of the electors of the governmental entity.¹⁸

The regulatory features and especially the provision that the fee of land for railroad right of way was to remain with the original owners, raised the ire and opposition of the railroad interests. This, plus a provision exempting religious property only up to \$5,000, was sufficient to defeat the constitution when added to those who opposed it for any number of minor reasons.¹⁹

Rejection of the Constitution of 1871 has been ascribed to various causes: corporation hostility; the church taxation clause, with an exemption of only \$5,000; the short time--only thirty days--allowed the people for consideration; the opposition of a strong political combination within the Republican party, the members of which received the encouragement and support of a majority of the Democratic leaders and a greater part of the Democratic press; and a somewhat penurious attitude on the part of the people, who feared

¹⁷Ibid., p. 158.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 158-160.

¹⁹Sheldon, Debates, Vol. III, p. 498; Olson, op. cit., pp. 187-188.

that under the new constitution the expenses
of the state would be too greatly increased

... 20

The Constitution of 1875.—The failure to adopt a new constitution compounded the state's troubles and added to the chaotic conditions reigning in Nebraska government. In October 1874, the electorate approved, 18,067 to 3,880, another convention and the Legislature provided for its election. The convention sat from May 11 to June 12, 1875 and the electorate approved its efforts in October 1875 by an overwhelming majority, 30,202 to 5,474.²¹

The Constitution of 1875 resembled the 1871 document minus the two features which caused the most opposition to the latter--the \$5,000 church exemption clause, and the railroad right of way restriction.²² In addition, the wording of the clause relative to legislative power over railroad passenger and freight rates was changed from

²⁰ Sheldon, Nebraska, p. 456.

²¹ Sheldon, Constitutions, p. 3; Sheldon, Debates, Vol. III, pp. 503-506, 675-676.

²² Bruce Raymond in "Nebraska Constitution: An Historical Study" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1937), contends that the 1875 document, as opposed to the 1871 one, bore little resemblance to the Illinois Granger Constitution of 1870 and thus was not a rehash of the 1871 document. A careful study of both const^{opp}itions leaves this writer with the conclusion that in substance the two are similar enough to justify Olson and Sheldon's conclusion that "it closely paralleled the rejected document of 1871." (Olson, op. cit., p. 189.)

"shall" to "may" thus making the clause more permissive rather than mandatory. Salaries were slightly lower than the 1871 provisions (though substantially higher than the 1866 scale), indebtedness was limited to \$100,000, and the amendment provision called for three-fifths approval by both houses and majority approval by all electors voting in the election, not merely those voting on the proposition itself. This restrictive procedure all but eliminated the possibility of amendment as will be seen. As a separate proposition, a preference vote for United States Senator was also approved.²³

The adoption of the Constitution of 1875 signalled an end to the era of uncertainty in the state's affairs. Fortunately, too, economic conditions improved somewhat in the late 1870's and early 1880's, giving government under the new instrument a fighting chance.²⁴

Constitutional Development: 1875-1919.--From the adoption of the Constitution of 1875 until 1900, only one amendment was added to the state's fundamental law out of a total of twenty-two presented to the electorate. The reason for this is simple: the amending process, which required majority approval by all those voting in the

²³Sheldon, Constitutions, pp. 6-205; Sheldon, Nebraska, pp. 521-524.

²⁴Olson, op. cit., p. 190.

election made it all but impossible to get the necessary majority because of the large number of voters who, for one reason or another, simply do not vote on constitutional questions. Of the twenty-two propositions presented, eighteen received majority approval of those voting on the question, but the large number who did not vote on the question, tantamount to a "no" vote, caused this approval to fall short of the required majority.²⁵

The one amendment which did pass in 1886 provided for an increase in the salary of the legislators. However, it took a recount to establish the fact that the voters approved it with the necessary majority. The circumstances of the recount led some at the time and others later to raise questions about the mathematical principles involved, but the decision stood and the legislators enjoyed a salary raise.²⁶

The difficulty of amending the constitution was alleviated in 1901 by a most ingenious subterfuge. A 1901 statute, the so-called "party endorsement" law, provided that if a political party formally took a stand on an amendment, all straight party votes in the election would count as a "yes" or "no" on the amendment according to the

²⁵ For a list of the propositions and the vote on each, see Nebraska Blue Book 1960, pp. 97-98.

²⁶ Raymond, op. cit., pp. 84-87.

party's position. This substantially cut down the number of non-voters on constitutional propositions and made it easier to receive the necessary majority vote.²⁷ Between 1901 and 1919, seventeen amendments were proposed, ten of which were approved initiating some of the most important changes in Nebraska's constitutional development. In 1906 a Board of Railway Commissioners was approved with regulatory powers, climaxing a twenty-year effort to set up an effective regulatory commission. In 1912 an initiative and referendum procedure was authorized which broadened the avenues of constitutional amendment as well as providing a means for direct involvement in legislative procedure by the electorate. Also in 1912 home-rule charters were authorized for cities over 5,000 population, as well as a nonpartisan Board of Commissioners of State Institutions to administer the state institutions. In 1918 suffrage, which up to this time had been extended to aliens who expressed an intention of becoming citizens, was limited to citizens only.²⁸ The constitutional innovations, coupled with progressive legislative steps--direct primary system, public utility regulation, labor legislation,

²⁷ Martha McCall, "History of the Popularization of the Governmental Process in Nebraska" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1938), pp. 18-19; Raymond, op. cit., p. 88.

²⁸ Nebraska Blue Book 1960, p. 98; McCall, op. cit., pp. 35-37.

nonpartisan judiciary--made Nebraska a leader in governmental reform in the first two decades of the twentieth century.²⁹

It will be noticed that it took a legal subterfuge, the party endorsement law of 1901, to make amendments practicable. The attempts to remedy the major defects of the constitution occurred over and over without success before the passage of this act. . . . It is probable that, had it not been for the party endorsement system, a constitutional convention would have been called much earlier in the history of the state than was finally the case. . . . Nebraska became after 1900 a leading state in progressive governmental activity, and was one of the earlier states to place the initiative and referendum in its constitution and to make use of the direct primary.

It would seem therefore that, had not the Nebraska Supreme Court given its support to the party endorsement law, it is safe to say that the constitution of 1875 would have remained practically unamended until a new convention could be called to frame a new constitution. The act of 1901, as amended in 1907, is consequently one of the most vital documents in its effect upon the constitutional history of the state.³⁰

The Constitutional Convention of 1919-1920.--

Despite all the reforms being undertaken, there was a move on the part of some of the more progressive elements in the state for a constitutional convention. Failing to get legislative support, the advocates turned to the initiative procedure, but the 1917 Legislature agreed to submit the

²⁹For a detailed history of these many reforms see Sheldon, Nebraska, pp. 816-899.

³⁰Raymond, op. cit., pp. 123-125.

question to the electorate in 1918. The voters approved a convention, 121,830 to 44,491, members were elected in November 1919, and the convention met from December 2 to March 25, 1920.³¹ The progressive elements, no doubt hoping to capitalize on the reform sentiment that had prevailed in the state since 1906, were thwarted by circumstances. By the time the convention was approved and delegates elected, World War I had intervened, and the post-war reaction was definitely conservative in nature. Thus, the convention of 1919-20 looked to amending the 1875 document, rather than drafting a completely new document.³² In September 1920 the electorate was asked to pass on forty-one amendments which the convention had submitted, each separately rather than an integral whole. The amendments were all approved by the small number of voters who bothered to turn out, about 20 percent of those who voted in the Presidential election the following month.³³

The amendments presented by the Convention of 1919-20 generally sought to remedy the defects of the

³¹Ibid., pp. 126-132; Sheldon, Constitutions, p. 4.

³²Olson, op. cit., pp. 285-286; Sheldon, Nebraska, pp. 961-964.

³³Olson, op. cit., pp. 286-287; Raymond, op. cit., pp. 145-148.

Constitution of 1875. The amending procedure was simplified--approval needed only a majority of those voting on the proposition, provided this represented at least 35 percent of those voting in the election. New executive offices could be created by two-thirds vote of the Legislature; the offices of Tax Commissioner and Board of Pardons were created; there was a provision for woman and soldier suffrage; an executive budget was provided; and an authorization for salary increases once every eight years by legislative action. Uniform and proportional taxes on tangible property were required; classification of other property was permitted, and taxes other than property taxes could be adopted.³⁴

Recent Constitutional Development.--From 1920 through 1966 a total of 92 amendments have been presented to the voters, twelve of these via the initiative procedure. Sixty-one have been approved by the electorate including six of the twelve submitted by popular initiative.³⁵ The majority of the amendments have dealt with modernizing constitutional provisions, raising salaries, modifying taxing procedures and providing for governmental

³⁴Olson, op. cit., pp. 285-287; Sheldon, Constitutions, pp. 6-205; Nebraska Blue Book 1960, pp. 95-96.

³⁵Nebraska Blue Book 1966, pp. 104-106.

reorganization of a minor nature.³⁶ Among the more significant amendments, the 1934 provision establishing the unicameral, nonpartisan Legislature stands out as the most important recent development in the state's constitutional history. The one-house legislature has been the pivotal point of the state's constitutional and political development since its adoption. Some of the more significant amendments adopted were: definition of the liability of stockholders in banks which had failed (1930); authorization of pari-mutuel betting (1934); abolition of the "closed shop" (1946); prohibition of state property tax upon adoption of state sales and/or income tax (1954); removal of eight-year restriction on raising officers' salaries (1956); increase in legislative salaries (1960); four-year terms for executive and legislative officers (1962, 1964); two-term limitation for Governor (1966); repeal of the state property tax (1966).³⁷

Conclusion.--The Constitution of a body politic includes not only the basic written document or documents and formal amendments, but also judicial interpretation,

³⁶For a list of the specific amendments and vote on each, see Nebraska Blue Book 1966, pp. 104-106.

³⁷Ibid.

legislative and executive enactments, and custom and usage as have developed over the years. In Nebraska, the basic written document is that of 1875 as amended 113 times through 1966.

The 1875 document was adopted in a period of economic depression after nearly ten years of efforts to provide the state with a suitable governmental framework. The document, though not as detailed as some other state constitutions, deviated a great deal from the ideal of a constitution--a broad general outline of government, the specific details being left to legislative action. This, coupled with the difficulty of amendment, severely restricted the orderly development of government in the state until the adoption of the party endorsement law of 1901. The latter is an excellent example of the effect of legislative action on constitutional development. This legislative act permitted a more flexible amending procedure until the 1920 Constitutional Convention simplified the formal amending process.

An examination of the Nebraska Constitution, in the broad sense, provides the institutional framework of the political system and indicates the constitutional growth which has evolved since the adoption of the basic written document in 1875.

Bill of Rights and General Provisions

The Nebraska Constitution provides for a Bill of Rights with guarantees similar to those found in other constitutions, with no significant additions or deletions. The one exception perhaps is the provision permitting the Legislature by law to modify the grand jury system.³⁸ This provision was new to the 1875 Constitution and was apparently a compromise following extensive debate in the constitutional convention of 1871 over the grand jury system.³⁹ The bulk of the Bill of Rights closely resembles the provisions of the previous two constitutions and deviates little from the traditional Bill of Rights.⁴⁰

³⁸Nebraska, Constitution, Art. I, sec. 10.

³⁹Sheldon, Debates, Vol. I, pp. 224 ff.

⁴⁰Judicial interpretation is extensive in Nebraska in reference to the Bill of Rights, but space does not permit a discussion of this area. With the increased attention of the United States Supreme Court to civil rights and the increasing applicability of the United States Bill of Rights to the states through the Fourteenth Amendment, many of the traditional provisions of the states' Bills of Rights are now governed by federal judicial interpretation. Suffice it to say that the Nebraska courts have not distinguished themselves as being in the vanguard of constitutional development in the area of civil rights and liberties. For a discussion of the interpretation of due process in criminal prosecutions, for example, see Bernard Kolasa, "State Courts and Due Process in Criminal Prosecutions: The Record of Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota," Nebraska Municipal Review, No. 474 (January, 1964), 21-35.

The Nebraska Constitution provides for a separation of powers which is explicit and rigid. Article II provides:

The powers of the government of this state are divided into three distinct departments, the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial, and no person or collection of persons being one of these departments, shall exercise any power properly belonging to either of the others, except as hereinafter expressly directed or permitted.⁴¹

The separation of powers provision is much more explicit in the Nebraska Constitution than the United States Constitution, and the Nebraska courts have been careful to preserve this tripartite division of powers.⁴² This has been particularly significant in the area of legislative delegation of authority to the executive, an important phenomenon of twentieth century constitutional development.⁴³

⁴¹ Nebraska, Constitution, Art. II, sec. 1.

⁴² In numerous cases, the state Supreme Court has reiterated this rigid separation of powers concept in prohibiting the invasion of one department into the area of another. (State v. Hall, 125 Neb. 236, 249 N.W. 756 [1933]; Lavery v. Cochran, 152 Neb. 354, 271 N.W. 354 [1937]; School District No. 39 v. Decker, 159 Neb. 693, 68 N.W.2d 354 [1955]; Lincoln Dairy Co. v. Finigan, 170 Neb. 777, 104 N.W.2d 227 [1960]; Ferry Carpenter, Inc. v. Nebraska Liquor Control Commission, 175 Neb. 26, 120 N.W.2d 374 [1963].)

⁴³ This will be considered in more detail in discussion of the legislative article of the Constitution; see also Frank B. Morrison, "Streamlining the Executive in Nebraska," 40 Nebraska Law Review 636 (June, 1961).

Legislature

The legislative article provides that "the legislative authority of the state shall be vested in a Legislature."⁴⁴ In its area, the Legislature's power is limited by the initiative and referendum and constitutional prohibitions. "The Legislature, subject only to the initiative and referendum, and constitutional inhibitions, and provided that legislation is for a public purpose, has an unlimited field within which to legislate."⁴⁵ Thus, the Legislature possesses the power to do all that is not expressly prohibited to it by the Constitution.

Restrictions on legislative power are found in the Bill of Rights section of the Constitution. The legislative article also contains a number of limitations on legislative powers. The Legislature is constitutionally prohibited from passing local or special laws in a number of enumerated cases⁴⁶ and in instances not so designated,

⁴⁴ Nebraska, Constitution, Art. III, sec. 1.

⁴⁵ Power Oil Co. v. Cochran, 138 Neb. 827, 295 N.W. 805 (1941).

⁴⁶ Among some of these are included: divorces; changing names or law of descent; laying out of highways; locating or changing county seats; regulating county and township offices, the practice of courts of justice, the jurisdiction and duties of justices of the peace, police magistrates, or constables; providing for change of venue in civil or criminal cases; incorporating cities, towns, or villages or changing the charter of any town, city, or village; providing for the bonding of cities, towns,

a special law is prohibited "where a general law can be made applicable."⁴⁷

There has been extensive court interpretation relative to the meaning of a special law and when a general law can be made applicable. Though a law affects only one county, it is not necessarily void as special legislation,⁴⁸ and the courts have held that the use of various classes does not constitute special legislation within the meaning of this constitutional prohibition.⁴⁹

The Legislature may classify persons, corporations and property for purposes of legislation, but classification must rest upon real differences in situation and circumstances of members of the class relative to the subject of legislation, and the law must operate uniformly on every member of class so designated.⁵⁰

In addition, a classification cannot be arbitrary⁵¹ nor unreasonable,⁵² and must operate uniformly and equally

precincts, school districts or other municipalities; providing for the management of public schools; granting to a corporation, association, or individuals any special or exclusive privileges, immunity, or franchise. (Nebraska, Constitution, Art. III, sec. 18.)

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸State v. Frank, 61 Neb. 679, 85 N.W. 956 (1901).

⁴⁹State v. Graham, 16 Neb. 74, 19 N.W. 470 (1884).

⁵⁰State v. Hall, 129 Neb. 669, 262 N.W. 835 (1930).

⁵¹Steinacher v. Swanson, 131 Neb. 439, 268 N.W. 317 (1936).

⁵²Thorin v. Burke, 146 Neb. 94, 18 N.W.2d 664 (1945).

on all members of the class.⁵³

Court interpretation, thus, has permitted the Legislature to obviate at times the constitutional prohibition against special laws by instituting classification which in effect may provide for special legislation.

Despite its broad grant of legislative powers, the Constitution explicitly sets forth legislative powers in the area of creation of new executive state offices not contained in the Constitution,⁵⁴ in the composition, tenure, and salary of part of the judicial system,⁵⁵ and in the educational field to carry out constitutional provisions such as distribution of income from the school fund, duties and powers of the Board of Regents of the state university and State Board of Education.⁵⁶

In Article VIII, revenue, the Legislature is granted the power to raise revenue by taxation "in such manner as the Legislature may direct."⁵⁷ However, certain limitations are imposed on the taxing power which in some cases are of a statutory rather than constitutional nature. The revenue article has been amended thirteen times

⁵³Continental Insurance Co. v. Sarha, 131 Neb. 791, 270 N.W. 122 (1936).

⁵⁴Nebraska, Constitution, Art. IV.

⁵⁵Ibid., Art. V.

⁵⁶Ibid., Art. VII.

⁵⁷Ibid., Art. VIII, sec. 1.

since 1952 and has been the source of much of the political debate of the last fifteen years. The heavy reliance upon the property tax until the past year was primarily responsible for the various amendments, and different method for taxing various classes of property to the extent of a constitutional provision which holds that the Legislature "may provide that livestock shall constitute a separate and distinct class of property for purposes of taxation" ⁵⁸ Furthermore, "notwithstanding the other provisions of Article VIII, the Legislature is authorized to substitute a basis other than valuation for taxes upon grain and seed produced or handled in this state." ⁵⁹

One area of legislative authority which has become increasingly important in the twentieth century is the delegation of power to the executive. In Nebraska, this area has stimulated a great deal of litigation, largely due to Article II, which explicitly sets forth a separation of powers concept. ⁶⁰

Following general judicial interpretation, the Nebraska Supreme Court early held that essential legislative power could not be delegated to the other two

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., sec. 10.

⁶⁰ Morrison, op. cit., p. 636.

branches of government.⁶¹ But the Court also held that the authority to make rules and regulations to carry out an express legislative purpose is not an exclusively legislative power which may not be delegated.⁶²

In this early period the Court upheld the powers of administrative rate-making in reference to railroad rates, insurance rates, and public service corporation rates.⁶³ Later the Court set up certain criteria which had to be met for a valid delegation of legislative authority. The delegation had to be accompanied by rules or standards of guidance for those exercising the authority; otherwise the delegation was invalid.⁶⁴ Determination of whether adequate guides or standards were present rested, of course, with the Court. In 1955 the Court invalidated a statute delegating to the State Superintendent of Public

⁶¹Winkler v. City of Hastings, 85 Neb. 212, 122 N.W. 858 (1909).

⁶²State v. Howard, 96 Neb. 278, 147 N.W. 689 (1914).

⁶³Ibid.; State ex rel Missouri Pacific Railroad Co. v. Clarke, 98 Neb. 566, 153 N.W. 623 (1915); Appeal of Union Stockyards Co., 103 Neb. 224, 170 N.W. 908 (1919).

⁶⁴Smithberger v. Banning, 129 Neb. 651, 262 N.W. 492 (1935). In this case the Court struck down a statute giving an administrative board the power to determine the distribution of funds for welfare purposes. See also Nelson v. Tilley, 137 Neb. 327, 289 N.W. 338 (1940); Lennox v. Housing Authority of City of Omaha, 137 Neb. 582, 290 N.W. 451 (1940).

Instruction the power to formulate rules and regulations for approval of high schools for the collection of free high school tuition money. The Court held that the administrative body has been given absolute, unregulated, and undefined discretion.⁶⁵

In 1960 the Court invalidated a delegation of authority to the State Department of Agriculture to promulgate rules and regulations which complied generally with a prescribed milk ordinance and code and providing violations would be criminal offenses. The Court held that the Legislature could not delegate its legislative power to define a criminal offense to an administrative or executive authority.⁶⁶

In a 1963 case,⁶⁷ the Court ruled that the Liquor Control Commission had exceeded the express legislative purpose by carrying out a price-fixing policy and had gone

⁶⁵School District No. 39 of Washington County v. Decker, 159 Neb. 693, 68 N.W.2d 354 (1955). A similar law was upheld in 1964 which gave the State Board of Education this authority with the Court holding that the statute was in accord with the constitutional requirement that the power and duties of the Board be prescribed by the Legislature. (School District No. 8 of Sherman County v. State Board of Education, 176 Neb. 722, 127 N.W.2d 458 [1964].)

⁶⁶Lincoln Dairy Co. v. Finigan, 170 Neb. 777, 104 N.W.2d 227 (1960).

⁶⁷Terry Carpenter, Inc. v. Nebraska Liquor Control Commission, 175 Neb. 26, 120 N.W.2d 374 (1965).

beyond the standards prescribed in the legislative act.⁶⁸

The Court, thus, has kept a close watch over the delegation of legislative authority and though criteria have been established, a valid delegation is, in the final analysis, what the Court determines according to the facts of the particular case.

The legislative article of the Constitution provides for a unicameral, nonpartisan body of not more than fifty members who serve a four-year term⁶⁹ at a salary of two hundred dollars a month for the term of office.⁷⁰

Biennial legislative sessions are provided for, meeting in the odd numbered years, with no constitutional limit on the length of such sessions. The Legislature is granted the usual powers of determining its own rules and proceedings, and choosing its officers except that the Lieutenant Governor is designated as presiding officer of the body.⁷¹

⁶⁸The Commission adopted a policy requiring distributors and retailers to file a price list with the Commission and limited the discounts that could be granted below the listed prices.

⁶⁹The four-year term was instituted in 1962 by constitutional amendment replacing the two-year term in effect since the first Unicameral session in 1937.

⁷⁰Nebraska, Constitution, Art. III, sec. 7.

⁷¹Ibid., sec. 10.

The Constitution provides for procedural steps in the passage of legislation, provisions incorporated into the Unicameral amendment of 1934 to provide a check for hasty legislation and replace safeguards theoretically present in the "checks" of a second house. These provide for a full reading of all bills and amendments before a final vote is taken, at least a five-legislative-day period between introduction and passage of a bill and one legislative day between final reading file and passage. No bill can contain more than one subject and the latter must be clearly expressed in the title of the bill.⁷²

Executive

Article IV provides that the "supreme executive power shall be vested in the Governor,"⁷³ The courts have expressed the power of the Governor thus:

. . . Except as limited by the Constitution itself, supreme executive power is to be exercised by the Governor and, under the constitutional division of powers, neither the Legislature nor the courts may exercise powers thus conferred upon the executive branch.⁷⁴

The Constitution provides for an executive branch of six elected officials including the Governor, Lieutenant

⁷²Ibid., sec. 14.

⁷³Nebraska, Constitution, Art. IV, sec. 6.

⁷⁴State ex rel Beck v. Young, 154 Neb. 588, 48 N.W.2d 677 (1951).

Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Auditor of Public Accounts,⁷⁵ and Treasurer, each serving a four-year term with the Governor restricted to two consecutive terms.⁷⁶ Other "executive" officials elected by constitutional provision include the five-man State Railway Commission,⁷⁷ the six-man State Board of Education, and the six-member Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska. In addition, the Constitution provides for a Board of Pardons made up of the Governor, Attorney General, and Secretary of State,⁷⁸ and gives the Governor, Secretary of State, State Auditor, State Treasurer and Tax Commissioner

⁷⁵ Though the Auditor is listed as an executive officer in the Constitution, he is not strictly speaking an executive official but rather one possessing functions properly belonging to both the executive and legislative branches. Pre-audit functions represent executive functions and post-audit, legislative ones. The auditor thus stands within both branches unlike the United States Comptroller who is elected by and responsible to the Congress. (G. Theodore Mitau, State and Local Government [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965], p. 149.)

⁷⁶ The four-year term was adopted in 1962 for the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, and in 1964 for the other four officials with the restriction on two consecutive gubernatorial terms adopted in 1966. Previous to 1962 all state officials served two-year terms with no restriction on the number of consecutive terms except the Treasurer who was limited to two consecutive terms. (Nebraska, Constitution, Art. IV, sec. 1.)

⁷⁷ This body is akin to the Public Utility Commission found in other states and is not, strictly speaking, an executive agency. The Railway Commission, as the independent regulatory commissions on the national level, is a hybrid possessing what are called quasi-legislative and quasi-judicial powers.

⁷⁸ Nebraska, Constitution, Art. IV, sec. 13.

together the power to review and equalize assessments of property for taxation.⁷⁹ The balance of executive officials are appointed by the Governor and head departments which have been created by the Legislature.

Unless expressly provided otherwise, the Governor has complete powers of appointment and the courts have reacted unfavorably toward legislative encroachments in this area. The Supreme Court voided an act which limited the Governor's appointment power in reference to directors of the electric grid system. The latter was held to be a political subdivision of a public corporation and the limiting of the Governor's appointment power violated constitutional provisions prohibiting the Legislature from appointing officers whose offices are created by law.⁸⁰ The Governor has complete power of appointment and removal over all department heads,⁸¹ and where the Governor's removal power is limited constitutionally to cause, as in various boards and commissions, a hearing for removal is necessary to include a reasonably definite charge, notice of hearing and opportunity for defense afforded.⁸²

⁷⁹Ibid., sec. 28.

⁸⁰Wittler v. Baumgartner, 180 Neb. 446, 144 N.W.2d 62 (1966); Nebraska, Constitution, Art. 1V, sec. 10.

⁸¹State ex rel Beck v. Obbink, 172 Neb. 242, 109 N.W.2d 288 (1959).

⁸²State ex rel Meyer v. Borrell, 174 Neb. 340, 117 N.W.2d 872 (1962).

The Constitution provides the Nebraska executive with the traditional powers of transmitting messages to the Legislature, calling special sessions of the Unicameral,⁸³ and serving as commander-in-chief of the National and State Guards.⁸⁴

The Governor possesses an extensive veto power which includes an item veto in appropriation bills; a three-fifths vote of the Legislature is required to override a gubernatorial veto. The courts, however, have restricted the appropriation item veto provision somewhat. The Constitution provides that the Legislature cannot increase an appropriation item of the executive budget except by two-thirds vote (changed by constitutional amendment in 1964 from three-fifths).⁸⁵ The courts have held that this provision applies only to departments, institutions, and agencies in existence when the Governor is required to make his budget recommendations.⁸⁶ In addition, the Court has held that if the bill was passed by the requisite two-thirds vote, the gubernatorial veto

⁸³The Legislature can only consider those matters which the Governor outlines in the call for a special session and cannot consider any matters which are not so included. (Nebraska, Constitution, Art. IV, sec. 8.)

⁸⁴Ibid., sec. 7, 8, 10, 14.

⁸⁵Ibid., sec. 7.

⁸⁶Nekota v. State Board of Equalization and Assessment, 146 Neb. 370, 19 N.W.2d 633 (1945). Though the Constitution was amended to read two-thirds after the pertinent case was handed down, the rule of law would still apply.

would not apply.⁸⁷ Thus, the item veto does not apply when the bill has been passed by the Legislature by a two-thirds vote.

The Governor does not possess a pocket veto and must return a bill with his objections within five days to the Legislature or, if the latter has adjourned, to the office of the Secretary of State; otherwise a bill becomes a law.⁸⁸ The veto power has been fairly effective in Nebraska with the veto being overridden by the Legislature less than twenty percent of the time.⁸⁹

While the Constitution provides that "the supreme executive power shall be vested in the Governor who shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed and the affairs of the state efficiently and economically administered,"⁹⁰ it also provides for the independent existence of many executive officials which leads to a fragmentation and decentralization of executive responsibility and power.

⁸⁷ Klsen v. State Board, 120 Neb. 141, 231 N.W. 772 (1930). Again, though the constitutional requirement was changed to two-thirds, the rule of law would still apply.

⁸⁸ Nebraska, Constitution, Art. IV, sec. 15.

⁸⁹ Of the one hundred vetoes from 1937 through 1965, the Legislature has successfully mustered a three-fifths vote on only eighteen occasions. (Nebraska, Legislative Journal of the State of Nebraska, Fifty-second session through Seventy-seventh session, 1937, 1965.)

⁹⁰ Nebraska, Constitution, Art. IV, sec. 6.

Further, the constitution allows little overlapping of the three branches of government,⁹¹ and thus the increasing importance of the executive in the twentieth century has been slow in emerging in Nebraska.

In part, however, the retarded growth of the executive in Nebraska is due to custom. The Governor stands in a favorable position compared to many state governors despite all that has been said,⁹² yet the image of the Nebraska Governor has been that of a weak, figurehead role to a great extent. This paradox will be examined in more detail in the later discussion of the Governor as a decision-making agent.⁹³

Judicial

The judicial power has been defined as the "authority to hear and determine controversies as to rights and to render judgment binding on disputants on such determination."⁹⁴ The courts have asserted the separation of powers concept both in preserving their respective powers

⁹¹Morrison, op. cit., pp. 635-636.

⁹²Joseph A. Schlesinger, "The Politics of the Executive," in Politics in the American States, ed. by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), p. 229.

⁹³Chapter VIII, infra.

⁹⁴Laverty v. Cochran, 132 Neb. 118, 271 N.W. 354 (1937).

and in refusing to exercise power held to be within the purview of the other branches.⁹⁵ In the latter connection the state Supreme Court has held that the power of classification rests with the Legislature and the courts cannot interfere with this power,⁹⁶ and the courts will not inquire into the wisdom, motive, policy, or expediency of legislation.⁹⁷

While laying down these rules, the Court has also made it clear that it is not completely powerless to

⁹⁵The Court has established itself as the sole authority to declare acts of the Legislature unconstitutional. (In re Metropolitan Utilities District of Omaha, 179 Neb. 783, 140 N.W.2d 626 [1966].) Numerous times the Court has refused to exercise powers it held to have been legislative in nature. (McDonald v. Rentfrow, 176 Neb. 796, 127 N.W.2d 480 [1964].)

⁹⁶Nevertheless, the Court has held that if it is clearly apparent that the Legislature has attempted to avoid and violate provisions of the constitution relating to special and local legislation, the courts will step in. (Metropolitan Utilities District v. City of Omaha, 171 Neb. 609, 107 N.W.2d 397 [1961].)

⁹⁷Chicago B. & Q. R. Co. v. State, 47 Neb. 549, 66 N.W. 624 (1896); Copple v. Bowlin, 172 Neb. 467, 110 N.W.2d 117 (1962); McDonald v. Rentfrow, 176 Neb. 796, 127 N.W.2d 480 (1964); City of Grand Island v. Ehlers, 180 Neb. 331, 142 N.W.2d (1966). In connection with the police power, the Court has said that it would not determine economic policies of legislation, but, in order for legislation to be valid under the police power, it cannot be arbitrary or discriminatory, but must have a real and substantial relation to the object sought to be ordained. (Lincoln Dairy v. Finigan, 170 Neb. 777, 104 N.W.2d 227 [1960].) Similarly, while conceding that the determination of whether legislation is in the public interest is for the Legislature to decide, the Court has held that the Legislature may not, under the guise of public interest, impose conditions which are on their face unreasonable, arbitrary, discriminatory, or confiscatory. (Blauvelt v. Beck, 162 Neb. 576, 76 N.W.2d 738 [1956].)

interfere if there is unreasonableness, arbitrariness, or the like involved. Judicial self-restraint would appear to be important in this regard in limiting the number and extent of judicial incursions into those areas it recognizes as being within the cognizance of other branches of the government (often referred to as "political questions").

The Constitution provides for a judicial system consisting of a seven-member Supreme Court, district courts, county courts, and other inferior courts as established by law. By virtue of an amendment adopted in 1962, Supreme Court and District Court judges are chosen by the merit plan from geographical judicial districts with the exception of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court who represents the state as a whole.⁹⁸ Appointed by the Governor from a list submitted by a judicial nominating commission,⁹⁹ the judge retains office for three years, at which time the voters approve or reject him. If approved, he is subject to the same process of voter assent every six years.

The Supreme Court has jurisdiction in all cases "relating to the revenue, civil cases in which the state

⁹⁸ Nebraska, Constitution, Art. V, sec. 1, 21.

⁹⁹ The seven-man committee includes a judge of the Supreme Court (designated by the Governor), three members of the bar residing within the judicial district, and three citizens appointed by the Governor from the same respective district.

is a party, mandamus, quo warranto, habeas corpus, and such appellate jurisdiction as may be provided by law."¹⁰⁰ To declare an act of the Legislature unconstitutional, the Supreme Court must have the concurrence of five of the seven judges; in other situations, a majority is all that is required.¹⁰¹

The District Courts (presently composed of thirty-six judges in twenty districts) have both chancery and common law jurisdiction and are in most cases the courts of original jurisdiction, since county courts cannot handle criminal cases in which the punishment exceeds six months imprisonment or a fine of over five hundred dollars, or civil cases involving title to real estate or action on mortgages or contracts, or where the debt or sum claim exceeds \$1,000.¹⁰² Thus, county courts handle only minor criminal and civil actions.

Revenue

The complexity and detail of the revenue provisions of the Nebraska Constitution have already been noted. With the recent broadening of the tax base coupled with a constitutional amendment in 1966 terminating the property tax on the state level, it is expected that many provisions

¹⁰⁰ Nebraska, Constitution, Art. V, sec. 2.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid., sec. 9, 16.

of the revenue article of the Constitution will become inoperative. For instance, section 1A, adopted in 1954, provides that upon the adoption of a sales or income tax, or combination of both, the state is prohibited from levying a property tax for state purposes. The adoption of the 1966 amendment abolishing the state property tax replaced section 1A. Other provisions regarding valuation of property are likewise outdated under these circumstances, though some will still have force in reference to taxation below the state level. Nevertheless, the revenue article is in need of updating and simplification due in large part to the incorporation in the article of items of a statutory rather than constitutional nature.

In the area of fiscal matters, the Nebraska Constitution includes a prohibition against indebtedness.

The state may, to meet casual deficits, or failures in the revenues, contract debts never to exceed in the aggregate one hundred thousand dollars, and no greater indebtedness shall be incurred except for the purpose of repelling invasion, suppressing insurrection, or defending the state in war¹⁰³

While the state is restricted to a debt of \$100,000, local subdivisions are permitted by the Constitution, upon approval by the voters, to incur indebtedness up to fifteen percent of their assessed valuation.¹⁰⁴ The lack of indebtedness by the state, looked to with pride by many of

¹⁰³Ibid., Art. XIII, sec. 1. ¹⁰⁴Ibid., sec. 2.

its citizens, presents a number of difficulties, not the least of which is capital construction funds. Most fiscal authorities agree that so strict a restriction on state indebtedness works against flexibility necessary for a sound and responsible governmental fiscal program in the context of mid-twentieth century conditions.¹⁰⁵

In the area of taxation, a number of judicial rules of law should be briefly noted. The courts have held that the Constitution requires that all taxes on all tangible and intangible property be levied by valuation, uniformly and proportionately.¹⁰⁶ The courts have also enforced the doctrines of tax exemptions for religious and charitable organizations,¹⁰⁷ and intergovernmental tax

¹⁰⁵"This self-imposed discipline [debt limitation] seems to be an unwarranted and extreme reaction to the excesses and follies of the 'wildcat' era. It should not be necessary to hamper a government with such restrictions and deprive it of its legitimate power merely in order to prevent abuses. . . . In the present conditions of state finances, when reliance upon the very stable property tax is rapidly diminishing and more 'cycle-sensitive' taxes such as the income tax are taking its place, it is particularly important that states have some powers in the field of public credit." (Harold M. Groves, Financing Government [New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 6th ed., 1964], p. 644.)

¹⁰⁶H./K. Company v. Board of Equalization, 175 Neb. 268, 121 N.W.2d 382 (1963); State ex rel Meyer v. Story, 173 Neb. 741, 114 N.W.2d 769 (1962); Railroad Tax Cases, 170 Neb. 77, 106, 139, 101 N.W.2d 856, 873, 892 (1960); United States Cold Storage Corp. v. Stolinski, 168 Neb. 513, 95 N.W.2d 408 (1959); K-K Appliance Co. v. Board of Equalization, 165 Neb. 547, 85 N.W.2d 381 (1957).

¹⁰⁷Young Women's Christian Association v. City of

immunity.¹⁰⁸ The latter has been modified by a constitutional amendment adopted in 1958 requiring in-lieu-of-tax payments by governmental corporations organized primarily to provide electricity or irrigation.¹⁰⁹

Local Government

The Constitution contains a section on county and township organization,¹¹⁰ as well as one on municipal corporations.¹¹¹ The restrictions on the Legislature in reorganization of counties are not excessive, requiring a

Lincoln, 177 Neb. 136, 128 N.W.2d 600 (1964). In this case the Court upheld the power of the Legislature to exempt from taxation property owned and used exclusively for religious and charitable purposes.

¹⁰⁸A public corporation is not subject to taxation unless the power to tax has been expressly conferred by the Legislature. (Consumers Public Power District v. City of Lincoln, 168 Neb. 183, 95 N.W.2d 357 [1959].) A public power district is considered to be a governmental subdivision of the state and thus falls under the tax immunity provision. (United Community Services v. Omaha National Bank, 162 Neb. 785, 77 N.W.2d 576 [1956].) The power of a city under its home-rule charter to tax does not extend to property that is exempt from taxation by virtue of a constitutional provision. (East Lincoln Lodge No. 210, A. F. & A. M. v. City of Lincoln, 131 Neb. 379, 268 N.W.2d 91 [1956].) Tax exemption of governmental entities does not extend, however, to assessments for local improvements. Municipal or other public property is not exempt from assessments for local improvements. (Drainage District v. Richardson County, 86 Neb. 355, 125 N.W. 796 [1910]; Beatrice v. Brethren Church, 41 Neb. 358, 59 N.W. 932 [1894]; Herman v. City of Omaha, 75 Neb. 489, 106 N.W. 593 [1906].)

¹⁰⁹Nebraska, Constitution, Art. VIII, sec. 11.

¹¹⁰Ibid., Art. IX. ¹¹¹Ibid., Art. XII.

vote of the people affected and prohibiting any county of less than 400 square miles. Permission for intercounty cooperation is provided in the judiciary article where one or more counties are permitted to form a common county judicial district.¹¹² It would seem of benefit to all if more intercounty reorganization and cooperation were achieved, though obstacles in this direction are less of a constitutional nature and more of a traditional, ideological one. The less than satisfactory applicability of the county system to the Great Plains has been noted,¹¹³ and more adaptation in this area of governmental organization seems justified.

The Nebraska Constitution provides for home-rule, permitting any city of 5,000 or more population to frame a charter for its own government. Further, the charter of any city over 100,000 population may be adopted as the home-rule charter. In all cases, charters are subject to the Constitution and laws of the state.¹¹⁴ The courts have held, in keeping with the general doctrine of state sovereignty vis-à-vis its various governmental subdivisions, that matters of state-wide concern take precedence

¹¹²Ibid., Art. V, sec. 15.

¹¹³Chapter II, supra.

¹¹⁴Nebraska, Constitution, Art. XI, sec. 2, 5.

over local laws, home-rule charters notwithstanding.¹¹⁵
 What this has meant is that if the Legislature passes a general law which is of state-wide concern, this law will be applicable to cities having a charter and any conflicting local law will be set aside.

At the same time the Court has emphasized that matters of strictly municipal concern to cities which have adopted home-rule charters are not subject to state legislation.¹¹⁶ The question of what is strictly a local matter and what is state-wide is dependent upon judicial determination according to the facts of the particular case. Education has been held to be within state-wide concern and thus state law rules over municipal ordinance.¹¹⁷ The dismissal procedure for city firemen was held to be a purely local matter,¹¹⁸ but firemen's pensions in metropolitan and first-class cities were held to be of state-wide concern and thus the state law was binding on

¹¹⁵State ex rel Fischer v. City of Lincoln, 137 Neb. 97, 288 N.W. 499 (1939); Axberg v. City of Lincoln, 141 Neb. 55, 2 N.W.2d 613 (1942).

¹¹⁶Carlberg v. Metcalf, 120 Neb. 481, 234 N.W. 87 (1930); State ex rel Fischer v. City of Lincoln, 137 Neb. 97, 288 N.W. 499 (1939).

¹¹⁷Carlberg v. Metcalf, 120 Neb. 481, 234 N.W. 87 (1930).

¹¹⁸State ex rel Fischer v. City of Lincoln, 137 Neb. 97, 288 N.W. 499 (1939).

the home-rule cities.¹¹⁹ The procedure for condemnation of property within a city for park purposes was held to be of state-wide concern,¹²⁰ as well as state statutes relating to municipal sewage disposal systems.¹²¹

Examples of purely local matters, as interpreted by the courts, include the levy and assessment of special benefits for the cost of paving within a city,¹²² and the construction of a city reservoir.¹²³

Local self-government has never been a problem and from the earliest times the people have enjoyed a great deal of local autonomy if they so desired and the Constitution has been quite liberal in this direction. The 1875 Constitution provided for charters for cities above 5,000; the Constitutional Convention of 1919-20 added the provision for home-rule for cities above 100,000.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Arberg v. City of Lincoln, 141 Neb. 55, 2 N.W.2d 613 (1942).

¹²⁰ Neale v. City of Grand Island, 144 Neb. 67, 12 N.W.2d 540 (1943).

¹²¹ State ex rel City of Grand Island v. Johnson, 175 Neb. 498, 122 N.W.2d 240 (1963).

¹²² State ex rel Martin v. Cunningham, 158 Neb. 708, 64 N.W.2d 455 (1954).

¹²³ Niklaus v. Miller, 159 Neb. 301, 66 N.W.2d 824 (1954). In this case the Court held that the fair labor standards statute which applies to cities and villages generally did not apply to Grand Island in the construction of a city reservoir.

¹²⁴ Sheldon, Constitutions, pp. 159-164.

Amendment

The Constitution provides for amending the document by: (1) three-fifths of the Legislature and majority approval by the voters provided the latter represents thirty-five percent of the total vote cast; (2) initiative petition of ten percent by the voters distributed to include five percent in each of two-fifths of the counties and majority approval by the voters as above; (3) constitutional convention proposed by three-fifths of the Legislature and if approved by the necessary percentages of voters (at least thirty-five percent of the total vote cast), the Legislature provides for calling the convention of a membership of not more than one hundred persons. All proposals of the convention then must be approved by a majority of the voters.¹²⁵

The amending provisions of the Nebraska Constitution are not restrictive and provide for a fairly easy and simple amending process. Since 1875, 172 proposals for amendment have been submitted to the people, and 113 or 65.7 percent have been accepted.¹²⁶ The bulk of these proposals have come from the Legislature and the one constitutional convention in this period, that of 1919-20.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Nebraska, Constitution, Art. III, sec. 1, 2; Art. XVI.

¹²⁶ Nebraska Blue Book 1966, pp. 103-107. ¹²⁷ Ibid.

Miscellaneous Provisions

The state Constitution contains a number of provisions which appropriately are included in a Miscellaneous Provisions article. This includes a provision that drunkenness shall be a cause of impeachment and removal from office, a right to work provision adopted in 1946, and a provision permitting municipal corporations to acquire and lease real and personal property to private enterprise.¹²⁸

Conclusion

The Nebraska Constitution compares favorably with the Model State Constitution on many points including its relative brevity, unicameral legislature, legislative procedure, executive item veto, four-year term for the executive, merit system for judicial officers (alternative provision of Model Constitution), home-rule provisions for local government, and initiative procedure for constitutional amendment.¹²⁹ On the other hand, the Nebraska document contains many provisions which are at variance with the letter and spirit of the Model Constitution and reflect the era in which the document or specific

¹²⁸ Nebraska, Constitution, Art. XV, sec. 3, 13, 14, 15, 16.

¹²⁹ National Municipal League, Model State Constitution (6th ed.; New York: By the Author, 1965).

provision was adopted. Many of these provisions reflect the period when less was asked of government, and excesses of the period caused limitations to be written into the constitution which seriously retard government action today. The basic Nebraska document was adopted in the latter part of the nineteenth century and reflects the governmental ideas of that period. Subsequent amendments as well have reflected the thinking of the time of adoption, and in many cases improvements have been achieved by updating outmoded ideas and procedures. But many outmoded provisions still remain, and many of the updated provisions have themselves become outmoded. If statutory initiative and referendum were accepted in 1920, it is not true that these devices enjoy the same acceptance today. The Model State Constitution no longer accepts an unlimited referendum and includes only an appendix on statutory initiative and a referendum limited to legislative and/or executive action.¹³⁰ In 1875 a constitutional debt limitation was sound and understandable, but in 1968 such a restriction is neither sound, nor accepted by most fiscal and governmental authorities.¹³¹ Whereas in the early decades of the twentieth century "popular" control of government was a sought-after goal, and constitutional

¹³⁰Ibid., pp. 117-118.

¹³¹Groves, op. cit., p. 644.

provisions were adopted to reflect this ideology, in 1968 this concept is no longer seen as a panacea and in fact is regarded as having retarded governmental progress in many significant areas. Thus, the approach of today envisions strengthening representative democracy, providing a more flexible separation of powers, instituting a responsible and responsive administrative structure though this means centralization rather than dispersal of power.¹³² The electorate, it has been found, is not able, nor should it have been expected, to carry out the responsibilities given it under the concepts of "popular" democracy. The Nebraska Constitution, like most state constitutions, suffers from too much popular democracy at the expense of representative democracy. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the Nebraska document suffers too much from the egotism of constitutional drafters who sought to immortalize their detailed ideas of governmental organization, rather than merely providing guidelines within which those who followed would be free to adapt or modify as they saw fit.

The departure of many state constitutions from the simplicity and clarity of the national prototype prepared by the convention of 1787 has been due, of course, to a number of causes, perhaps the least of which have been unclear

¹³²John C. Buechner, State Government in the Twentieth Century (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1967), pp. 157-161.

thinking and bungling workmanship. For the most part, the over-elaboration of checks and balances, the built-in weaknesses in all branches of government, and the proliferation of "thou shalt nots" on the one hand and of essentially statutory declarations of public policy in the guise of constitutional provisions on the other stem from disillusionment with representative institutions and the desire either to prevent sin or to enforce the good (as seen by those making the constitutions).¹³³

Electoral Procedures

Initiative and Referendum

Nebraska was one of the first states to adopt the initiative and referendum devices, a peculiarly Progressive-inspired governmental reform which found its major acceptance in the decade of the 1910's. Since 1917 only Alaska has adopted these devices.¹³⁴ The reform movement was sweeping Nebraska in the first decade of the twentieth century and both major parties had fallen under its influence. The adoption of initiative and referendum into the state's governmental structure was in effect a bipartisan move. Both parties were pledged in their platform in the 1910 election to adopt these devices¹³⁵ and though the

¹³³ John E. Bebout, Introduction to Model State Constitution (New York: National Municipal League, 1963), p. viii.

¹³⁴ Charles R. Adrian, State and Local Governments (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967), p. 168.

¹³⁵ Works Project Administration, Nebraska Party Platforms 1858-1940 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1940), pp. 339-348.

Democrats controlled the 1911 Legislature,¹³⁶ the passage of a bill proposing amending the constitution to provide for initiative and referendum procedures found broad acceptance within both parties. It was the Senate version which finally emerged from the legislative mill as the one presented to the Governor for his signature on March 24, 1911.¹³⁷ The Senate bill provided for a larger percentage of signatures for the initial steps of the procedure than the House version which sought to make the procedure as easy as possible to invoke. The final bill provided that petitions for initiative of a law required signatures of ten percent of the votes cast for Governor at the previous election, ten percent for referendum, and fifteen percent for constitutional amendments. In all cases the signatures needed to be distributed to include five percent of the voters in each of two-fifths of the counties. Majority approval of the measure by the electorate, if not less than thirty-five percent of the total vote cast, embodied the measure into law.¹³⁸

¹³⁶The balance was 19-14 in the Senate and 53-46 with one Populist Independent in the House.

¹³⁷Nebraska, House Journal of the Legislature of the State of Nebraska, Thirty-second session, 1911, p. 639. The legislative journals will be cited hereafter as House Journal, Senate Journal, and Legislative Journal (post-Unicameral period).

¹³⁸McCall, op. cit., pp. 35-37.

Though some members of the House were unhappy with the large percentage figures of the Senate bill, they accepted the latter as the best that could be achieved. Representative J. M. Norton (Democrat, Polk County) commented:

. . . Although I consider Senate File No. 1 in its present form as entirely too conservative, and that the people of Nebraska have demanded and had a right to expect a more progressive measure from this legislature, yet, realizing that the people can amend this provision of the constitution in case it is finally adopted, and since this is undoubtedly the only measure that can be obtained at this time, therefore, I vote Aye.¹³⁹

With the backing of both parties, there was no question of its approval by the electorate and this was overwhelmingly given in the 1912 election, 189,200 to only 15,315 negative votes.¹⁴⁰

The elections of 1914 and 1916 saw vigorous use of the new devices, the referendum being utilized twice and the initiative four times, three of these in the form of constitutional amendments.¹⁴¹ Despite criticisms that the

¹³⁹ Nebraska, House Journal, Thirty-second session, 1911, p. 584.

¹⁴⁰ This represented approval by 73 percent of the total votes cast in the election, well above the necessary 35 percent figure. Interest in the amendment is demonstrated by the fact that almost 80 percent of the persons voting in the election took time to vote on the constitutional question. (Nebraska Blue Book 1966, p. 104.)

¹⁴¹ Nebraska Blue Book 1966, pp. 104-107.

initiative and referendum procedure was too stringent, there seemed to be no problem in getting the required signatures as evidenced by the rather liberal use of the devices in the first two elections following their adoption.

The initiative and referendum provisions were subjected to vigorous debate in the Constitutional Convention of 1919-20 with the focus of attention directed to the percentage provisions. Representative J. H. Norton proposed substituting total numbers for percentages in Proposal No. 108 which became the basis of the amendment finally adopted by the Convention and submitted to the people in 1920. The Norton proposal provided for 20,000 signatures for an initiated law, 25,000 signatures for an initiated constitutional amendment, and 15,000 to refer a measure. In each case the signatures needed to be distributed to include 100 voters in each of forty counties. Majority approval was sufficient for passage of any proposal. In addition, "all propositions submitted in pursuance hereof shall be submitted in a non-partisan manner, and without any indication or suggestion on the ballot that they have been approved or endorsed by any political party or organization . . ."¹⁴²

¹⁴²Nebraska, Journal of the Nebraska Constitutional Convention 1919-20, Vol. I, pp. 160-161. Cited hereafter as Journal.

Under the existing constitutional provisions (ten percent for initiated laws and referendum and fifteen percent for a constitutional amendment) and based on the election of 1918, an initiated law needed 22,219 signatures, a constitutional amendment 33,329 and a referred measure 22,219. Thus, the Norton proposal did not lower the number of needed signatures drastically.¹⁴³ However, the turnout at the 1918 election was one of the smallest in a decade and computed on the 1916 vote for Governor the required signatures were 29,140 for a law or referendum and 43,710 for a constitutional amendment. In this light the Norton proposal did significantly lower the needed signatures, particularly in a presidential election situation with its higher voter turnout.¹⁴⁴ The number formula favored easier use of the initiative and referendum than the percentage formula which fluctuated substantially between presidential and non-presidential elections.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³The corresponding percentage figures of the Norton proposal were nine percent for an initiated law, eleven percent for a constitutional amendment and six percent for a referred measure.

¹⁴⁴The corresponding percentage figures of the Norton proposal were seven percent for an initiated law, eight and one-half percent for a constitutional amendment, and five percent for a referred measure.

¹⁴⁵Nebraska State Canvassing Board, Official Report: General Election 1916, 1920. Hereafter cited as Report.

The Committee on Initiative, Referendum and Recall, to whom the Norton proposal was referred, adopted the percentage formula, but lowered the existing figures to seven percent for an initiated law, ten percent for a constitutional amendment, and five percent for a referred measure. The Committee retained the existing distribution formula--five percent in each of two-fifths of the counties--and the approval provision--a majority provided this represented thirty-five percent of the total votes cast in the election.¹⁴⁶

The percentage figures recommended by the Committee were the cause of sharp debate on the floor as had been the case in the Committee deliberations. Many felt the percentages were too low and the opponents and proponents argued over representative government versus direct democracy.¹⁴⁷ The crucial vote centered around two amendments which sought to raise the Committee's figure back to the existing level. The move to keep the percentage for an initiated law at ten percent was defeated 52-33,¹⁴⁸ and the motion to retain the fifteen percent figure for constitutional amendment fell 48-36.¹⁴⁹ Throughout the debate, J. N. Norton lent his weight to the Committee's

¹⁴⁶ Nebraska, Journal, pp. 455-456.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 473 ff., pp. 494 ff.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 507.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 514.

recommendation though, as in 1912, he felt the figures should be lower:

Whenever you increase the percentages, and make them too large, you defeat the very purpose of the initiative and referendum because you make it difficult for the people to use. If you make the percentages too low, naturally it is used too much and becomes a nuisance, so to speak; but the percentages should be reasonable. I do not agree that they are too low, but as a matter of fact, I think they are too high, yet I have consented to them and decided to support the report of the Committee because I realize that the report of the Committee has weight and, furthermore, I realize that the report of this Committee is very much in line with what some other states have done.¹⁵⁰

With the amendments defeated, the proposal had little trouble passing and was approved on final reading by a vote of 70-14,¹⁵¹ and was approved by the electorate in September 1920 by a vote of 56,046 to 19,834.¹⁵²

One of the important considerations in the Committee's adoption of the seven, ten, and five percent figures was the fact that, in their estimation, these most closely approximated the percentages necessary to keep the total number of needed signatures near the existing level in the context of the new voters to be added to the rolls because of the extension of the suffrage to women.¹⁵³ This did not apply to the referendum procedure and here

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 504.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 2651.

¹⁵² Nebraska Blue Book 1966, p. 100.

¹⁵³ Nebraska, Journal, pp. 478 ff.

the Committee felt a lower figure was justified because of the restricted time in which this procedure could be initiated.¹⁵⁴

Comparing the old and new provisions, we find that in 1916 the required number of signatures for an initiated law or referred measure was 29,140 and for a constitutional amendment, 43,711 compared in 1920 to 26,477 for an initiated law, 37,824 for a constitutional amendment, and 18,912 for a referendum.¹⁵⁵ Thus, while the referendum procedure was significantly eased, the initiative changed only slightly in the direction of ease of use.

Though the 1920 provisions made it easier to use the initiative and referendum devices than under the 1912 procedure, there was not a marked increase in their use in Nebraska. From 1920 through 1936, the initiative was used seven times, three in the form of constitutional amendments, and the referendum five times.¹⁵⁶ From 1937 through 1966, the initiative has been utilized twelve times, nine in the form of constitutional amendments, and the referendum only three times.¹⁵⁷

Table IV-1 summarizes the manner and extent of constitutional change in Nebraska and the importance of

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 479.

¹⁵⁵ Nebraska State Canvassing Board, Report, 1916, 1920.

¹⁵⁶ Nebraska Blue Book 1966, pp. 104-107. ¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

the initiative and referendum vis-à-vis the regular legislative process.

TABLE IV-1
CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY CHANGE IN
NEBRASKA 1914-1966

Method	Constitutional Amend.		Statutes	
	Submitted	Adopted	Submitted	Adopted
Convention	41	41	..	..
Legislature	116	65	21,010	7,898
Initiative	15	7	8	1
Referendum	..	..	10	7

Source: Nebraska Blue Book 1966, pp. 104-107.
p. 323.

It is evident that the initiative and referendum have not been used to any great degree in Nebraska. In fact, compared to other states, Nebraska is far below average. A study of North Dakota indicates a much greater use of these devices in the state compared to Nebraska.¹⁵⁸ In North Dakota between 1916 and 1960, the initiative was used 116 times, 25 for constitutional amendment, and the referendum was utilized 42 times for a total of 158 times.¹⁵⁹ This compared to a Nebraska total for a slightly

¹⁵⁸ Raymond V. Anderson, "Adoption and Operation of the Initiative and Referendum in North Dakota" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1962).

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 250-251.

longer period of 33 instances of the use of initiative and referendum. From 1915 through 1959, the North Dakota legislatures enacted 7,110 laws while 40 initiated laws were placed on the statute books.¹⁶⁰ The comparable figures for Nebraska for the 1914-1966 period were 7,898 laws passed by the legislatures and only one initiated law enacted. North Dakota is not unusual in its use of direct legislation being comparable to Colorado, above that of California and Oregon, but below that of Michigan, Ohio, and Washington.¹⁶¹ Thus, Nebraska's use of direct legislation has been anything but extensive.

The greatest discrepancy between North Dakota and Nebraska is in the area of direct legislation of a statutory nature. On the constitutional level, Nebraska is comparable to North Dakota (fifteen instances compared to twenty-five for North Dakota), but in the use of initiative and referendum in the realm of statutory law, Nebraska trails North Dakota significantly. Anderson argues in his North Dakota study that these devices serve to add an additional line of access in the decision-making process for interest groups whose goals are not achieved through the existing channels.¹⁶² There seems to be little question that in more cases than not the procedures are

¹⁶⁰Ibid., p. 252.

¹⁶¹Ibid., pp. 251-252.

¹⁶²Ibid., pp. 20 ff.

invoked by organized interest groups as opposed to individuals or unorganized groups. Only the former possess the resources necessary to successfully mount an initiative or referendum drive. It would follow, therefore, that if interest groups are able to achieve their goals within the traditional decision-making channels, the incidence of usage of initiative and referendum would diminish. This is perhaps the key to the minimal use of these devices in the statutory area in Nebraska. It would seem logical to assume that interest groups achieve their objectives at the legislative or executive level and thus find little reason to resort to initiative and referendum. Other factors may be relevant, but it is significant to note that in the thirty-year period since the adoption of the nonpartisan Unicameral in 1936, initiatives and referenda seeking statutory change have been used only six times, compared to twelve times in a twenty-year period previous to the Unicameral. The saliency of the argument of interest group satisfaction within the traditional decision-making channels in Nebraska cannot be disregarded.

Except for the negative asset of a "gun behind the door," an asset which is as difficult to substantiate as disprove, the record of these devices in Nebraska has been less than spectacular. With the exception of the adoption of the Unicameral Legislature in the election of 1934, it

is difficult to find much of positive value that has been accomplished through the initiative and referendum (Table IV-2).

TABLE IV-2
THE INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM MEASURES
ENACTED IN NEBRASKA
1914-1966

- I. Constitutional Amendments Approved (7)
 - A. Prohibition of liquor traffic, 1916
 - B. Unicameral legislature, 1934
 - C. Pari-mutuel betting, 1934
 - D. Abolition of the closed shop, 1946
 - E. In lieu of taxes by public power districts, 1958
 - F. Bingo, 1958
 - G. Termination of the state property tax, 1966
- II. Statutes Approved through Initiative Process--
Authorization for cities and towns owning electric light plants to extend their lines. 1930
- III. Legislative Acts Repealed through Referendum Process (7)
 - A. Nebraska City Armory, 1914
 - B. Partial repeal of primary law, 1920
 - C. Partial repeal of primary law, 1922
 - D. Registration of voters, 1922
 - E. Repeal of increased gas tax, 1950
 - F. Repeal of increased motor vehicle registration fee, 1950
 - G. Repeal of income tax law, 1966

Source: Nebraska Blue Book 1966, pp. 104-107.

In summary, the initiative and referendum in Nebraska have been utilized to a small degree compared to other states, and their positive benefits have been minimal with one notable exception. The restricted use of the

devices in Nebraska can be attributed to a great extent to evident interest group satisfaction within traditional decision-making channels, thus precluding the need to utilize the initiative and referendum for goal achievement.

Nonpartisan Ballot

The elimination of party labels in electoral contests was primarily a Progressive era reform and found its greatest acceptance in the Midwest and the area west of the Mississippi.¹⁶³ In Nebraska, the nonpartisan ballot extends to all offices on the local level except for county officials who are elected on a partisan ballot (county judges and school superintendents, however, are nonpartisan). This is in line with the general practice in the United States.¹⁶⁴ On the state level, the nonpartisan ballot is used for judicial and educational offices, and since 1934, for members of the Legislature.

The period 1909 to 1917 was the most active in Nebraska in adoption of the nonpartisan ballot. In 1909, judicial and educational offices were made nonpartisan, but the legislative act was later ruled unconstitutional by the state Supreme Court because of a provision which prohibited a political party from endorsing, nominating, recommending, criticizing or referring to these officials

¹⁶³Adrian, op. cit., p. 165.

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

in any way.¹⁶⁵ The 1911 Legislature passed another law removing judges and superintendents of public schools from the partisan ballot, but the bill was vetoed by the Governor.¹⁶⁶ The 1913 Legislature passed a bill providing for the nonpartisan nomination and election of judges following the recommendation of the new Governor and the move to remove judges from partisan politics finally succeeded.¹⁶⁷ State and local educational officers were added to the nonpartisan ballot by the 1917 Legislature.¹⁶⁸

In the election of 1924 the voters were asked to pass on an initiated constitutional amendment calling for the elimination of party labels in all state and county races. The measure, largely the work of U.S. Senator George Norris and progressive Republican C. A. Sorensen through the Nonpartisan League, brought strong opposition from both political parties.¹⁶⁹ In defense of the proposal, Sorensen said, "We believe that state and national politics should be divorced; this

¹⁶⁵ Richard L. Hall, "The Direct Primary in Nebraska" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1935), pp. 7 ff. The Court held that the provision violated freedom of speech and assembly. (State v. Junkin, 85 Neb. 4 [1909].)

¹⁶⁶ Niels H. Debel, The Direct Primary in Nebraska, Nebraska History and Political Science Series, Bulletin No. 7 (Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, 1914), pp. 50 ff.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. ¹⁶⁸ Sheldon, Nebraska, p. 915.

¹⁶⁹ McCall, op. cit., p. 82; Sheldon, History, p. 1017.

measure makes it possible for the voters to choose the best man for the office, regardless of his national party affiliation."¹⁷⁰ Despite strong political party opposition and the radical and far-reaching extent of the proposal, it received surprising support, gathering just under 42 percent of the total vote cast on the proposal. It carried in thirty-two counties, most of them the less populated ones, in losing 163,932 to 228,485.¹⁷¹

The nonpartisan efforts of Norris and Sorensen did not go completely unrewarded, however, because in 1934 the voters adopted the Unicameral legislature, and with it the provision for the nonpartisan election of its members.¹⁷²

Thus, by 1934 the partisan ballot extended only to county offices (excluding judicial and educational) on the local level and to executive offices (excluding educational) on the state level. As far as party identification on the ballot was concerned the political parties were excluded from two of the three branches of state government and were left to vie with one another only in the realm of executive branch offices.

¹⁷⁰McCall, op. cit., p. 82.

¹⁷¹Nebraska Blue Book 1924, pp. 402-403; Sheldon, History, p. 1017.

¹⁷²Olson, op. cit., pp. 315 ff.

Numerous attempts have been made to return the Legislature to a partisan basis, but legislative bills calling for submission of the question to the people have failed repeatedly,¹⁷³ and an initiative procedure by the Republican Party in 1964 failed due to judicial action involving irregularities in the signature process.¹⁷⁴ A new attempt by the Republican party was launched in 1968.

Voter Registration

Until 1963, compulsory voter registration extended only to cities over 7,000 population, and the two counties containing the Omaha and Lincoln metropolitan areas. An amendment in 1963 extended registration to counties over 30,000 population,¹⁷⁵ and in 1965 the legislature extended voter registration procedures to the entire state.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³The partisan legislature question has been introduced almost biennially since 1939, but in most cases failed to get out of committee. Recently, the proposal has made it to the floor, but each time has been soundly defeated. In the 1963 session the attempt to place the bill on General File over the Committee's objection lost 8-34. (Nebraska, Legislative Journal, Seventy-third session, 1963, p. 1285.) In the 1967 session the bill was reported out of committee but was killed on the floor 14-26 (Lincoln Star, May 4, 1967, p. 24.)

¹⁷⁴Robert F. Sittig, "Unicameralism in Nebraska 1936-1966," State Government, XL (Winter, 1967), 41.

¹⁷⁵Nebraska, Laws of Nebraska 1963, Chap. 173.

¹⁷⁶Nebraska, Legislative Journal, Seventy-fifth session, 1965, p. 2550.

The original provisions of the voter registration law date back to 1903 as amended in 1913 and were applicable to counties over 40,000 population and cities above 7,000 population.¹⁷⁷ The 1921 Legislature passed a state-wide party registration law. In a legislature dominated by the Republicans,¹⁷⁸ the bill passed the Senate 24-9 and the House 54-37.¹⁷⁹ Opposition was heavy from the rural areas, but the move was also seen as a blow against the "people" by the politicians. In recording his opposition to the measure, Representative Gilmore (Republican, Adams County) stated: "Because this bill is vicious, uncalled for, and meant to disenfranchise the rural vote, and give the politician a greater chance to control elections, I vote 'No.'"¹⁸⁰

The referendum procedure was invoked against this law and the voters negated the legislative action in the 1922 election by a vote of 106,314 to 195,066.¹⁸¹ It was

¹⁷⁷ Nebraska, Laws of Nebraska 1903, Chap. 40; Laws of Nebraska 1913, Chap. 36.

¹⁷⁸ The Senate contained no Democrats and only four of the one hundred House members were Democrats.

¹⁷⁹ Nebraska, Senate Journal, Fortieth session, 1921, pp. 1034-1035; Nebraska, House Journal, Fortieth session, 1921, pp. 1556-1557.

¹⁸⁰ Nebraska, House Journal, Fortieth session, 1921, p. 1557.

¹⁸¹ Nebraska Blue Book 1962, p. 104.

to be forty years before any revision of the registration procedure was to be made.

The Direct Primary

The first primary law in Nebraska was enacted in 1887; this, however, was an optional primary and set forth certain conditions that had to be met in its use, but did not require political organizations to use this method of candidate nomination.¹⁸² A direct primary procedure, pursuant to the 1887 law, was first used by the Republicans in three cities in 1896. Amendments to the 1887 law were passed in 1899 and 1903 to cope with some of the problems that arose in the operation of the direct primary, particularly in the area of cross-voting.¹⁸³ Agitation for compulsory direct primary laws began around the turn of the century with bills being introduced in the 1901 Legislature to establish such primaries. But in 1901 and 1903 these bills died on General File. Partial success was achieved in the 1905 legislative session where a bill passed but was limited to counties of 125,000 or more population--Douglas (Omaha) County being the only county that large.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Debel, op. cit., p. 24.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 43 ff.

The efforts of these years, however, were not in vain and both parties in their 1906 platforms were pledged to enact a state-wide compulsory primary law. It was no coincidence that this is the period when the progressive wing of the Republican Party gained dominance and ushered in a decade of feverish reform activities.

It is not surprising, then, that the 1907 Legislature enacted a mandatory direct primary law for Nebraska. The bill which passed provided for a closed primary for all elective offices, party committees, U.S. Senator, and for the direct determination of party policy on proposed constitutional amendments.¹⁸⁵

In the next few years the primary procedure was modified. Changed to an open primary in 1909, it was returned to a closed primary two years later.¹⁸⁶ In 1915 provision was made for petition candidates in the general election with the restriction that no person defeated in the primary could file for that office in the general election. In 1925 this was expanded to include any office.¹⁸⁷ Minor party activities were retarded by the 1925 Legislature which withdrew the privilege of running on two party tickets and provided that no candidate could receive a minority party nomination by write-in if he lost

¹⁸⁵Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁸⁶Hall, op. cit., pp. 7 ff.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 15 ff.

his own party nomination. Further, a party was now required to receive five percent of the total vote to be eligible for a primary ballot in the succeeding election.¹⁸⁸ After 1925, only the Progressive Party and LaFollette Independent Party in 1926 participated in the primary other than the two major parties. Neither received five percent of the vote. The Socialist Party entered the general election of 1928 but failed to gain five percent; they tried again in 1932 but once again fell short of the necessary five percent. Since 1932, only petition candidates have emerged in the general election and the two major parties have had the primaries to themselves since 1928.¹⁸⁹

Two serious assaults on the direct primary were made by the Legislature in 1919 and 1921. Both times legislative action was negated by a referendum procedure. The 1919 Legislature¹⁹⁰ passed a law which, with the exception of the Governor, put state candidate nomination back into the hands of party conventions.¹⁹¹ This partial

¹⁸⁸Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁸⁹Nebraska State Canvassing Board, Report, 1916 through 1966.

¹⁹⁰The Republicans dominated both chambers, the Senate 30-3 and House 85-15.

¹⁹¹The bill passed the House 51-41 and the Senate 18-11. (Nebraska, House Journal, Thirty-seventh session, pp. 1064-1065; Nebraska, Senate Journal, Thirty-seventh session, pp. 1228-1229.)

repeal of the primary law was defeated in a 1920 referendum 133,115 to 95,410, due largely to the efforts of the Nonpartisan League.¹⁹²

Undaunted by the voters' action, the 1921 Legislature¹⁹³ passed another primary amending law which provided for a pre-primary convention with the three candidates for state offices receiving the highest vote in the convention being put on the primary ballot.¹⁹⁴ On adoption of the bill in the House, Representative Lundy (Republican, Custer County) stated: "I am opposed to any change in present primary laws whatsoever. I believe that the present laws enable us to elect businessmen to office instead of smooth talking politicians. Therefore, I vote No."¹⁹⁵

As with the previous attempt to repeal the primary, the voters in 1922 through a referendum successfully overturned the 1921 Legislature's action, 208,261 to 95,494.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹²Sheldon, History, p. 959.

¹⁹³This was the body so overwhelmingly Republican, 33-0 in the Senate and 96-4 in the House.

¹⁹⁴The conference committee bill passed the Senate 26-1 and the House 62-32. (Nebraska, Senate Journal, Fortieth session, p. 1816; Nebraska, House Journal, Fortieth session, p. 1794.

¹⁹⁵Nebraska, House Journal, Fortieth session, p. 1794.

¹⁹⁶Nebraska Blue Book 1962, p. 104.

No further attempts were made to water down the primary law or to increase political party influence until 1943 with the passage of a pre-primary convention endorsement law.

The 1943 law permitted party conventions to meet prior to the primary election to endorse candidates with the endorsement appearing on the ballot below the candidate's name. The procedure involved successive balloting with the lowest vote being dropped from the next ballot until only two candidates remained. The winner received the top position on the ballot and the party endorsement was noted. The runner-up was entitled to second place on the ballot also with the party endorsement notation if he secured at least twenty-five percent of the convention vote.¹⁹⁷ In 1949 the percentage was raised to thirty-five.¹⁹⁸ The primary endorsement procedure was utilized in the elections of 1946, 1948, 1950, and 1952. The 1953 Legislature repealed the endorsement provision and the primary reverted back to its original form with no indication on the ballot of party endorsements.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ Nebraska, Laws of Nebraska 1943, Chap. 77, sec. 2.

¹⁹⁸ Nebraska, Laws of Nebraska 1949, Chap. 87, sec. 5.

¹⁹⁹ Nebraska, Laws of Nebraska 1953, Chap. 108.

Conclusion

The ideals of direct democracy are found in the institutional factors just examined. Nebraska is not unique in this regard though the extent to which this ideal has been incorporated into the system is not shared by many sister states. Only Minnesota has a nonpartisan legislature as does Nebraska. The degree to which the nonpartisan ballot has been adopted, successfully and otherwise, is unmatched in other governmental entities. The experience of political parties during the formative years of Nebraska's primary law, aside from the wisdom or strategy involved, could not help but further weaken them in an era when parties were less than respectable.

In the developing picture of the Nebraska environment institutional factors strengthen observations previously made concerning the essentially negative environmental factors relative to the operation and effectiveness of political parties. The institutional factors, if anything, have reinforced the picture presented by the demographic, economic, and social factors. The political culture and tradition, intimately interacting with and upon the other factors, must now be considered in rounding out the mosaic of the state's political environment.

CHAPTER V

POLITICAL CULTURE AND TRADITION:

MYTHS, MOVEMENTS AND MEN

Introduction

Perhaps one of the most pervasive arguments in the realm of political science is the relationship of ideas and actions. What causal relationships, if any, are there between ideas and behavioral patterns? But even more important, and probably the least satisfactorily answered, are questions of how one can scientifically measure ideas and their effects upon actors in the political environment. Problems of definitions provide the first hurdle, as "ideas" defy simple and exact descriptions. Nevertheless, most observers accept the existence of ideas and see them as influences on behavioral patterns, rationalizations for the latter, or a combination of both. In any case, ideas and ideological systems are accepted as important aspects of the total picture of behavioral influence. The Nebraska political culture and tradition, the ideas and belief systems, along with the individuals who have articulated and propagated them, are significant aspects in completing the mosaic of the state's environment.

There is no question that various ideological influences of the past continue to have relevance in the functioning of the state's present-day political system. Though the factors providing the stimulus may have lost much of their validity, the response in many cases remains largely unchanged. Thus, while agriculture is declining and its character drastically changing, "agrarianism" seems to be continuing with a vitality hardly diminished from a period long past. Though the rationalizations for abhorring "politicians" and partisanship have little relevance in fact today, concepts which perpetuate this abhorrence are as strong today as ever. Though George W. Norris is no longer a participant in the political process, his legacy continues to influence and pattern the political system. In short, the political culture and tradition of all the yesterdays are important for an understanding of the operation of the political process for today and probably many tomorrows.

Myths

Introduction

Myths, defined as the underlying belief system of a society, play a significant role in the political development of the United States. It is unimportant whether these myths are supported by fact or not, or reflect the real conditions--all that is important is that they are

believed to be operative in the minds of many people. Perhaps one of the most pervasive myths in the American experience, and one which has a continuing relevance today in the Middle West, is the so-called agrarian myth.

Agrarianism Defined

The agrarian myth encompasses many differing facets depending upon the particular individual, culture or period in which it is considered. But in essence agrarianism embraces the concept of an inherent correlation between democracy and the agrarian way of life; that the latter inculcates in the individual those qualities and traits which best achieve desired ends in the political realm--a well-functioning and strong democratic system.¹ This concept of farming and democracy leads to a belief in the sanctity of the yeoman as a man whose occupation puts him above other occupations because it is he, after all, who is perpetuating those virtues which strengthen and further the democratic ideal. Traits of independence, individualism, and self-reliance combine to produce "virtues" which

¹For the best exposition of the agrarian myth, see Henry Nash Smith, The American West in Symbol and Myth (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950). For other treatments of the question, see Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956); Merle Curti, The Growth of American Thought (New York: Harper and Bros., 1943); A. Whitney Griswold, Farming and Democracy (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1948); Grant McConnell, The Decline of Agrarian Democracy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953).

are to be imitated--localism, belief in the native abilities of the common man, a "common-sense" approach to problems, both public and private, and a simplistic and uncomplicated philosophical outlook.

One concept central to agrarianism is a belief in, perhaps a glorification of, private property.² The virtue of private property is a recurring theme in the long and varied expositions of agrarianism.³ Private property is a cherished virtue of Anglo-American development and its connection to democracy has been noted by more than one political theorist.⁴ "Independence in the economic aspects of life is thought to obviate the debilitating effects upon 'virtue' which dependence gives rise to, and also to provide a substantial power base from which usurpations of political authority can be thwarted."⁵

²Curti, op. cit., pp. 610 ff.

³Delos D. Hughes, "The Influence of Ideas on Political Action: The Agrarian Idea in American Politics" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1964), p. 278.

⁴Property as a stabilizing force in government goes back to Aristotle and in the more immediate Anglo-American tradition to such men as James Harrington and John Locke whose influence on the Founding Fathers has not gone unnoticed.

⁵Hughes, op. cit., p. 245.

The Pervasiveness of
Agrarianism

Agrarian ideals were by no means limited to those who pursued agriculture or to the era when the "farmer was king." The pervasiveness of agrarianism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was understandable since the majority of people during this period were farmers. But the ideal continued to hold fast in the nineteenth century as well, even as industrialization began to overtake agriculture.⁶ This was probably due in part to the rapid expansion that took place in the central United States in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the glorification of this area in railroad and speculator propaganda. There were two frontiers in American pioneer history.

One was a frontier of fact, where sweating dirt farmers toiled endlessly to triumph over nature's obstacles and the greed of their fellowmen. The other was a frontier of myth, existing only in the minds of eastern humanitarians, western promoters, and romanticists everywhere, but no less influential both at that time and since. Each of these frontiers has affected life and thought in the United States from the eighteenth century to the present; their heritage can be understood only by recognizing that the frontier which men thought to exist bore little resemblance to the frontier that actually did exist, yet was just as real in the minds of men.⁷

⁶McConnell, op. cit., p. 8.

⁷Ray A. Billington, "The Garden of the World: Fact and Fiction," in Heritage of the Middle West, ed. by John J. Murray (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), p. 27.

As long as agricultural benefits were positive, the farmer could overlook the hardships; but with bad times, occurring more frequently and with greater severity, the "king" began to ask what had happened in his kingdom. Was not he in the Garden of the World, "a West of breath-taking beauty and gentle climate, where a boundless opportunity elevated the transplanted factory worker into a prospering farmer and endowed him with virtues and morality unknown to the rest of mankind?"⁸ There was definitely something "rotten in Denmark" and the farmer sought to rectify what he viewed as an unbalanced world. This is the source of the protest movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

But the myth of the Garden of the West was not limited to the farmers for if it were it would have died with Populism. The agrarian myth traced its origin back to Thomas Jefferson and the founding of the American "democracy." Its virtues had been trumpeted throughout history and there is still a strong attraction to the imagined idyllic life of farming.

The agrarian idea, however, is not just a personal taste for farming. It is a rationalized expression of the values implied in an agricultural way of life. This, apparently, is what makes the idea potent enough to win

⁸Ibid., p. 35.

battles even when it is losing its war. A man need not be a farmer to be an agrarian, nor even like to farm. He may accept the agrarian value scheme and act on it all the same.⁹

The vitality of the agrarian myth, then, continues to the present day and its longevity is tied to its acceptance above and beyond merely those who engage in agricultural pursuits as a vocation. One author sees agrarianism deriving its strength from the existence in the United States of a large middle class. Ownership of property is stressed as a goal in middle class ideology. This property is translated into land ownership in the United States because at the time of our founding typical ownership was in land and the middle class was mainly composed of farm owners. Identifying with middle class ideals, and most Americans tend to regardless of actual class status based on socio-economic factors, is identifying with land ownership. American society, thus, holds the agrarian system as an ideal, as something to live by.¹⁰

Again, what is believed, not what is in reality, provides the key to the strength of agrarianism and an understanding of the protest movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1890, the yeoman of Thomas Jefferson had disappeared to be replaced by

⁹Hughes, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 279.

"a harassed little country businessman who worked very hard, moved all too often, gambled with his land, and made his way alone."¹¹ But the ideal, rather than the real, was the picture the farmer accepted and with the real so far removed from the ideal, the protest movements were born to bring the real back into line with the ideal.

In closing it is relevant to quote from the speech of the president of the Farmers Union, successor to the Farmers Alliance, in 1937:

To me there is nothing quite so dear as our Farm Home with wife and children and the livestock, the poultry, the trees, the garden and sweet music of the birds as they chirp and chatter in the trees while they build their homes for their babies that are to come; and farm work--well it is the noblest work known to mankind, working with Nature and Nature's God to produce the food and fiber to feed and clothe and comfort God's children.¹²

Movements

Introduction

The history of agrarian protest movements falls roughly into two main periods: (1) pre-1900 when the emphasis was on action through organized political groups outside the major two-party orbit, or the political party

¹¹Hofstadter, op. cit., p. 46.

¹²John A. Crampton, The National Farmers Union: Ideology of a Pressure Group (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), p. 42.

approach; (2) post-1900 when the emphasis was on working within the two major political parties through the device of nonpartisan organized interest groups, or the pressure group approach.

Independent political action began in the early 1870's and continued through the demise of the Populist Party in the election of 1896. Reforms were carried out after 1900 within the Progressive ideology which encompassed both major political parties. The farm groups were likewise affected and adopted pressure tactics to achieve their goals, throwing their support to Republican and/or Democrat depending upon which more enthusiastically embraced their cause. The twentieth century successors to the nineteenth century farm protest include the Farmers Union, the Nonpartisan League, the Farm Bureau Federation, the National Farmers Organization, and the Grange, which spans both periods.

The Populist Revolt

The People's Independent (Populist) Party was the culmination of twenty years of agrarian agitation.¹³ The

¹³The classic treatment of the Populist movement is John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931). Other treatments include: Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956); Eric Goldman, Handservants With Destiny (New York: Vintage Books, 1956); Murray and Susan Steadman, Discontent at the Polls (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950).

Farmers Alliances, from which the Populist Party emerged, began to be formed in the 1870's with a distinct geographical basis: the South, the Midwest, and the West.¹⁴ Sharing a common purpose, there were efforts toward merger into one large organization, but the two large groupings--the Northern and Southern Alliances--were unsuccessful in achieving a common understanding.¹⁵ Both, however, were active in the political realm, though each saw differing techniques for success--the Southern looked to capturing the Democratic Party, whereas in the Northwest, third party action was thought to hold more promise of success.¹⁶

In 1890 the Northern Alliances entered the political realm, presenting candidates in various states. The third party tickets were largely made up of Alliance men but attempts were made to broaden support by bringing in dissident Republicans and Democrats and vestiges of past reformist movements, fusing with them when such support was forthcoming.¹⁷ The next step of forming the People's Independent Party followed a number of regional, as well as rump, conventions and the party was formally founded and held its first convention in July of 1892 in Omaha, Nebraska.¹⁸ Running an independent Presidential

¹⁴Hicks, op. cit., pp. 96 ff.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 153 ff.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 205 ff.

nominee and independent candidates in most of the Populist states, the Party achieved some local successes, but the third party approach was less than satisfactory to many, particularly in the South.¹⁹

The fusion issue dominated Populist politics for the next four years, and it was fusion and William Jennings Bryan which finally buried the party in the 1896 election. The return of good times in the latter 1890's also cannot be discounted as a factor in the decline of the Populist Party.

Populist electoral success is less important than Populist programmatical success, because if they lost the battle, the Populists won the war. Reforms which the Party championed were picked up by other parties and movements and in large part were eventually enacted. The Populist program--Australian ballot, woman suffrage, direct election of Senators, direct primaries, Presidential

¹⁹With Democratic help, the Populists captured Kansas for their Presidential nominee, the entire Populist state ticket was elected along with five of the seven Congressional seats. In Nebraska, the Populists won one Congressional seat with Democratic help (in exchange for Populist help to elect a Democrat to another), and an outright fusion candidate won a third seat. The fusionist ticket swept all but one of the state offices in North Dakota, but the Republicans controlled both houses of the Legislature. The Populists held the balance of power in the Minnesota Senate, elected one Populist to Congress, but lost everything else. Fusionist state tickets won in Wyoming and Colorado. The Populists failed to break into the South. Though impressive for the first time out, the Populist Party had won few victories on its own and owed much of its success to Democratic help (Ibid., pp. 261 ff.).

preference primaries, initiative and referendum, recall, farm loan banks, postal savings system, stabilization of farm prices and purchasing of surpluses²⁰--became an accepted part of much of our political system.

But Populism was based on discontent and the analysis of this basis produced the Populist ideology which leaned heavily on the agrarian myth. The Populists accepted the "Garden of the West" theme and the nobility and "goodness" of agriculture and consequently sought to rectify what they saw as a deviation from what ought to have been. Thus, the "devils" of the play were unmasked--the monied interests, the middleman, the politician, the corporate interests²¹--and the conspiracy revealed. Indeed it had to be a conspiracy since all knew the agrarian way of life was noblest. The strong flavor of direct democracy, of returning government to the "people," of an abhorrence of the major political parties and politicians was reflected in the programmatic aspects of Populist ideology.

Thus, perhaps it is more accurate to view Populists as reactionaries rather than radicals, as a movement looking to bring back the days long gone, if ever

²⁰Steadman, op. cit., pp. 12 ff.

²¹Hofstadter, op. cit., pp. 65 ff.

existent, when agriculture was dominant and government reflected the democratic virtues best developed and perpetuated by the agrarian way of life.²²

The Progressive Mood

The demise of Populism was followed by the rise of what is called the Progressive Movement. The reformist wave which swept over the entire country in the early part of this century, as opposed to Populism which was largely restricted to the Midlands and Mountain West, was more of a mood or attitude, rather than a cohesive, identifiable political movement as Populism. In addition, reforms were carried out by the established political parties which came

²² This is by no means a universally accepted view of Populism. Norman Pollack, The Populist Response to Industrial America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962) contends that Populism was not a regressive force, but rather a progressive one and that it accepted industrialism and was not looking backward to the days of the independent yeoman. Pollack sees Populism as more radical than generally assumed and had it succeeded, "it could have fundamentally altered American society in a socialist direction." (Pp. 11-12.) Another view sees the Populists as simply ordinary businessmen who were seeking to correct injustices in the marketing and credit system and bore little resemblance to the "picture of sockless, hell-raising frontiersmen, grasping frantically at every crack-pot panacea offered them by self-styled messiahs who promised to lead the mortgage-ridden farmer out of bondage into a freer, happier land." (Benton Wilcox, "An Historical Definition of Northwestern Radicalism," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXVI [December, 1939], 377-394.) Others see Populism as but another in the long line of agricultural upheavals in bad times which focus on prices, markets, and credits. (Carl C. Taylor, The Farmer's Movement 1620-1920 [New York: American Book Co., 1953].)

under the control of progressive members, rather than through the vehicle of a third party.²³

The progressives took up the cry for reform which had been sounded by numerous groups since the early 1870's and successfully translated this into adopted programs. A vast array of changes in governmental practices were adopted throughout the country, but it was particularly west of the Mississippi that many of the "direct democracy" features found most enthusiastic acceptance.²⁴

The progressive ideology included a healthy distrust of political parties and political institutions, particularly the "politicians" who operated these institutions. Progressive reforms were intended to correct the abuses that the latter had brought into the political system. In short, the progressive ideal sought a more involved and participant democracy and incorporated institutional reforms designed to enlarge the governing elite.²⁵

²³For a general treatment of the progressive movement, see Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956); Eric Goldman, Handcuffs With Destiny (New York: Vintage Books, 1956); George E. Howry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900-1912 (New York: Harper and Bros., 1958); Arthur B. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era: 1910-1917 (New York: Harper and Bros., 1954); Russell Nye, Midwestern Progressive Politics (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1959).

²⁴G. Theodore Mitau, State and Local Government (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), p. 90.

²⁵Hofstadter argues that the progressive spirit was a response by the old urban middle class group which

Farm Organizations

Beginning with the Patrons of Husbandry (Grange) in the 1870's, farmers in the Middle West joined various organizations seeking to better the status of the farmer. After 1900, the farmer eschewed the third party approach and concentrated on interest groups which worked both sides of the political fence. The Farmers Union (founded in 1902), as the direct descendant of the Farmers Alliance, and the Farm Bureau Federation (founded in 1919), along with the established Grange, represent the main farm organizations of the twentieth century.²⁶

Other organizations, since disappeared, played a significant role in localized areas of the Middle West. The Nonpartisan League, begun in North Dakota, but enjoying support throughout the wheat-growing belt, was very active in the early decades of the twentieth century. Its socialistic orientation was utilized by the League's enemies in the "Red-scare" era of the early 1920's and the League

saw its privileged leadership position being eroded by corporate leaders and rising labor unions. This group had strong ties with the agrarian, democratic doctrines of the nineteenth century and acquired a sense of guilt in viewing the condition of the twentieth century city. (George E. Mowry, The Progressive Era 1900-1918: Recent Literature and New Ideas (Washington: American Historical Association, 1964), p. 6.)

²⁶Theodore Saloutos and John Hicks, Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West 1900-1939 (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1951), pp. 111 ff.; McConnell, op. cit., pp. 36 ff.

rapidly lost influence.²⁷ In the decade of the 1930's more radical organizations enjoyed a brief period of success, the Farm Holiday movement being perhaps the best known, and in recent times the National Farmers Organization has emerged as the most aggressive and radical group seeking to challenge the position of the Farm Bureau as the spokesman for the farmer.²⁸

Movements in the Middle West

This brief survey of protest movements and farm organizations permits a number of generalizations about midwestern politics. First, independence of political behavior is an established pattern. There has not been built up over time strong identification and loyalty to established political party structures; in fact the opposite is more prevalent, leading to rapid abandonment of party loyalties if circumstances so dictate.

The farmer found in the Grange that joint action got results--the first modification of the old pioneer individualism. The third parties disappeared, but they gave the Midwest a taste of independent politics that it did

²⁷ Robert L. Morlan, Political Prairie Fire (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), pp. 109 ff.

²⁸ Harmon Zeigler, Interest Groups in American Society (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 198. For some general treatments of the farm organizations, see Morlan, op. cit.; Crampton, op. cit.; McConnell, op. cit.

not forget. Broken once, the bonds of party loyalty might be broken more easily again.²⁹

This independence leads to a strong nonpartisan flavor of much of midwestern politics. With party loyalty very fluid, politics can easily become "partyless," particularly in the context of the anti-party ideology and programs of Populism and Progressivism which worked to erode party strength.

Second, the farmer was and continues to be essentially conservative in his outlook. Despite his supposed radicalism the farmer deviates from the status quo only when necessary and only to the extent necessary to fulfill existing needs. Specific grievances are dealt with one at a time within the existing framework of politics.

The midwestern progressive movement was sectional minded, perhaps provincial in its manner of thinking, concerned with immediate problems solved in local terms. . . . The Midwestern agrarians called in the federal government when they needed help, but not before. The Wisconsin idea of "the new individualism" did not propose a leviathan state, or constant subsidization, or consistent federal assistance. It had in mind instead the old Jefferson-frontier ideal of a self-reliant individual living in an agrarian commonwealth.³⁰

²⁹Nye, op. cit., p. 52.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 381-382.

Finally, then, the agrarian ideology is a constant thread which runs through the history of protest movements in the Middle West. The agrarian myth with its adulation of the common man, individualism, localism and distrust of bigness, professionalism, and urbanity is still a significant factor because of, rather than in spite of, Populism, Progressivism and a long history of agricultural protest.

For years they [the farmers] had been told that they were the backbone of the nation, that their calling was the most important, the most deserving, the most fundamental of all, the collapse of which would bring down the pillars of civilization itself. Of the farmers of the nation, those from the western Middle West appear to have been among the most tenacious in holding to those beliefs and among the least willing to accept a status of inferiority in our economy.³¹

Movements in Nebraska

Settlement to 1890.--Almost from the beginning of statehood, Nebraska voters have been subject to various third party movements and tickets, and though these movements generally failed to gain office, they did establish a pattern of dissent and encouraged independence from the major parties.³²

³¹Saloutos and Hicks, op. cit., p. 562.

³²For a detailed history of some of the early third party movements in the state, see Juliette Herscher, "Early Third Party Movements in Nebraska" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1931).

Beginning with the Liberal Party movement in 1872,³³ third party movements appeared at almost every election in Nebraska. The 1874 election saw the appearance of the first independent third party in Nebraska history, the People's Independent Party. The election of 1874 also saw the appearance of the Prohibition Party.³⁴ Between 1874 and 1890 other third parties appeared regularly on the ballot including the Greenback Party in 1876, 1878 and 1880; the Anti-Monopolists (with Greenback support) in 1882; the National Union in 1886 (old Greenbackers, Anti-Monopolists, and emerging Farmers Alliance advocates).³⁵ Though unsuccessful, these movements did demonstrate that a united opposition could present a serious

³³This represented the liberal Republicans who broke with President Grant and in Nebraska received support of the Democrats, the two groups uniting on candidates. Though the regular Republicans won, the Liberal-Democratic coalition garnered 29.3 percent of the presidential vote (for Horace Greeley) and 40.4 percent of the gubernatorial vote. (Addison E. Sheldon, Nebraska: The Land and the People [Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1931], pp. 466 ff.; School of Journalism, University of Nebraska, Supplement to Depth Report No. 4: Statistical Summary of One Hundred Years [Lincoln: By the Author, 1966], pp. 2, 8. Hereafter cited as Supplement.)

³⁴The People's Party won only about 11 percent of the total gubernatorial vote, and the Republican candidate won a clear majority in the four-man race, gathering 56 percent of the vote. (Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 479 ff.; School of Journalism, Supplement, p. 8.)

³⁵Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 558 ff.

threat to the dominance of the Republican Party.³⁶

Populism.--The Farmers Alliance began organizing in the state in 1880, becoming a state organization in 1887 with a constitution and by-laws and a statement of principles, among them "to labor for the education of the agricultural classes in the science of economic government in a strictly non-partisan spirit."³⁷ A newspaper was founded and by July 1890 there were over 1,500 local alliances with a membership of 50,000 distributed in every county of the state.³⁸

The state organization was reluctant to embark on an independent political course, reflecting the sentiment of the other state Alliance organizations. In Nebraska the impetus for independent political action seems to have come from below, from various county locals which were impatient and not content to wait for the Republican and Democratic leadership to come around to their point of

³⁶Herscher, op. cit., p. 107. In the election of 1882, for instance, the Republican gubernatorial candidate received 48.8 percent of the vote, the Democrat 32.0 and the Anti-Monopolist 19.2 percent, the Republican winning only a plurality of the vote. (School of Journalism, Supplement, p. 8.)

³⁷Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 671-672.

³⁸Ibid., p. 672.

view.³⁹ In Custer county, for instance, the Alliance organization put forth a slate of candidates for county office in the election of 1889 and carried on an extensive propaganda campaign to force the state leadership to enter the political realm.⁴⁰

Nebraska Alliance leaders saw the danger of the third party approach, but yet could not ignore the pressure from local organizations. The compromise was the People's Independent Party supposedly separate from the Alliance; thus, the Alliance retained its autonomy and the People's Independent Party would be able to attract liberal Republicans and Democrats, whose support was necessary if the party was to win office.⁴¹ A series of meetings of state and county officials in the spring of 1890 resulted in a declaration of principles and a call for a convention.⁴² Among the principles was a vote of no confidence in the existing political machinery. "And we hereby invite all men, without regard to past or present political affiliations,

³⁹James C. Olson, History of Nebraska (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), p. 230. Hereafter cited as History.

⁴⁰Annabel L. Beal, "The Populist Party in Custer County, Nebraska" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1965), pp. 25 ff.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 44 ff.

⁴²Olson, History, pp. 230 ff.

to join us in this, our effort for pure government, for the relief from the shackles of party politics and the domination of corporate power in our public affairs."⁴³ Within thirty days, fifteen thousand voters signed the declaration of principles and in July 1890 the first convention of the People's Independent Party was held in Lincoln.⁴⁴

For a new party, the People's Independent, or Populist, made a good showing in the 1890 election. They swept the Legislature winning 54 of the 100 seats in the House and 18 of the 33 in the Senate, though a few of these were with Democratic support. The Democrat narrowly won the Governor's seat, the first time since statehood, the Populist was second and the Republican ran third. Other state offices were retained by the Republicans, though by a very slim margin.⁴⁵ The Populists also elected one member of Congress and in fusion with the Democrats elected another. The Democrats took the third Congressional

⁴³Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 673-674.

⁴⁴Olson, History, p. 231.

⁴⁵For Governor, the Democrat Boyd received 71,331 (33.88 percent), the Populist Powers 70,187 (33.36 percent), and the Republican Richards 68,878 (32.74 percent). The other executive offices found the Republican winning with about 35 percent of the vote, the Populist second, and the Democrat a respectable third. (Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 672 ff.)

seat.⁴⁶

The year 1892 was one of fever pitch for Populist activity in Nebraska with the national convention of the People's Party in Omaha setting the stage for the first third party presidential candidate since the Civil War to win Electoral College votes. In Nebraska, a full slate of independent candidates was presented by the Populists, but in a three-cornered fight the Republicans won all state offices and improved their state legislative position over 1890 to the extent that Populist-Democratic cooperation was necessary to prevent Republican control.⁴⁷ Nebraska picked up three Congressional seats in the election, but the Populists failed to improve their position over 1890, winning only one seat outright and another with Democratic fusion.⁴⁸

The Republicans won the off-year election in 1893 and there was a great deal of sentiment for a united Populist-Democrat effort as it became evident the Republicans still held the balance of power in a three-party

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷The Senate was divided 14 Republicans, 13 Populists, and 6 Democrats, and the House 48 Republicans, 40 Populists, and 12 Democrats. The Populists and Democrats fused to organize the Legislature but the arrangement was unsatisfactory and the coalition failed to hold on a legislative program, though the Populists succeeded in getting their man elected to the U.S. Senate. (Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 723 ff.)

⁴⁸Ibid.

fight. The growing division within the Democratic Party between the Bourbons led by J. Sterling Morton and the liberal element headed by William Jennings Bryan made fusion more palatable to the Populists and liberal Democrats.⁴⁹ By 1894 Bryan controlled the Democratic machine and fusion with the Populists was accomplished. Populism disappeared as a separate entity after 1892.

In 1894, the Democrats, under Bryan's influence, endorsed the Populist slate with the exception of secretary of state, auditor and treasurer. But a three-cornered contest was not averted as gold Democrats presented a slate of their own.⁵⁰ Consequently, though the fusion candidate for Governor won, the Republicans swept the

⁴⁹In the election of 1892, Morton, leader of the Democratic party in Nebraska since 1880, was the Democratic nominee for Governor and spent much of the campaign attacking the Populist candidate. Bryan, who broke with Morton on the silver issue, was reelected to Congress while Morton went down to defeat. (Horace Merrill, Bourbon Democracy in the Middle West [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953], pp. 221 ff.) Though defeated, Morton did prevent a Populist victory. "It was, in fact, well known that the motive in Mr. Morton's campaign was to hold enough Democratic votes away from Van Wyck [the Populist] to secure election of Crouse [the Republican]. In this he was successful . . ." (Sheldon, op. cit., p. 721.) But Morton's influence, as well as that of Bourbon Democracy, was waning and the Bryan forces took control of the party in 1894. (For a fuller treatment of the Morton-Bryan controversy and a chronicle of Democracy in Nebraska in this period, see James C. Olson, J. Sterling Morton [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1942]. Hereafter cited as Morton.)

⁵⁰Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 748 ff.

other state offices and regained control of the Legislature.⁵¹

The Great Crusade of 1896 on the national scene has been well chronicled as both the height and death of Populism. In Nebraska, Populist-Democratic fusion, begun in 1894, was continued and the 1896 state ticket received silver Republican support as well. The entire fusion ticket was elected and fusion control of the Legislature was overwhelming.⁵² Fusion elements won the off-year election of 1897, and state offices in 1898, but lost control of the Legislature in that year.⁵³ Splits in the fusion ranks were evident as far back as 1896. By 1900 there was little pretense of cooperation and the Republicans swept back into office in 1900 ending the brief Populist-Democratic reign.⁵⁴

⁵¹The fusion candidate won by a plurality of 3,202 out of a total of 203,852 votes cast. The Senate included 25 Republicans and 8 Populists; the House, 72 Republicans, 22 Populists and 6 Democrats. (Ibid., pp. 754 ff.)

⁵²The House consisted of 49 Populists, 21 Democrats, 2 Silver Republicans, and 28 Republicans. In the Senate there were 17 Populists, 7 Democrats, 2 Silver Republicans, and 7 Republicans. (Sheldon, op. cit., p. 765.)

⁵³The Republicans controlled the Senate 21-12 and the House 52-48 over fusion elements. (Ibid., p. 770.)

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 777 ff.

Populist legislative accomplishments were modest--a railroad regulation bill; anti-Pinkerton bill preventing importation of armed men for police duty; Australian ballot; free school text book law; eight-hour day (agricultural workers excepted).⁵⁵ The fusionist Legislature of 1897 enacted a number of reforms: initiative and referendum; regulation of stockyards, telephone and telegraph companies; laws against grain elevator combinations; a law preventing corporations from contributing to political campaigns. Anti-railroad legislation, however, failed.⁵⁶

Populism in Nebraska is probably less significant for its legislative accomplishments than for its psychological ones. Populist successes in 1890 and 1892 no doubt strengthened the hand of the liberal Democrats in their struggle to wrest control of the party from the hands of the Bourbons. Though not as drastically, liberal elements in the Republican party were strengthened and it was not long before that party also moved to the left.⁵⁷

⁵⁵William F. Zimmerman, "Legislative History of Nebraska Populism 1890-1895" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1926); pp. 189 ff.

⁵⁶Olson, History, p. 245.

⁵⁷Reformist elements were active within the Republican party for a long time. In 1890 the protest faction of the party held a convention and passed resolutions calling for reform and breaking the corporate hold

Populism created a new mood, even fervor, for reform, and succeeded in spreading this fervor to a greater extent than previous reform movements in the state. Because of its success, Populism had a greater impact on political party development and was much more significant than previous protest groups in encouraging political independence and circumventing the political party device in the political processes of state government.

From the beginning the Farmer's Alliance had urged independent voting and the disregard of partisan prejudice in favor of actual personal ability and honesty. And though the Populist Party became a thoroughly organized and disciplined body, the influence of its

on the state Republican party. The 1890 Republican platform made concessions to the reformists and Populists in calling for the Australian ballot, reduction of railroad rates, abolishment of free passes, abolishment of discrimination by elevators and railroads in grain handling and recognition of the right of labor to organize. Republican maverick Edward Rosewater, editor of the influential Omaha Bee newspaper, had been feuding with Republican regulars since the mid-1880's. Rosewater resigned as National Committeeman in 1894 when regulars nominated Thomas Majors, a Rosewater enemy, for Governor. Rosewater evidently was helpful in getting Bryan's delegation from Omaha seated in the state Democratic convention of 1894, a step which aided Bryan in taking control of the party from Morton, and got Democratic endorsement for the Populist Holcomb increasing the chances of defeating Majors. Rosewater's Bee supported Holcomb who won a narrow victory over Majors. The election greatly increased Rosewater's position within the Republican party as well as aiding the Populist-Democratic cause (Olson, History, pp. 225, 240; Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 744 ff.). For a fuller treatment of Rosewater and the Bee's activities, see Dale J. Hart, "Edward Rosewater and the Omaha Bee in Nebraska Politics" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1938).

action was ever in favor of independent voting, for it tended to break down the loyalty to the older parties.⁵⁸

Progressivism.--Corporate, particularly railroad, interests had dominated the Republican party since statehood. Though some anti-railroad legislation had been passed in the 1890's, the action was by no means comprehensive and the railroads were still influential at the turn of the century.⁵⁹ The transformation of the Democratic party under Bryan left only the Republican party in the hands of conservatives. The character of the latter party began to change as the Rooseveltian image of the national party took shape, the old Nebraska war horses passed on, old Populists began to drift back into the party, and young leaders raised on Populist oratory sought to assume power positions within the party.⁶⁰ This, plus the spectacle of the two railroads fighting an "all or nothing" battle to get their men elected to two U.S. Senate vacancies in 1901, presaged the struggle to transform the

⁵⁸John D. Barnhart, "History of the Farmer's Alliance and People's Party in Nebraska" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1930), p. 434.

⁵⁹Olson, History, pp. 250 ff.

⁶⁰Ibid.; Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 793 ff.; Claire P. Mulvey, "Republican Party in Nebraska 1900-1916" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1934), pp. 77 ff.

Republican party to a more progressive bent. By 1905, the progressives had gained control of the Republican party and an era of feverish reformist activity began.

The Republican platform of 1906 reflected the extent of change in the party's outlook. The document called upon the railroads to pay their fair share of taxation, called for a direct primary law, election of U.S. Senator by direct vote, an anti-pass law, and a constitutional amendment providing for three Railroad Commissioners elected by the people and clothed with wide powers.⁶¹ The election of 1906 saw both parties running on programs any Populist a decade before would have wholeheartedly supported.

The next twelve years constituted the progressive period in Nebraska and most of the concrete results were accomplished by 1913. In 1907 a state-wide primary law was passed, a child labor act, an anti-free pass act and two-cent passenger fare act, a railroad employees liability act, an act creating the State Railway Commission, and a law compelling railroads to grant equal rights to all shippers. The railroad legislation represented the culmination of Populist efforts of the 1890's.⁶² The 1909

⁶¹Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 818-819.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 824-825.

Legislature, dominated by the Democrats, added its contribution: non-partisan election of judges and educational offices (later ruled unconstitutional by the state Supreme Court); a pledge law requiring candidates for the Legislature to state whether they would follow the preferential vote for the U.S. Senate; and a bank guaranty law.⁶³ The pace continued in 1911 with a number of constitutional amendments: initiative and referendum; non-partisan Board of Control to govern state institutions; and permission for cities over 5,000 to frame a charter without legislative approval. The 1911 body also enacted more railroad and stockyard regulatory legislation.⁶⁴ Though neither party controlled the 1913 Legislature,⁶⁵ the progressive measures continued nonetheless: initiative and referendum act implementing the approved constitutional amendment; protection of women workers; minimum wage; commission government for cities 5,000 and over; workman's compensation; non-partisan judiciary; and permission for county ownership of telephone facilities.⁶⁶

⁶³Ibid., p. 839.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 853-854.

⁶⁵The Republicans controlled the Senate 18-15, and the Democrats the House 56-44. Nevertheless, following the pledge law of 1909, George Norris (Republican) was unanimously elected U.S. Senator. (Ibid., p. 880.)

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 832.

The four legislative sessions provided the bulk of the contributions of Nebraska Progressivism, consolidation of these efforts following and the First World War ending the progressive era in the state as well as generally across the country.⁶⁷

Numerous other governmental reforms were nurtured in the progressive period, though they did not come into full bloom until many years later. The unicameral idea first appeared in this period. The 1913 Legislature authorized a study of legislative procedure and budgeting. The Committee, based on research done by the Legislative Reference Bureau which included data from other states,⁶⁸ made a number of recommendations, one of which was for a unicameral legislature of about 60 members. The chairman of the 1913 Joint Committee was J. N. Norton of Polk County who introduced a unicameral proposal in the Constitutional Convention of 1919-20.

In recommending a unicameral legislature, the 1914 report drew heavily upon the unicameral experience in

⁶⁷ Before bowing out, the progressive period provided, through the 1917 Legislature, for a vote on the question of a constitutional convention, nonpartisan ballot for county and state educational officials, and an optional city manager act for cities over 5,000 population. (*Ibid.*, pp. 914-915.)

⁶⁸ The director of the Bureau, founded in 1911, was Addison E. Sheldon and the research work was largely his effort.

foreign countries, particularly the Canadian provinces. The report further recommended that consideration be given to instituting a cabinet system, "enabling the people to be represented with real responsibility in the executive offices as well as in the legislature" ⁶⁹

The report further stated:

The chief reason hitherto for two houses in government has been the existence of an aristocracy of wealth or title which demanded and secured the second house as a means of perpetuating its own privileges. The growth of democracy in Nebraska and elsewhere calls for a single body of men, large enough to represent the different sections and industries of the state and small enough to transact the public business under a sense of individual responsibility, free from unwieldy numbers and the additional machinery of a second house. ⁷⁰

A unicameral proposal was introduced in the 1915 Senate but failed on final reading. ⁷¹ A similar proposal failed to even get that far in the legislative process in the 1917 House. ⁷² The proposal, however, received long

⁶⁹Addison E. Sheldon and Myrtle Keegan, Reform of Legislative Procedure and Budget in Nebraska (Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, Bulletin No. 4, May 15, 1914), p. 36.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Nebraska, Senate Journal of the Legislature of the State of Nebraska, Thirty-Fourth session, 1915, p. 417.

⁷²Nebraska, House Journal of the Legislature of the State of Nebraska, Thirty-Fifth session, 1917, p. 1404. The introducer of the proposal in the Senate was E. J. Spirk of Wilber. A businessman, Spirk identified himself with the progressive element of the Republican Party. Born in Bohemia, Spirk came to Nebraska at the age of nine,

and serious consideration in the Constitutional Convention of 1919-20 and barely failed. John N. Norton was instrumental in leading the unicameral fight in the convention debates. Much sentiment existed in the convention for a unicameral system, but procedural problems involved in submitting it as an alternative proposal played a great part in simply sidetracking the entire matter.⁷³ Norton attempted to get a resolution passed having the body go on record in favor of the question being submitted in the future, but this lost on a tie vote.⁷⁴

The progressive era in Nebraska had two important results. It created a spirit of direct democracy both in concrete governmental innovations and in general political attitudes. It brought to fruition many of the Populist programs and carried forth the spirit of political independence and individual responsibility which was part of the Populist creed.

became a successful businessman in Wilber, served two terms as Saline County Treasurer and as delegate to the 1919-20 Constitutional Convention. (Sara and Robert Baldwin (eds.), Nebraskana [Hebron, Nebr.: The Baldwin Co., 1932], p. 1124; Nebraska Blue Book 1915, p. 364.)

⁷³Nebraska, Journal of the Nebraska Constitutional Convention 1919-20, Vol. II, pp. 2123 ff.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 2792.

Farm Organizations.—The pattern of development of farm organizations in the Middle West has been reflected in Nebraska with the Grange, Farmers Union, Farm Bureau, the National Farmers Organization all representing the farmer.

The first local of the Farmers Union was formed on May 29, 1911, near Brunswick in Antelope County (northeastern part of the state). Enjoying a steady growth in this area of the state, the Union moved into other parts of Nebraska and by 1913 had 5,000 members and secured a state charter.⁷⁵ As successors to the Farmers Alliance, the Union's national founders were Populists and espoused the Populist attitude. The 1914 National Convention went on record as:

. . . unqualifiedly in favor of the Initiative, Referendum, and Recall, and all other measures, local, state and national which will place more power in the hands of the People and enable them to end corrupt boss rule and the control of government by the privileged corps.⁷⁶

In Nebraska the Farmers Union was closely associated with the progressive movement and took part in many of the reformist causes undertaken in the 1910's and 1920's. The leadership, however, was careful to avoid

⁷⁵Farmers Union, "The Farmers Union: What It Is and What It Is Doing" (unpublished manuscript in the Nebraska State Historical Society, n.d.).

⁷⁶Crompton, op. cit., p. 49.

partisan appearances and strove to present a nonpartisan image and remain aloof from partisan politics. President C. J. Osborn in a letter in 1924 to C. A. Sorensen, replying to the latter's request for permission to use Osborn's name in connection with the LaFollette campaign, said:

The Farmers Union bars Partisan-politics and for that reason it would not be possible for me to let my name be used as per your suggestion. I may be favorable toward candidates for different offices, but as long as I am connected with the Union I have to refrain from taking an active part in politics.⁷⁷

Despite its early progressive bent, the Union in Nebraska was for many years led by an individual whose conservative ideology gave the state organization an image far different from the national group.

. . . The strong Nebraska union, led for many years by Chris Milius, has long professed a conservative ideology, favoring state and local rights, reduced taxes, a balanced budget, and economy in government. It has opposed federal (and apparently state) aid to education

⁷⁷Letter, C. J. Osborn to C. A. Sorensen, August 11, 1924, Nebraska State Historical Society, Sorensen Collection. A similar situation in 1918 provides another example of the Farmers Union nonpartisan image. L. S. Herron, editor of the Nebraska Union Farmer, wrote Sorensen asking the latter to remove his name from material being used in the Morris reelection campaign. Herron had not felt this was improper, but had received objections from other members of the Union and now believed he indeed had violated the nonpartisan nature of the Union. (Letter, L. S. Herron to C. A. Sorensen, October 12, 1918, Nebraska State Historical Society, Sorensen Collection.)

and relief for unemployed and low-income groups. It has opposed farm subsidies. In the fifties it supported the Bricker amendment limiting the President's power in foreign affairs. Its attitude toward labor has been reserved when not antagonistic.⁷⁸

Though some may view the conservative stance as an aberration, it can be argued that this attitude is not inconsistent with the Populist heritage. Milius' attitudes are consistent with the interpretation of Populist ideology which sees the movement as a reactionary response to conditions of the times and a desire to bring reality into conformity with the ideals of agrarianism. Milius' ideology is then the logical expression of ideas inherent in Populism--keeping government close to the people, individualism, self-reliance, and economy.

The Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation was founded in 1917 by interested individuals at the University College of Agriculture and the Extension Service. Early officers were Extension Service men and the program formulated

⁷⁸Crompton, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-200. Milius served as President from 1941 to 1957. A member since 1916, Milius served in various local and county board positions and was a district director when narrowly elected president in 1941. His column in the Nebraska Union Farmer reflected his conservative ideology as when he wrote in the October 24, 1956, edition: "Government has its well defined functions, but isn't it a fact that there is an ever increasing danger of giving it too much power and responsibility for our economic welfare, too large a part in supplying our personal needs from the cradle to the grave."

reflected the ideas of this area of agriculture.⁷⁹ For the next couple of decades the Bureau retained this bias and its program reflected the ideas of the men at the top and membership was predicated on farmer acceptance of the Extension Service ideology.⁸⁰ Until about 1948, the Bureau survived on proceeds from affiliated services, since membership alone was inadequate to provide the funds necessary to carry the parent organization.⁸¹ At that time the decision was made to exist on membership alone and retain only those auxiliary services which paid their own way.⁸² By 1952, the Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation had increased its membership to a level sufficient to provide the funds necessary for the organization to operate in the black and only the services paying their own way were retained.⁸³ Since 1950, the Farm Bureau has

⁷⁹Floyd H. Rodine, "The Farm Bureau in Nebraska" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1952), p. 303.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹At the end of the 1930's Bureau membership had yet to reach the two thousand figure. A number of approaches were utilized in the early 1940's looking toward increased membership. (Ibid., p. 301.)

⁸²Ibid., p. 296.

⁸³At the annual convention in November 1951, 12,464 paid memberships were announced and for the first time in twenty-two years the organization ended the year with a reserve. (Ibid., p. 299.)

emerged as the largest general farm organization in the state, a position it retains to the present day.

The Farm Bureau, because of the nature of its origin and the type of farmer it came to represent, has espoused a conservative ideology and program. The state organization generally endorsed the position of the national organization on questions relating to overall agricultural policy and the federal government's role in it.⁸⁴ On the state scene the Bureau led a fight in the 1940's to broaden the tax base because it felt the two main sources of taxation in Nebraska--gas and property--fell most heavily upon the farmers. Failing to gain any success in bringing about wholesale change, the Bureau sought to lessen the farmer's tax burden by erosion. In 1941 a gas tax exemption bill was passed exempting from tax gas used in tractors, grinding mills, combines and other farm machinery.⁸⁵ In addition the Bureau consistently opposed any moves toward raising the gas tax or diverting gas tax revenue to other than highway construction and maintenance purposes. In 1950 the Bureau, in league with other groups, successfully negated the 1949 Legislature's action in increasing the gas tax and

⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 168 ff.

⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 205 ff.

license fees.⁸⁶

The Farm Bureau also advocated state aid to education but tied this to its stand on broadening the tax base. State aid, however, was acceptable only on a basis which provided sufficiently for the interest of rural schools and thus a per pupil allocation plan was unacceptable, particularly in the context of the existing tax base.⁸⁷ The Farm Bureau was anti-labor and was a strong advocate of the 1946 constitutional amendment providing for a "right to work" law in the state.⁸⁸

The Farm Bureau in Nebraska appealed to a distinct class of farmer and did not enjoy organizing success among the state's farmers until after World War II. By this time the character of agriculture had vastly changed and those who remained in agriculture were to a large extent oriented more toward the scientific-business approach to agriculture than the family farm enterprise which was dominant prior to the Depression and World War II. With the commercialization of agriculture, the Farm Bureau was able to thrive and its membership rolls grew. Its

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 233 ff. The Farm Bureau secured just over 12,000 of the total 43,865 signatures which were needed to put the referendum on the ballot. The other principal organizations were the Nebraska Motor Carriers (10,671 signatures), and the Petroleum Industries (8,583 signatures). (Ibid., p. 235.)

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 258 ff.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 275 ff.

legislative program, both nationally and statewide, sought to improve the economic position of the farmer and thus thrust it to the forefront in the fight for a broadened tax base, one of the most potent political issues in Nebraska since the early 1930's.

What of the more radical movements that swept the Midwest in the first third of this century? The Nonpartisan League, which found its greatest acceptance in North Dakota in the early 1920's, and the Farmer Holiday Movement, which enjoyed a brief influence in the early 1930's, both touched Nebraska. But the impact of each in the state was minimal and brief.⁸⁹ The Nonpartisan League had a longer and more lasting influence, but the fever of World War I cut short what promising future the League may have had in the state.⁹⁰

⁸⁹For a fuller treatment of the Nonpartisan League, see Olson, History, pp. 274-276; Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 931 ff.; Elmo B. Phillips, "The Non-Partisan League in Nebraska" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1931); Robert N. Manley, "The Nebraska State Council of Defense and the Non-Partisan League 1917-18," Nebraska History, XLIII (December, 1962), 229-252; Non-Partisan League Collection, Scrapbooks and other material, Nebraska State Historical Society. For the Holiday Movement, see John L. Shover, "The Farm Holiday Movement in Nebraska," Nebraska History, XLIII (March, 1962), 53-78.

⁹⁰The Nonpartisan League remained active in the political sphere in the early 1920's endorsing candidates and pushing various legislative reforms in cooperation with other groups. The League, according to Sheldon, played a vital role in defeating legislative acts through referenda in 1920-1922 seeking to repeal part of the primary law and requiring statewide registration of

The National Farmers Organization (N.F.O.) was founded in 1955 by a group of Iowa farmers and the movement spread throughout the Midwest Cornbelt. The N.F.O. looks to bettering farm prices through organization and collective bargaining with processors. To accomplish the latter, a number of withholding actions have taken place, the logic being to hold back products until processors agree to enter into contracts providing for satisfactory prices.⁹¹

The first serious withholding action in Nebraska took place in the fall of 1962 and marked the first

voters. (Sheldon, *op. cit.*, p. 936.) Active work by the League ceased in 1922, but League influence continued in many ways. The League newspaper in 1921 merged with one under the management of C. A. Sorensen who continued to be influential through the 1930's, leading the anti-party label initiative drive of 1924 (*Supra*, p. 129). Sorensen was closely allied with Senator Morris in both the 1924 endeavor and the 1934 Unicameral drive. Harry M. Lux, state manager of the Nonpartisan League, was active in the Farmer Holiday Movement in 1932 in Nebraska serving as state organizer of the Communist-supported Madison County Farmer Holiday. Lux was involved in a court case involving prosecution for inciting to riot stemming from a Holiday attempt to prevent a foreclosure sale in Wilber. (John L. Shover, *Cornbelt Rebellion* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965], pp. 115-116.) The radical left continued to agitate but made little progress among the Nebraska farmers. A small "riot" in Loup City in 1934 during a rally addressed by the Communist Mother Bloor was the most celebrated incident in this modern era of Nebraska radicalism. (William D. Rowley, "The Loup City Riot of 1934: Main Street vs. the 'Far-Out' Left," *Nebraska History*, LVII [September, 1966], 295-327.)

⁹¹ Julius Dascha, "Farmers on Strike," *Reporter*, XIVII (November 22, 1962), 32-35.

occasion of farmer violence since the Farmer Holiday Movement. The 1963 Legislature, behind the impetus of the older farm organizations, passed a law making it unlawful for any person or group to interfere with the flow of farm products to market or farm supplies to farms.⁹² The year 1963 was a trying time for the Nebraska N.F.O. as it went through three presidents. The holding action of 1962 evidently created some policy differences between the Nebraska leaders and the national leadership.⁹³ Membership figures are not revealed and thus it is difficult to estimate N.F.O. support. Made up largely of small and medium-size farmers and concentrated largely in eastern Nebraska, the state membership in 1963 was probably no more than 5,000.⁹⁴

⁹²Lincoln Star, July 19, 1963, clipping in Brandsberg Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society.

⁹³The president during the withholding action resigned shortly afterwards because he did not favor such activities and felt that many Nebraskans agreed with him. (Omaha World-Herald, December 18, 1962, clipping in Brandsberg Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society.)

⁹⁴At the 1962 national convention each state was allotted one delegate for every twenty-five members. In the balloting for president, Nebraska cast 213 votes. Assuming each vote represented the full 25 members, the Nebraska N.F.O. strength would have been 5,325. (Des Moines Register, December 14, 1962, clipping in Brandsberg Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society.)

Conclusion.--The thread of nonpartisanship runs throughout the history of the Populist and Progressive era, and in the character of the various farm organizations. If nonpartisanship is perhaps too strong, it cannot be doubted that these movements encouraged independence from party direction in political activities. Populism and Progressivism eroded party loyalty and the twentieth century farm organizations, as pressure groups, eschewed party identification lest it retard achievement of their ultimate goals.

Men

Introduction

To recount all the individuals who have had an impact on the political system would be an impossible task. All that can be done is to focus on those key individuals who have played a vital role. The choice is subjective to be sure, and in the context of this study could well lead to "stacking the deck" by considering only those individuals whose ideology reflected an anti-party bias, failing to balance the picture with the pro-party actors whose influence on the political system is not without effect. This is compounded in choosing the founders of the nonpartisan Unicameral legislature as the actors upon which to focus. Nevertheless, the adoption of the Unicameral, coming when it did in the political

development of the state, was perhaps the crowning blow against parties and constituted the greatest success of the anti-party movement. The individuals connected with this event thus merit examination.

Were these individuals men who but appeared just before and disappeared soon after the 1934 election, one would be justified in dismissing their influence beyond this one event. But these individuals were present long before and for a time after the birth of the Unicameral, and their influence was a long and continuing one spanning a number of decades. The Unicameral represented the culmination of many years of effort by men who had been actors in the political system for many years and whose contributions were many. But the ideological biases which were operative in the Unicameral fight were present and operative as well in the other activities of these actors who influenced the system over a long period of time. The more than fleeting influence of these men cannot be doubted, and no man exerted a less fleeting influence than George W. Norris.

George W. Norris (1861-1944)

The achievements of George W. Norris are legion and his record of accomplishments is well-known. His contributions to American democracy have been matched by few men who have served in the United States Congress.

Yet Norris was a man of his times and environment and he, perhaps better than anyone else, epitomized the Populist-Progressive anti-party spirit. Norris had little use for political parties and all that they entailed. He prided himself on being an independent though it was only late in his career that he formally became one, having always been, nominally at least, a Republican.

Norris embarked on his political career in 1890 seeking the post of prosecuting attorney of Furnas County (south-central Nebraska). As a Republican he was buried in the Populist landslide of that year but came back two years later to win that post. Elected district judge in 1895, Norris served two terms dispensing justice, always mindful that frontier conditions necessitated modifying existing legal principles.⁹⁵ Though Norris remained a Republican, his utterances as well as actions were sympathetic to the Populist cause and brought him the support which enabled him to retain office in the face of strong Populist strength.⁹⁶ In these early battles, Norris had to go it alone, the Republican party being at first too

⁹⁵Norman L. Zucker, George W. Norris: Gentle Knight of American Democracy (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), pp. 2 ff.

⁹⁶Richard Lowitt, "Populism and Politics: The Start of George W. Norris' Political Career," Nebraska History, XLII (June, 1961), 76.

disorganized to render much assistance, and later reluctant to do so because of Norris' increasingly progressive position.

This factor, of course, helped to increase his sense of isolation and realization that in politics he almost always had to go it alone. These traits were evident by the end of his first important campaign. They would become possibly more pronounced. They were more widely observed in future years.⁹⁷

In 1902 Norris was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Nebraska's Fifth Congressional District, defeating a Democrat-Populist-supported candidate. Ten years later Norris moved up to U.S. Senator and represented Nebraska in that capacity for the next thirty years.⁹⁸

Almost from the beginning of his Congressional career, Norris lashed out at what became his two favorite topics--partisanship and patronage. As time passed, it became a crusade and Norris was the knight called upon to slay the dragon of partisanship. His break with the Republican party machine came in 1908 when he first challenged the position of House Speaker Cannon. Now he charted the independent course which was to characterize the balance of his political career.⁹⁹

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 94. ⁹⁸Zucker, op. cit., pp. 4 ff.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 5.

After 1910, there was no doubt about Norris' attitude toward partisanship. Again and again he repeated the theme of the evils of party and sought reforms which would mitigate the power of political parties. In 1913 at a meeting of the National Popular Government League,¹⁰⁰ he said:

As contradictory as it may seem, the country needs a nonpartisan party that shall advocate freedom of thought, freedom of action, both in the citizen and in the public official; a public sentiment that shall demand of every citizen and of every official a service of country rather than of party; a sentiment that shall applaud rather than condemn any citizen who shall oppose his party whenever in his own heart he believes such action best for good government and the advancement of humanity and civilization.¹⁰¹

Norris' position is perhaps best revealed in a letter sent to C. A. Sorensen in reply to the latter's request for a campaign platform for Norris' 1924 reelection bid.

I have believed and still believe and have always voted for a greater democracy, the primary, the referendum, the recall. I wanted to place the Government more directly in the hands of the people who are governed. . . .

I think one of the greatest evils of Government is partisanship. That is the thing

¹⁰⁰This was the successor of the National Progressive Republican League founded by Senator Robert LaFollette of Wisconsin in 1911 as a counter to President Taft's policies. Norris served as a vice-president of the organization. (Ibid., p. 8.)

¹⁰¹Alfred Lief, Democracy's Norris (New York: Stackpole and Sons, 1939), p. 146.

I had in mind to try to bring about when I announced that I would not be a candidate for reelection. It ought to be a business institution. No man ought to be put in a clerical position or put out of a clerical position on the grounds of his politics. If he performs his official duty faithfully he ought to be retained. If he is simply a politician he ought to be put out, no matter to what party he belongs. I believe we could abolish more than half of the offices in the State of Nebraska. No man deserves an office simply because he has taken an active part in somebody's behalf. He ought to be given an office on the strength of his qualifications for the office and for no other reason.¹⁰²

In a letter following his renomination in the primary, Norris thanked C. A. Sorensen for his efforts on Norris' behalf and remarked on partisanship:

. . . If I had my way about it, I would abolish the party circle and make it impossible to thus vote a straight ticket. I would elect every office in the state on a nonpartisan ballot, and I would be perfectly willing to have the same rule applied to candidates for Congress, although I presume the party virus is so firmly established in the hearts of many of our people that it would be impossible at this time to carry the reform that far. I would like to abolish party responsibility and in its stead establish personal responsibility.¹⁰³

In a letter to Warren Fisher of the Progressive League in 1925, Norris stated:

I expect to work in the future, as I have in the past, for those things that I believe

¹⁰²James A. Stone (ed.), "The Norris Program in 1924," Nebraska History, III (June, 1961), 134, 136-137.

¹⁰³Letter, G. W. Norris to C. A. Sorensen, April 20, 1924, Nebraska State Historical Society, Sorensen Collection.

to be right, and I will support them regardless of whether they originate with Democrats, Republicans, Progressives, or men bearing any other party label. I have seen so much evil come to the Government and to the people because of the blind adherence to party and to party leadership, and the foolishness of "standing by the party" regardless of what it represents or who leads it, that I have reached the conclusion we ought to eliminate party wherever we can; and I have advocated, for instance, in State matters, the election of everybody in the State, from Governor down, on a nonpartisan ballot. If I had my way, I would extend that idea to members of the House and Senate in the National Legislature.¹⁰⁴

Norris' passionate belief in nonpartisanship resulted in incorporation into the unicameral provision in 1934 the provision for the election of members of the legislature without party labels. The nonpartisan feature of the Unicameral was one aspect on which Norris refused to compromise despite the efforts of others involved in the drive to retain the partisan aspect. They tried to convince Norris that the effort would be difficult enough and adding nonpartisanship to the one-house idea would only strengthen the opposition.¹⁰⁵ In fact, Norris

¹⁰⁴ Richard L. Neuberger and Stephen B. Kahn, Integrity: The Life of George W. Norris (New York: Vanguard Press, 1957), pp. 163-164. Norris in 1924 supported C. A. Sorensen and the Nonpartisan League in their initiative drive to abolish party labels for all state offices. The move failed to pass, though 42 percent of the electorate accepted the initiative proposition demonstrating the influence of Norris and the strength of the nonpartisan spirit. (Supra, p. 129.)

¹⁰⁵ Adam C. Breckenridge, One House For Two (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1957), p. 8.

refused to trade nonpartisanship for the active support of the Democratic party.

I answered [Arthur F. Mullen, Democratic head in Nebraska] with equal frankness, although with much regret, that I would not surrender the nonpartisan election feature, that I saw no reason why election to the legislature should be on a partisan basis and was going to continue to fight for a nonpartisan unicameral legislature, win or lose.¹⁰⁶

Despite objections from many quarters, Morris succeeded in retaining the nonpartisan feature and was convinced that in the campaign this would prove to be a strong asset rather than the liability supposed by many.

But I insisted strenuously that the nonpartisan feature be retained, expressing the opinion to the [organizing] committee that when the campaign got under way the nonpartisan feature would present one of the strongest appeals of the proposed amendment.¹⁰⁷

During the 1934 Unicameral campaign, Morris did indeed return again and again to the nonpartisan feature in his stumping over the state urging a "yes" vote on the initiative question. The October 24, 1934 Beatrice Daily Sun reported:

Touching upon partisanship, Senator Morris said that "after 30 years in politics during which I have always had my cards right side up

¹⁰⁶George Morris, Fighting Liberal (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1947), p. 348.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 346.

on the table, I have come to the conclusion that the greatest evil today is the party spirit."¹⁰⁸

The previous day the Lincoln Star reported Norris' views:

I stand before you as a living example of a man who has never bent the knee to a boss of any party, and I tell you now that everything of value to the people that I ever accomplished was put across in the face of determined opposition from the machines of both parties.¹⁰⁹

Few doubt that Norris' efforts were significant in the favorable vote on the Unicameral. Certainly the nonpartisan feature must be credited to Norris. Beyond that, it can be said that his tireless effort in stumping the state was a vital factor in the actual outcome and perhaps even the determinative factor.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸Phillips K. Tompkins, "George W. Norris Persuasion in the Campaign for the Unicameral Legislature" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1957), p. 56.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 67. The ethical argument was one of Morris' strongest appeals as he made the unicameral a personal issue between himself and the citizens of Nebraska. (Ibid., p. 73.) Tompkins concludes that Morris utilized a more vigorous, emotional delivery to his constituents compared to his Senate colleagues, where a more conventional and unemotional delivery was used. (Ibid., p. 24.)

¹¹⁰The measure failed to carry in only nine counties, and in six of these Morris had failed to make an appearance on behalf of the Unicameral. Two other measures also received favorable approval in the 1934 election--repeal of prohibition and pari-mutuel betting--and it is difficult to determine if a coattail effect was operative and if so, which proposition was helped. The repeal of prohibition won the strongest approval, the Unicameral placed second, and pari-mutuel betting "showed."

In retrospect one can carp at Norris for failing to recognize that the way to viable political power is through the medium of political parties. Much as Hoover was inhibited in combatting the Depression by his deep-seated convictions and neutral (as opposed to vigorous) view of the Presidency, so too, Norris was inhibited, by another set of predilections, from implementing his liberal views. George Norris' failure to properly appreciate and understand the role and value of a democratically organized and oriented political party, along with his oversimplification and uncritical interpretation of domestic and foreign affairs, were his greatest intellectual liabilities.^{l11}

To criticize Norris' lack of appreciation of parties is merely to say that he was a man of his times and environment. The Populist-Progressive ideal, which he perhaps articulated most passionately and unswervingly, could not accept parties because they stood in the way of "government by the people," the ultimate goal which progressives saw as the answer to perfecting the political and social system. If it were perhaps an answer at that period in time, it was not the answer. Norris, as most progressives, however, accepted it as the answer.

^{l11}Zucker, op. cit., p. 160.

Christian A. Sorensen
(1890-1959)¹¹²

C. A. Sorensen matured during the height of the progressive era and even before his graduation from the University of Nebraska Law School in 1916 was engaged in feverish political activities.¹¹³ Though he served as state Attorney General for four years and ran unsuccessfully for Governor and Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court, Sorensen was more the man behind the scenes--the organizer, the manager, the petition circulator for various causes and candidates.

Sorensen was born of Danish parentage in Harrisburg (extreme western Nebraska), March 24, 1890. He received his B.A. and LL.B. degrees from the University of Nebraska. From 1915 to 1917 he served as secretary of the Nebraska Popular Government League¹¹⁴ and concurrently

¹¹²This section is based largely on material in the C. A. Sorensen collection on file in the Nebraska State Historical Society. The collection contains a wealth of information on state and national politics, particularly the period 1918-1936.

¹¹³While in law school, Sorensen and others were circulating petitions on behalf of political candidates. (Petitions, Nebraska State Historical Society, Sorensen Collection.)

¹¹⁴This group was leading the move for the calling of a constitutional convention and was in the process of circulating petitions to get the question on the ballot when the 1917 Legislature approved submitting the question. (Nebraska, Journal of the Nebraska Constitutional Convention, Vol. I, p. vii.)

as Assistant Director of the Nebraska Reference Bureau. Sorensen served as Secretary of the League of Nebraska Municipalities and editor of the Nebraska Municipal Review from 1917-1919.¹¹⁵

Independence in political matters was a characteristic of Sorensen. In 1917 he became attorney for the Nonpartisan League and his association with the movement continued through its demise. More than just the League's legal counsel, Sorensen was active in the League's program.¹¹⁶ This association, along with that of the Popular Government League, put Sorensen squarely in the center of a group of progressives who led numerous campaigns in the next decade.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵Sorensen remained interested throughout his career in municipal problems and as Attorney General in 1930 led the move to initiate a law approving the legal status of municipally owned utility plants and authorizing them to issue revenue bonds. This measure is the only successfully initiated statute on the books. (Judson King, "Nebraska, the Public Power State," Public Utilities Fortnightly, XXXIX [April 10, 1947], p. 483; Nebraska Blue Book 1966, p. 107.)

¹¹⁶Sorensen's early association with reformist-progressive movements led to his being solicited by probably every national reformist group that organized in this period. Sorensen rarely failed to support them financially in some small way. Thus, one finds him contributing to Morris Hillquit's campaign for Mayor of New York in 1917, furnishing information and names of possible supporters within the state for numerous causes, serving as temporary secretary for the Committee of Forty-Eight in 1919, a group of progressives, mostly intellectuals, who were seeking to form a new, independent national political party.

¹¹⁷Throughout the various referendum and initiative

Many times Sorensen had more than one political iron in the fire at a time. For instance, in 1920 he was campaign manager for the gubernatorial bid of Independent Arthur Wray,¹¹⁸ while at the same time leading the petition campaign to refer a legislative measure which partially repealed the primary. In 1923-24 he was busy circulating petitions for Morris' reelection, leading a move to initiate a constitutional amendment making all state and local offices nonpartisan and another to establish a one-house legislature, all the while serving as counsel for the Nebraska Conference for Progressive Political Action,¹¹⁹ and also advising and helping the

campaigns, the Morris campaigns of 1924, 1930, and 1936, the LaPollette bid of 1924, and many others, the same core of leaders emerged, not the least of whom was C. A. Sorensen.

¹¹⁸Wray, a Roosevelt Republican who failed to return to the fold after 1912, made an impressive showing as the Independent Progressive candidate in the conservative landslide of 1920 garnering about 24 percent of the vote in a three-man race (the Republican won with 41 percent and the Democratic nominee captured 35 percent). (Nebraska Blue Book 1920, p. 522.)

¹¹⁹This was a coalition of the Legislative Committee of the Nebraska Farmers Union, the Railroad Brotherhoods, and individual progressives who endorsed various candidates across party lines, seeking thus to maximize the political effectiveness of the progressive groups. (Poll card of the Independent Progressive Slate, Nebraska State Historical Society, Sorensen Collection.)

LaFollette people in the state.¹²⁰ As a sidelight, Sorensen was doing what he could to help the bid of his progressive Democratic friend J. W. Norton who was running for Governor in 1924.¹²¹

Sorensen's party attitudes reveal an ambivalence that is perhaps inherent in the progressive creed. On the one hand, Sorensen fought to eliminate the party label in state and local offices, seeing this as a step in facilitating government reforms. "Once remove these offices from partisan control and I feel confident that the people will be much more ready to look with favor on a thorough-going re-organization."¹²² Yet Sorensen consistently counseled against the third party approach and sought to

¹²⁰Sorensen played a fairly active role in the organizational aspects of the LaFollette campaign in Nebraska and seemed particularly influential in convincing the national group to limit the Progressive party slate in Nebraska to LaFollette and Wheeler. Sorensen saw a complete slate as merely taking away votes from progressive Republicans and Democrats running, especially J. W. Norton, to the benefit of the conservative candidates. (Letter, C. A. Sorensen to Donald Richberg, August 1, 1924, Nebraska State Historical Society, Sorensen Collection.)

¹²¹Though a Democrat, Norton was looked upon as a political brother. "For ten years Norton has worked with us in the fight for progressive thinking in Nebraska and there is not a hair's breadth of difference between his notions of public questions and that of the great bulk of us who call ourselves Morris and LaFollette republicans." (Letter, C. A. Sorensen to Donald Richberg, August 1, 1924, Nebraska State Historical Society, Sorensen Collection.)

¹²²Letter, C. A. Sorensen to George W. Morris, June 2, 1923, Nebraska State Historical Society, Sorensen Collection.

work through the existing parties (for Sorensen this meant the Republican party). He saw capturing the major parties as the road to success; while recognizing this he really had no appreciation for grass-roots organization nor the patience necessary to achieve this control. In fact, most of his efforts broke down party cohesion. The nonpartisan approach, a carry-over of the Nonpartisan League, is an effective interest group technique, but hardly conducive to building an organization seeking to govern on a continuing basis--a political party.

I am most certainly convinced that the Independent Progressive Committee should continue its work, but my ideal for it is that it shall be nonpartisan, that it shall have charge of the referendum and initiative movements, and that in the matter of electing public officers it shall be in a position to swing its forces as strategy dictates.¹²³

Thus, while Sorensen probably had a greater appreciation of parties than Morris, he failed to follow through on the logical consequences, and instead looked to some sort of an inter-party, or extra-party, mechanism to achieve the progressive objectives. In the final analysis, he did feel that the situation would be much improved if the party in elections, certainly on the state level, could be eliminated. Failing this, he saw the technique

¹²³Letter, C. A. Sorensen to Arthur Wray, September 9, 1921, Nebraska State Historical Society, Sorensen Collection.

of "balance of power" as the road to influencing the direction of political decision making.

John N. Norton (1878-1960)

A progressive Democrat, Norton served in various state and national legislative offices during the first three decades of this century. Born on a Nebraska homestead of Swedish parents, Norton was educated in Polk county (east-central Nebraska) schools, attended Nebraska Wesleyan and received his B.A. from the University of Nebraska in 1903.¹²⁴ After having served as Mayor of Osceola in 1908-09, Norton moved to the state House of Representatives in 1911, serving four terms during which he was leader and speaker pro tempore.

Norton was chairman of the legislative study committee authorized by the 1913 session to study legislative procedure. The committee report was largely enacted into law in 1915 behind Norton's leadership.¹²⁵

Advocates of a constitutional convention found a strong supporter in Norton. Allied with a group preparing

¹²⁴ Sara and Robert Baldwin, op. cit., pp. 889-890.

¹²⁵ The report, largely the work of A. E. Sheldon, director of the Legislative Reference Bureau, is noteworthy because of its recommendation of a unicameral legislature. Norton was a unicameral advocate from this time and was influential in keeping the issue before the electorate in years following. (Supra, p. 169.)

to submit the question via the initiative route, Norton sponsored the bill in the 1917 Legislature calling for submission of the question to the people. The bill passed and Norton was associated with the successor of the initiative organization, the Nebraska Constitutional Committee which sought to work for the nomination and election of progressives as delegates.¹²⁶

Norton was a prominent member of the 1919-20 Constitutional Convention serving as chairman of the important legislative department.¹²⁷ The unicameral idea, born in the 1913 legislative study committee report chaired by Norton, was championed by the progressive Democrat in the Convention, but failed to be accepted.¹²⁸ The World War had brought the progressive wave to an abrupt halt and the delegates were not prepared to submit so wide-sweeping a reform to the voters at this time. But the move served to keep the issue before the electorate.

Though a Democrat, Norton was supported by many progressive Republicans in his bid for Governor in 1924.

¹²⁶The group was a coalition of four farm groups, the state labor organization, and progressive Republicans and Democrats. Norton, C. A. Sorensen, and A. E. Sheldon served on the executive committee of the group. (Nebraska Outlook, Vol. 1, No. 1, May 20, 1919.)

¹²⁷Nebraska, Journal of the Nebraska Constitutional Convention, Vol. II, p. 2959.

¹²⁸Supra, p. 170.

Norton was also a warm supporter of Sorensen's 1924 anti-party circle initiative and had circulated a petition on its behalf.¹²⁹ Though unsuccessful in his gubernatorial bid, Norton was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives two years later and served in the 1927-29 and 1931-33 sessions.¹³⁰

Norton was not a party man, true to progressive ideals, and though he was a Democrat, this was a nominal party identification much the same as Norris' and Sorensen's Republicanism. Sorensen wrote of him:

Norton is a democrat and will render lip service to the Democratic ticket, but we all understand that; . . . He was at one time president of the Farm Bureau Federation and as president liberalized in this state their policy. Norton has been for years a leader in the Farmers Union and was the Nonpartisan League candidate for the constitutional convention and was the spokesman for the progressives in the constitutional convention.¹³¹

The Unicameral movement of 1934 found Norton a leading participant though the public limelight focused on Norris. Norton, whose association with the unicameral idea dates from 1913, worked for its passage and upon its

¹²⁹Letter, C. A. Sorensen to D. Rees, October 16, 1924, Nebraska State Historical Society, Sorensen Collection; The New State, August, 1924, p. 4.

¹³⁰Baldwin, op. cit., pp. 889-890.

¹³¹Letter, C. A. Sorensen to Donald Richberg, August 1, 1924, Nebraska State Historical Society, Sorensen Collection.

acceptance resigned from a position with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to seek a seat in the new body. Norton served in the first session in 1937.¹³²

In 1939 Norton returned to Washington and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He retired to his farm near Polk, Nebraska in 1948, where he remained until his death in 1960.¹³³

John P. Senning (1884-1954)

If anyone can be credited with being the theorist behind unicameralism, it must be John P. Senning, for many years professor of political science at the University of Nebraska. No one has written so much about, or followed so closely, the evolution of unicameral legislation in Nebraska.

¹³²Norton succeeded in getting a bill passed providing for a short ballot with only the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Auditor elected, with other officials appointive. (Nebraska, Legislative Journal of the State of Nebraska, Fifty-Second session, 1937, p. 1603.) The measure, however, failed to receive electorate approval. (Nebraska Blue Book 1938, pp. 537-538.) Norton also sponsored the bill providing for the creation of the Legislative Council. The bill provided the basis for establishing the Council as the research and study arm of the Legislature as well as authority for committee studies to be undertaken while the Legislature was not in session. (Session Laws 1937, Chap. 118, pp. 421 ff.)

¹³³Upon his retirement the Secretary of Agriculture named him a collaborator, an honorary designation with life tenure. (Mrs. Lloyd Hahn, "John Norton: Organizer, Farm Leader, Legislator, Administrator," Nebraska Agriculture, XXIV [December, 1954], p. 13.)

Born in Germany in 1884, Senning came to the United States in 1892. Receiving his B.A. degree from Western Union (now Westmar) College in Iowa in 1908, he came to the University of Nebraska Political Science Department in 1916 following brief teaching stints at Connecticut Wesleyan University and Illinois College. In 1924 he earned his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois.¹³⁴

The 1919 Legislature, following the voters' approval of a constitutional convention, passed a law giving the state Supreme Court the power to appoint an investigative committee to survey Nebraska government and lay the groundwork for the delegates who were to meet later in the year. The five-man committee included John P. Senning¹³⁵ and it provided the Convention with a wealth of information on practices in other states, comparisons of constitutional provisions, and other pertinent data.¹³⁶

¹³⁴Baldwin, op. cit., p. 1075.

¹³⁵Other members were: Victor Rosewater, editor of the Omaha Bee; Ashton Shallenberger, former Governor; Charles E. Sandall, state senator; and, J. H. Broady of the University of Nebraska Law College. (Clipping, n.d., Nebraska State Historical Society, Senning Collection.)

¹³⁶Nebraska, Journal of the Nebraska Constitutional Convention 1919-20, Vol. I, pp. 13 ff.

Senning served on the committee which drafted the 1934 constitutional amendment for the unicameral,¹³⁷ and was by far the most prolific writer on the merits of unicameralism versus bicameralism.¹³⁸ The committee's attitude toward the nonpartisan election of the unicameral members was negative as they felt this would make passage more difficult. But they bowed to Norris' adamant stand on preserving the nonpartisan feature.¹³⁹

Thus, the committee opposed nonpartisanship more from political expediency rather than strong convictions on the assets of a party system. There is no evidence to indicate Senning felt a party structure was beneficial on the state level; his writing at the time indicates approval and general satisfaction with nonpartisanship.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷Other members included L. E. Aylsworth and Lane Lancaster of the University Political Science Department, A. E. Sheldon, C. A. Sorensen, Clarence G. Miles, Hugh Lanaster, F. C. Radke, Fred Hanxby, and Cloyd L. Stewart. The last two, according to Sorensen, did not take part in any of the meetings of the committee. (Letter, C. A. Sorensen to G. W. Norris, March 7, 1934, Nebraska State Historical Society, Senning Collection.)

¹³⁸He was the author of The One-House Legislature (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1937), which provides an excellent chronology of the adoption of unicameralism in Nebraska.

¹³⁹Minutes of the meeting of January 18, 1934 report: "All present agreed that non-partisanship is a thing to be worked for but believe that its inclusion in the amendment would lose much support for it." (Memorandum of meeting at Cornhusker Hotel, January 18, 1934, Nebraska State Historical Society, Senning Collection.)

¹⁴⁰Appearing before a legislative committee in 1951 considering a bill for a partisan legislature,

This innovation [nonpartisan election] is not as striking as it appears because Nebraska voters have not been accustomed to take their party adherence seriously, nor have party ties in recent years had a conspicuous influence in legislative procedure.¹⁴¹

. . . The nonpartisan feature has given a better-balanced representation in the legislature. The attention of the voter is focused on the member instead of on the member's party affiliation. This has made for a uniformly better personnel, and has freed members from party subserviency and from executive control. Members are able to concentrate attention on the merits and demerits of proposed legislation.¹⁴²

Despite his apparent approval of the nonpartisan feature, Senning was concerned in early 1936 over the caliber and numbers of individuals filing for the Legislature. This concern was expressed privately in a number of letters to prospective candidates,¹⁴³ and publicly in the form of a proposal suggesting a nonpartisan "pre-primary" district convention to nominate candidates and perhaps

Senning was quoted as saying: "I was the last member who opposed the non-partisan feature. . . . I had to convert myself to the non-partisan viewpoint." (Lincoln Star, March 1, 1951, clipping, Nebraska State Historical Society, Senning Collection.)

¹⁴¹ John P. Senning, "The One-House Legislature in Nebraska," Nebraska Law Bulletin, February, 1935, n.p. (Reprint, Nebraska State Historical Society, Senning Collection.)

¹⁴² John P. Senning, "Pro--Should the States Adopt the Unicameral System of Legislation," Congressional Digest, XVI (August-September, 1937), 214.

¹⁴³ Series of letters, J. P. Senning to various individuals, February 9, 1936, Nebraska State Historical Society, Senning Collection.

even adopt a platform.

Dr. Senning's "pre-primary" conventions in each of the 43 districts would be called without respect to party, by a group of interested and public spirited citizens. The gathering would be held in some centrally located point within the district to suggest about six candidates for the legislature.

The meeting would be open to the public. At the same time the conventions could draw up a platform, . . . The convention candidates and platform would bear no party label, and would simply be known as choices of "the district pre-primary nominating convention."¹⁴⁴

While recognizing the importance of legislative recruitment, Senning apparently was unable to accept the party as the logical organ to fulfill this role and sought other devices to supplant the party in this function. Perhaps he merely felt that this advantage of the party structure did not outweigh the other disadvantages. In any case, there is no indication in his writings that he believed the political party could serve better, on the state level, to bring about a more efficient and democratic system. In fact, the opposite seems more evident in his work.

Senning consistently endorsed the Unicameral in all of its aspects and there is no indication he had any second thoughts about nonpartisanship. Perhaps the best

¹⁴⁴ Press release to Omaha World-Herald's News Service, February 1, 1936, Nebraska State Historical Society, Senning Collection.

exposition of his attitude on this question is reflected in an article appearing in the Omaha World-Herald in 1952.

Dr. Senning's counter-arguments are these: first, under the American three-branch system--legislative, judicial and executive--the Governor, as Chief executive officer, has no right to expect the Legislature to do his bidding. He is the chief administrator. His job is to administer the laws the Legislature enacts; not to dictate the laws. His recommendations, rightfully, should be limited to such measures as will make for better administration. Under the system he is to keep his fingers out of general policy matters.

Second, and more important, Dr. Senning says, is the fact that political parties don't create legislative issues; certainly not at the state level. Issues, he said, are made by pressure groups: farm blocs, tax league members, labor, professional and quasi-professional organizations such as physicians, teachers, beauticians and so on.

Membership in pressure groups . . . is not determined by party affiliation. . . . Consequently, both parties, eager for votes, are sensitive to pressure group demands, especially when it comes to platform writing.

The thoughtful citizen, Dr. Senning believes, would not shackle the legislator to the commitments stemming from such an arrangement but is content to let the legislator's oath of office and his conscience determine where his responsibility lies.¹⁴⁵

To Senning, as many scholars of his time, the importance of institutional reforms and the need to "democratize" these mechanisms, took precedence over all else. State government was viewed largely as divorced from national political issues; thus, the advantages of a

¹⁴⁵"Prof. Senning Defends Unicameral, As Is," Omaha-Herald Magazine, May 18, 1952, p. 36.

party structure were not sufficient to justify parties on this level. Though it would not be completely fair to characterize this attitude as "state government should be run as a business," the belief persisted that institutional reforms such as the nonpartisan unicameral would result in efficient, democratic government where decisions would be made by responsible individuals who followed their consciences and judged issues on their merits free from undue influences such as parties and political bosses.

Addison E. Sheldon
(1861-1943)

The title "father of the Unicameral" in Nebraska perhaps should properly belong to Addison E. Sheldon, frontier newsman, Populist legislator, chronicler of Nebraska history, poet and scholar.

Sheldon came to Nebraska from Minnesota with his parents in 1869 and grew up on a homestead in Seward County (eastern Nebraska). In the 1880's and 1890's Sheldon was editor of a number of newspapers and was prominent in Populist party activities during the turbulent 1890's. An active Populist, he served on various county committees, was a delegate to the 1892 national convention in Omaha and an alternate four years later at St. Louis where he supported Thomas Watson for Vice-President.¹⁴⁶ In 1896 he

¹⁴⁶ Nebraska Press Association, Who's Who in

was elected to the Nebraska House of Representatives on the Populist ticket and served as chairman of the committee on public lands and buildings.¹⁴⁷

Having completed a career in journalism and politics, Sheldon turned to academia and received his B.A. from the University of Nebraska in 1902 at the age of forty-two. Two years later he was granted his M.A. and in 1908 earned a Ph.D. from Columbia.¹⁴⁸

In 1907 Sheldon founded the Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau and served as its director until 1919. Recognizing the need for legislative aid and assistance, the Bureau performed a needed service. It was as director that Sheldon in 1913 collaborated with Norton on the legislative procedure study which first introduced the unicameral idea.¹⁴⁹ The report recommended for future action ". . . the amendment of our constitution so as to provide for one house of the legislature instead of two" ¹⁵⁰

Nebraska (Lincoln: Nebraska Press Association, 1940), p. 739; A. G. Wolfenbarger (ed.), Nebraska Legislative Yearbook for 1897 (Lincoln: A. G. Wolfenbarger, 1897), pp. 156-157.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

¹⁴⁹Nebraska, Joint Committee of House and Senate, Reform of Legislative Procedure and Budget in Nebraska, Bulletin No. 4 (Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, 1914).

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 17.

As director of the Legislative Reference Bureau and secretary of the joint committee, Sheldon undoubtedly played an important part in the incorporation of the unicameral recommendation. Certainly the supporting material was the work of Sheldon.¹⁵¹

In 1917 Sheldon became Superintendent and Secretary of the Nebraska State Historical Society and in 1918 editor of Nebraska History, serving in these capacities until his death in 1943. During this period he was prolific in prose and poetry on Nebraskana, the most ambitious project being his book, Nebraska: The Land and the People, a comprehensive survey of Nebraska history from discovery to 1931.

The 1913 unicameral proposal contained no provision for the nonpartisan election of its members, but there is no question Sheldon believed this addition an asset. In 1938 he wrote:

There are those who believe election of members on political party tickets would place responsibility and give better results. This might be true if there were party divisions in Nebraska on state questions. There are no such divisions. With a few exceptions in the history

¹⁵¹In the supporting data, mention is also made of the advisability of studying the adoption of a cabinet system of government. Writing in Nebraska History in 1938, Sheldon again raises the possibility of adding a cabinet system to the new Unicameral. (A. E. Sheldon, "Unicameral Legislature," Nebraska History, XIX [July-September, 1938], 247.

of leading political parties in Nebraska they present no clear-cut state issues.

The managers of the two leading political parties aim to present platforms favoring every proposition which has a good bunch of votes backing it. Each then denounces the other as a smoke screen. In other words, there is no state political-party line of division in the Nebraska voting population.¹⁵²

A Republican, then a Populist, and again a Republican, Sheldon was by no means awed by parties. The Populist-Progressive repugnance of parties and bosses struck a responsive chord and patterned an attitude Sheldon retained throughout his life.

He was not a blind partisan. He voted as he thought, not as he was told. To him political parties, as such, were neither good nor bad; it was all in the use made of them by those at the wheel. He paid no more attention to party fences than to the shadow of telephone poles along the road. If he thought his party wrong, he up and said so in understandable English. He was not afraid to be with a minority and never abandoned a cause because it was unpopular.¹⁵³

James E. Lawrence (1889-1957)

Born in Beatrice, Nebraska (southeast), in 1889. Lawrence received his LL.B. from the University of Nebraska in 1911, joined the staff of the Lincoln Star¹⁵⁴

¹⁵²A. E. Sheldon, "Unicameral Legislature," Nebraska History, XIX (July-September, 1938), 246.

¹⁵³C. A. Sorensen, "Tributes to Addison E. Sheldon," Nebraska History, XXIV (October-December, 1943), 218.

¹⁵⁴The paper was founded in 1902 by David E. Thompson who, though associated with railroad interests,

shortly thereafter and rose through the ranks to become editor in 1922.¹⁵⁵ He retained this position until his death in 1957.

Lawrence was associated with the University of Nebraska as a member of the Department of Journalism for many years and was a staunch supporter of the institution dating back to 1914 when he fought an attempt to relocate the University away from its downtown Lincoln surroundings.¹⁵⁶

The 1930's were a period of great activity for Lawrence. Ever fighting with the Mullen-Burke faction within the Democratic party,¹⁵⁷ pushing conservation

sought an independent paper to compete with the conservative Lincoln State Journal. In 1910 Thompson sold out to H. E. Gooch who hired as editor an associate of William Jennings Bryan. The paper supported many of the progressive causes of the day and throughout Lawrence's editorship was considered an independent Democratic voice in its policy. (James E. Lawrence, History of the Lincoln Star, 1954, pamphlet in the Nebraska State Historical Society.)

¹⁵⁵ Nebraska Press Association, op. cit., p. 711.

¹⁵⁶ James E. Lawrence, Public Service Record of the Lincoln Star, 1954, pamphlet in the Nebraska State Historical Society.

¹⁵⁷ Lawrence's correspondence in the 1935-36 period is replete with his despair over the activities of the Democratic faction headed by former National Committeeman Arthur F. Mullen and Democratic Senator Burke. (Letter, J. E. Lawrence to G. W. Norris, May 10, 1936, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lawrence Collection.)

projects within Nebraska,¹⁵⁸ aiding Senator Norris in his Unicameral campaign of 1934 and heading his reelection campaigns of 1936 and 1942, Lawrence still found time to give strong editorial support to Roosevelt and the New Deal.¹⁵⁹ Lawrence collaborated with Norris in the writing of the latter's autobiography, Fighting Liberal.

Though a Democrat, Lawrence was never a strong party man. He refused to run for office a number of times,¹⁶⁰ and had less than a warm feeling toward partisan politics.¹⁶¹ He supported Norris' nonpartisan Unicameral, and was satisfied with the nonpartisan aspect. "James E. Lawrence, editor of the Lincoln Star, thinks the

¹⁵⁸ Lawrence spent a great deal of time and effort on behalf of soil and water conservation projects in Nebraska and worked closely with Senator Norris on federal aid for various projects. "Always a strong figure in programs for development of the state's natural resources, he was a leader in the foundation of Nebraska's public power and irrigation system, and in the early 1950's headed a Presidential commission studying the Missouri Basin." (Lincoln Star, September 17, 1957, p. 1.)

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ In 1954 his name was filed for the U.S. Senate but Lawrence refused to be a candidate. (Lincoln Star, May 4, 1954, p. 1.)

¹⁶¹ Though his battle with the Mullen-Burke faction may have colored his thinking, Lawrence remarked in a letter in 1935 to Senator Norris' secretary John Robertson, ". . . But I am sick a [sic] heart at the wretchedness I have seen in politics. I have been a spectator to the treachery of too many men to their own ideals and their own friends. I want nothing to do with politics." (Letter, J. E. Lawrence to James Robertson, October 23, 1935, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lawrence Collection.)

nonpartisan unicameral has resulted in the election of a much higher type of legislator than Nebraska got under the bicameral."¹⁶² The Star opposed the pre-primary convention endorsement law and when the law was finally passed in 1943, Lawrence worked for its repeal and was successful in 1953.¹⁶³

In 1953-4, both political parties joined in a bipartisan campaign to eliminate the nonpartisan Unicameral. First seeking to return to a partisan bicameral system, the move shifted to a partisan unicameral as it became obvious popular support was behind the Unicameral.¹⁶⁴ Lawrence commented upon the desirability of a partisan Legislature:

The issues of state government bear very little relationship to those that arise nationally. State government for years has been largely a matter of good business management. The construction of highways, for example is not a partisan concern. . . . What we have been attempting to do in this state for years is to get away from so-called "political" highway building, the word, "political," being a synonym of partisanship. . . . Because these four [highways,

¹⁶²Clipping from the Des Moines Register, February 2, 1947, Nebraska State Historical Society, Senning Collection.

¹⁶³The law permitted a primary party convention for the purpose of endorsing candidates, such endorsement to appear on the ballot with the aspirant's name. (Supra, p. 137.)

¹⁶⁴Lincoln Star, February 1, 1954, p. 1.

institutions, old age assistance, education] represent about 80 percent of all money appropriated in Nebraska by the Legislature, it is difficult to foresee what a partisan legislature would contribute anything to better state government [sic].¹⁶⁵

Lawrence saw things in terms of individuals and issues, rather than party, as his support of Morris indicates. A stronger party man in national issues, he felt that on the state level parties were generally a liability.

His interest in politics was not in parties per se or in personal favorites, but always in securing of the most competent individuals who would bear in mind their service and responsibility to the people. He shared Senator Morris' conviction that the unicameral was a great improvement over the old bicameral legislature and, most important of all, he believed that the nonpartisan feature expedited the public service in a state legislative body.¹⁶⁶

Conclusion

It is not contended that the above individuals were the only influential actors in the state's political system or necessarily the most important, as it would be all but impossible to measure "importance."¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵James E. Lawrence, "Of Men and Things," Lincoln Star, February 5, 1954, p. 4.

¹⁶⁶James L. Sellers, "James E. Lawrence, Dedicated Nebraskan," Nebraska History, XXXVIII (December, 1957), 255.

¹⁶⁷A number of other individuals could be added to this discussion. Perhaps one of the more influential in

Nevertheless, these men were very prominent, were extremely active throughout most of the twentieth century,

recent history, certainly as far as the Unicameral is concerned, is Hugo Srb who has served as Clerk of the Legislature since the first session of the Unicameral in 1937. Mr. Srb is perhaps one of the best propagandists for the nonpartisan, one-house legislature and loses no opportunity to sing the praises of the system to visitor and Nebraska citizen alike. The following excerpts from an article written in 1961 by Mr. Srb underscores this point.

"How should partisan politics enter the picture when the consideration of building a good highway system is being considered, or the providing of a good educational system, or adequate care of unfortunates either in or out of our state institutions? These needs must be met after a most careful consideration on their merits. Who is better qualified, than the person elected to that position; who else has the opportunity to judge by hearings held before committees, and by hearing the bills and amendments offered on the floor? Is he not in a better position to judge whether they are for the welfare of the state than some who would attempt to tell them how to vote but who may be far removed and not have the benefit of the discussions on the bills? The legislature is a deliberative body rather than a rubber stamp. . . .

"None of us would claim our system has reached perfection, but at the same time, where would we find a government more representative, more responsible, more deliberative, more orderly, and more economical in operation than our present legislature? . . . A comparison will show that the other states not only have the problems with which Nebraska is confronted but that their problems are multiplied many times by having two houses and the influences of outside partisan politics."

(Hugo F. Srb, "The Unicameral Legislature--A Successful Innovation," 40 Nebraska Law Review 632-633 [June, 1961].)

were intimately connected with many of the political developments of all but the recent past, and possessed at least one common ideological trait which is particularly significant for this study--their attitude toward political parties. To one degree or another they found the parties inadequate and sought to circumvent this mechanism by various means. Their opposition to, or at best neutral stance toward, parties was an accepted fact. It is significant that they sought not to reform parties, but to circumvent, replace, or outlaw them and they found little if anything which commended parties toward building an efficient and democratic state political system. Parties might be necessary on the national scene, but their usefulness on the state level was highly dubious. Partisanship, thus, was hardly a virtue.

Environmental Factors--Epilogue

The examination of the environmental factors of Nebraska's political system essentially substantiates the hypothesis of a low level of political partisanship operative in the system. The demographic, economic, social and institutional factors, as well as the political culture and tradition, reveal a pattern of forces consistently working to break down partisanship, to prevent partisanship or to militate against its growth. This almost constant battering throughout the development of

the Nebraska system has had a marked effect on the style of political behavior--a largely apartisan political style. To a great extent the environmental factors have been responsible, directly and indirectly, for this situation. In some cases they have directly aided the erosion of partisanship--many of the institutional factors and much of the political culture and tradition--and in others have retarded the growth of partisanship--the demographic, economic, and social factors.

The environmental factors have thus played an important role of their own in the erosion of partisanship. They have also influenced the character of the next aspect of the political system--the channels of communication--and it is to this that we now turn our attention.

CHAPTER VI

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION: POLITICAL PARTIES AND INTEREST GROUPS

Introduction

Having completed a survey of the perceptions of the environment, we may now view those channels of communication through which demands are translated to the decision-making agents. Political parties and interest groups are viewed as the two main channels by which this communication takes place.

. . . The most common means of communicating demands in the American political system remains the political party and interest group. Every state has an intricate set of party and interest group organizations whose principal function is to communicate general or specific demands to particular decision makers. The manner in which these organizations operate are an important variable in state politics.¹

Political Parties

Introduction

The dominance of the Republican party in Nebraska in national elections is well-known and the party's

¹Herbert Jacob, "Dimensions of State Politics," in State Legislatures in American Politics, ed. by Alexander Heard (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 21.

strength on the state level is only slightly weaker. This section will attempt to put this Republican bias into perspective to determine the actual extent and viability of it. A brief historical survey of party politics in the state will introduce the section. The formal party organization will be examined, statistical data will be sifted to establish some reliable indices of respective party strength based on past performance, the role of parties in legislative elections will be viewed to determine what place, if any, there is for a party in the nonpartisan environment, and finally, party attitudes toward the nonpartisan Unicameral will be examined.

Party Politics in Nebraska

Territorial Period.--It is no surprise that Nebraska's early territorial politics was dominated by the Democratic party since the state was created by a Democratic Congress with appointments in the hands of a Democratic administration. But the dominant issues of the period were not the party issues--slavery and tariffs took second place in Nebraska to the question of the location of the state capital and the emerging North-South Platte sectional rivalry. Acting Governor Thomas Cuming, representing Iowa interests who wanted the transcontinental railroad to run through Council Bluffs, assigned a majority of representatives to the northern counties and called for the legislature to

meet in Omaha. Since a majority of the population lived south of the Platte, this section vowed to fight Cuming and laid the basis for the sectional conflict which dominated territorial politics in Nebraska.²

Though somewhat quiescent during the Civil War when party lines began to replace sectional divisions, it [the north-south Platte sectional controversy] remained a divisive factor in Nebraska's politics throughout the territorial period and played an important part in the ultimate location of the state capital.³

The Civil War strengthened the new Republican party in the state. The party then led the move for statehood as a means of consolidating its position locally as well as strengthening its stance in Washington. But despite the Homestead Act of 1862 and the party's position on slavery, the Republicans were unable to push through statehood. It was only with the end of the war and the influx of Union veterans into Nebraska that the Republican party was able to tip the political balance and assume dominance as well as bring the state into the Union.

It was only with the adoption of the Constitution of 1875 and the return of economic prosperity in the late 1870's that the politics of the state assumed some semblance of order. From 1854 to 1875 politics in Nebraska

²James C. Olson, History of Nebraska (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), pp. 82-88.

³Ibid., p. 80.

was characterized by scandal, corruption, and general chaos which most times reached comic opera proportions.⁴ The Civil War, the post-war moral decline, plus the general frontier boom atmosphere, produced a record of governmental ineptitude hardly conducive to building confidence in representative democratic institutions.

Statehood and Republican Dominance: 1866-1890.--

Politics from the end of the Civil War to 1890 was Republican-dominated. Except for a Democratic State Treasurer elected in 1882, the Republicans won every state office contested plus control of both houses of the Legislature. The decline of the Democratic party because of its Civil War association with the South was felt in Nebraska as well as nationally. But more importantly, the philosophy and leadership of Democracy in Nebraska was distinctly conservative and ill-suited to the needs and desires of the population. The reign of so-called "Bourbon Democracy" in the state was probably the most important cause of Republican dominance. The Bourbon Democrats espoused individualism, free enterprise, and limited and restricted government with free trade as a panacea to all ills.

The Bourbons were primarily guardians and benefactors of a system, not humanitarian

⁴Ibid., pp. 85-91, 122-133, 149-160.

servants of the people. Their system was laissez-faire, dressed up in the provocative garb of American frontier individualism. They believed, or at least they proclaimed, that individual enterprise would automatically take care of all worthy workers in field and factory.⁵

The Republicans, on the other hand, were less ideologically tied to a laissez-faire philosophy and, though many Republicans were as conservative as the Democrats, the party as a whole was willing to undertake some steps, albeit small ones, in the direction of curbing corporate power and influence.⁶ Thus, the Republicans were able to retain the support of a majority of the voters in three-way contests between themselves, the laissez-faire Democrats, and the progressive reform third parties which appeared at almost every election between 1872 and 1890.

. . . the Nebraska Democratic party was dominated by conservative leaders. Dedicated to a conservative political philosophy which they traced from Jefferson, they opposed any extension of governmental authority on state or national level. On the other hand the Republican party, while essentially conservative, lacked a rigid ideological apparatus. Their policies in regard to the role of the Federal government in the affairs of the State were more pragmatic and more realistic.⁷

⁵Horace Merrill, Bourbon Democracy of the Middle West (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953), p. 143.

⁶Robert Manley, "Nebraskans and the Federal Government 1854-1916" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1962), pp. 58-79.

⁷Ibid., p. 78.

Democrat-Populist Reign: 1890-1900.--It was not until the Bourbon leadership was overthrown by William Jennings Bryan in the early 1890's and the party's consequent move toward the left that it, fusing with the reformist parties, was able to upset the Republican dominance. This combination, in the context of deep economic depression, put the Democratic party on more even terms with its Republican adversary in the contests for political power.

By 1890 grievances on the part of the agricultural community, accentuated by falling farm prices, approached their peak and dissatisfaction with both major parties--essentially conservative with the Democrats more so--was so great that for the first time a third party, the Populist, gained control of the Legislature and split the Republican vote enough to permit a Democrat to be elected Governor. In 1892 a Progressive Republican defeated arch-Bourbon Democrat J. Sterling Morton and a Populist for the governorship. Then followed the defeat of the Bourbon leadership by William Jennings Bryan and, by joining with Populists, the Democrats were able to control the next three elections.⁸

⁸Addison E. Sheldon, Nebraska: The Land and The People, Vol. I (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1931), pp. 663-775.

By 1900 with the return of better times, the decline of the Populist party and rising Republican sentiment nationally, state government returned to the Republican camp. But both parties were now more evenly balanced, as Democracy had thrown off the shackles of Bourbonism and the onus of the Civil War. Republicans now knew they had to do more than merely present candidates for office; there was now a loyal opposition ready and capable to take office if they should stumble.

Competitive Party Politics: 1900-1918.--The first two decades of the twentieth century, especially the period 1906-1918, were probably the most evenly balanced and competitive years in Nebraska history as far as two-party politics are concerned. The strengthened Democratic party vied with a more progressive, younger Republican party reinvigorated by new blood and the example of Theodore Roosevelt. After 1906 a wave of progressive ideology and action spread over the state which produced more far reaching results than all previous reformist movements put together.⁹ It was really the culmination of all past efforts and matched in intensity the Progressive feeling sweeping the country at the same time.

⁹Ibid., pp. 800 ff.; Olson, op. cit., pp. 249-253.

In the summer of 1906 a great tidal wave of progressive politics swept over Nebraska. . . . the long years of popular education by farm organizations, the dominance of the railroads in politics, the tyranny of political bosses in conventions, had produced a state of mind in both the Republican and Democratic parties which nothing could stop.¹⁰

The Republican party had long been plagued by its close ties with the railroad powers which had dominated politics from the very founding of the state. It is no coincidence that the final demise of railroad power and influence and the divorce by the Republican party came in the period of the party's progressive bent. Spurred by the irritation on the part of many citizens over the battle the two main railroads waged in 1901 over two vacant United States Senatorships (both decided to try for all or nothing), the progressives in the Republican party began their fight to destroy the railroad influence, a battle which culminated in victory by 1907.¹¹

While the Republicans elected their candidates in 1902, 1904, and 1906, the party by this time had estranged itself from corporation control and the Railroads no longer dominated and directed the choice of candidates. The Republicans had wisely accepted the

¹⁰Sheldon, op. cit., p. 816.

¹¹Olson, op. cit., pp. 248-253; Virginia Jones, "Influence of Railroads on Nebraska State Politics" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1927), traces the history of railroad influence, the numerous attempts to curb corporate power, and the final break-up of the railroad machine.

principle of Railway regulation under stimulation from Washington, without which platform their success probably would have been impossible. By 1907 Railway domination was at an end.¹²

These years were filled with feverish activity and the legislative mills ground out one innovation after another. It seemed as though the state were trying to make up for lost time and indeed in some cases it was. Among some of the more far-reaching reforms in this period were: statehood primary law;¹³ numerous railroad regulatory acts--anti-free pass act, anti-discrimination act, creation of state railway commission; bank guaranty law; nonpartisan ballot for judicial and educational offices; home-rule charter provision; initiative and referendum provisions; first budget law; state hail insurance; and labor legislation--child labor act, protection of women workers, maximum hours for females, minimum wage, workman's compensation, board of mediation.¹⁴

The Republicans controlled state government from 1900 through 1908, but the Democrats captured the

¹²Jones, op. cit., pp. 53-54.

¹³For a detailed look into the operation of the direct primary in Nebraska from its inception until 1935, see Richard L. Hall, "The Direct Primary in Nebraska" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1935).

¹⁴Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 824-825, 839, 853-854, 882, 896-897.

Governorship and state Legislature in the latter year. The Republicans won the Governor's chair in 1910 only to lose it again in 1912; the Democrats continued to control the Legislature, except the Senate in 1912. The elections of 1914 and 1916 swept the Democrats into complete control of state government. For the first time in Nebraska's history, the Republicans were the "out" party. Elections were vigorously contested and campaign oratory was directed to the issue of the day, usually centering around which party could best carry out the substantially identical reforms both endorsed.¹⁵

The Roaring Twenties and the Depressing

Thirties.--World War I and its aftermath--the return to "normalcy"--ended the progressive wave that had been running through Nebraska since the early 1900's. Both parties moved toward the center, and the Republicans regained complete control of state government for the first time in a decade. Except for three contests--the Governorship in 1922 and 1930, and Secretary of State in 1922--they retained complete control of state government

¹⁵For a closer look at the issues and personalities of each campaign, see Carl A. Smith, "Party Alignments in Nebraska 1908-1916" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1950); Claire P. Mulvey, "Republican Party in Nebraska 1900-1916" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1934); Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 777-915.

until 1932. The 1920's, a period of conservative sentiment, found the dominant political issues in Nebraska those of taxation, economy, and a business approach to government centering around Governor McKelvie's Civil Administration Code.¹⁶ It seemed as though the Republicans had successfully reasserted their dominance over Nebraska politics.

But the Great Depression, beginning in 1929, gave an unexpected lift to Democratic political ambitions. The Republicans, both nationally and in the state, were the party in office when the depression struck. As conditions worsened, they experienced the common fate of those in office at the time of economic upheaval--retirement from political life. The Democrats controlled state government throughout most of the 1930's. The issues dividing the two parties were again not great; retrenchment and economy

¹⁶Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 951-1075; Olson, op. cit., pp. 291-293. McKelvie's Code was an issue in state politics throughout the 1920's. Inaugurated in 1919, it consolidated existing commissions and boards into six administrative departments, each headed by a secretary appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Democrats used the Code as a political issue, and Charles Bryan successfully won the Governorship in 1922 on an anti-Code, economy, and lower taxes platform (the depression of 1921 was just beginning to ease, a factor in the Democrats' favor). Nevertheless, the Code, for all the verbal opposition, was not substantially changed and survived the criticism of the 1920's. (Bruce Nicoll and Ken Keller, Sen McKelvie: Son of the Soil [Lincoln: Johnson Publishing Co., 1954], pp. 61-109.)

were the watchwords. As the New Deal progressed, politicians of both parties in the state became alarmed over the threats of centralization and the growth of federal power. Many Democrats elected on F.D.R.'s coattails in 1932 soon repented and joined the chorus of anti-New Dealers. It was a Republican, Senator George Norris, who was F.D.R.'s most loyal supporter, so much so that the President persuaded the Democratic party to endorse him for reelection in 1936 over the party primary nominee.¹⁷

The conservative wings of both parties had been strong and generally gained control after World War I. The relationship between the state and federal government had been a continuing source of debate since 1854, but pragmatic considerations outweighed any ideological beliefs. Thus, federal aid and governmental action was supported, and indeed in many cases demanded. But a large number of people in both parties strongly opposed any centralizing tendencies which expanded the powers and spheres of action of the federal government. Beginning with the Federal Road Act of 1916 with its new approach to

¹⁷For many Democrats, Norris was the lesser of two evils. National Committeeman and Democratic Senator Edward Burke called the nominee Terry Carpenter, "mad as a March hare," likening him to Milo Reno (Farmer Holiday Movement) and Dr. Townsend. (Byron E. Yoder, "Political Life of Edward E. Burke" [unpublished manuscript on file in the Nebraska State Historical Society].)

federal aid--the matching dollar scheme and some federal supervision--the debate over federal-state relations began anew, and as the 1920's and 1930's progressed, shifted from the merits of individual programs to the very concepts involved in the program.¹⁸ Thus, it is not surprising to find many Democrats in agreement with the Republicans in the 1930's in their opposition to the New Deal program because of its centralizing tendencies.

Tests later proved that it [the NRA] was the craziest and most cockeyed piece of legislation ever enacted. . . . The trouble with the program [the AAA] was that the show was run by visionaries who believed in state planning for everybody from the cradle to the grave.

On the whole, the [New Deal] projects were well-intentioned, but the approach was too often based on fallacious theories and visionaries. The laissez-faire regime, from the close of Wilson's administration to the beginning of the New Deal under Roosevelt, was almost completely changed by the movement toward Collectivism. The greatest subtle change was a drifting to the left and condoning of Communism during the New Deal period.¹⁹

We have gone too far already in transferring to the federal government powers that naturally and rightfully belong to the states. We have too many bureaus, too many bureaucrats in Washington. . . . It is a dangerous tendency in

¹⁸ Hanley, op. cit., pp. 346-369.

¹⁹ Carl Luckey, 85 American Years (New York: Exposition Press, 1955), pp. 87-88, 94. Luckey served as Democratic Congressman from Nebraska's First District from 1934 to 1938.

any republic, and one to be watched with concern by all citizens.

By usurpation of power Washington has broken down the sovereign authority of the state. . . .

Trying to legislate basic economics is about as futile as trying to legislate morality. . . .

The theory of state paternalism may lead either to absolute monarchy or to communism.²⁰

Recent Political Trends.--The debate over federal-state relations, and more fundamentally the philosophy of government, has continued to the present day with the Republican party, generally under the control of the conservative wing, asserting its dominance over state politics. Recapturing a number of state executive offices in 1938, the Republicans went on to sweep the election of 1940 and every succeeding election up to 1958 when Democrat Ralph Brooks narrowly won the Governor's chair. Democrat Frank Morrison succeeded Brooks for three terms, but the Republicans continued to control almost all the other state offices, and were swept back into the Governor's chair in 1966.

²⁰ Arthur Mullen, Western Democrat (New York: Wilfred Funk, Inc., 1940), pp. 335, 349, 351, 355. Mullen served as Democratic National Committeeman from 1916 to 1920 and 1924 to 1936 and after a falling out with William Jennings Bryan was allied with the anti-Bryan faction of the party headed by Senator Gilbert Hitchcock.

Conclusion.--Republicanism has been the dominant force since statehood, but this Republicanism has been tempered by periods of Democratic resurgence, third-party reformist movements, and economic depressions as well as exaggerated by weak opposition and economic prosperity. Up to 1890 Republicans were able to control the state because of a combination of lingering Civil War sympathies and a Democratic leadership which led the party down paths ill-suited to the needs and desires of the populace. With the transformation of the Democratic party under William Jennings Bryan and its resultant fusion with the Populists, the Democrats were able to compete with the Republicans on more or less even terms for thirty years. The Republican party, on the other hand, fell into the hands of the progressives during the bulk of this same period which saw many reforms and innovations carried out in Nebraska.

World War I and its aftermath found both parties within the conservative orbit, the progressive influence relegated to a minor, but at times effective, position. With the Depression and the natural reaction to punish the party in power, the Democrats ruled the state until 1938 when Republican victories in a number of state offices presaged the return of almost two decades of complete Republican control. Recent Democratic victories have altered this Republican strength somewhat, but the

Democrats have been unable to reestablish the strength they enjoyed in previous times. The achievement of economic stability in agriculture never before known has probably played an important part in the continued Republican hold over the state, and has helped to strengthen the position of the conservative wing of the party.

Weather makes politics hereabouts. In wet weather the prevailing winds of public sentiment are likely to blow conservative. Times are almost inevitably prosperous, and the status quo is the best of all possible statuses. In dry weather the wind veers sharply. Times are bad, and of all things the status quo is the least commendable, the villain of the peace.

The extremes, furthermore, are generally extreme.

When conservatism is espoused, it is as rock-ribbed as the coasts--and politics--of Maine.²¹

Formal Organization

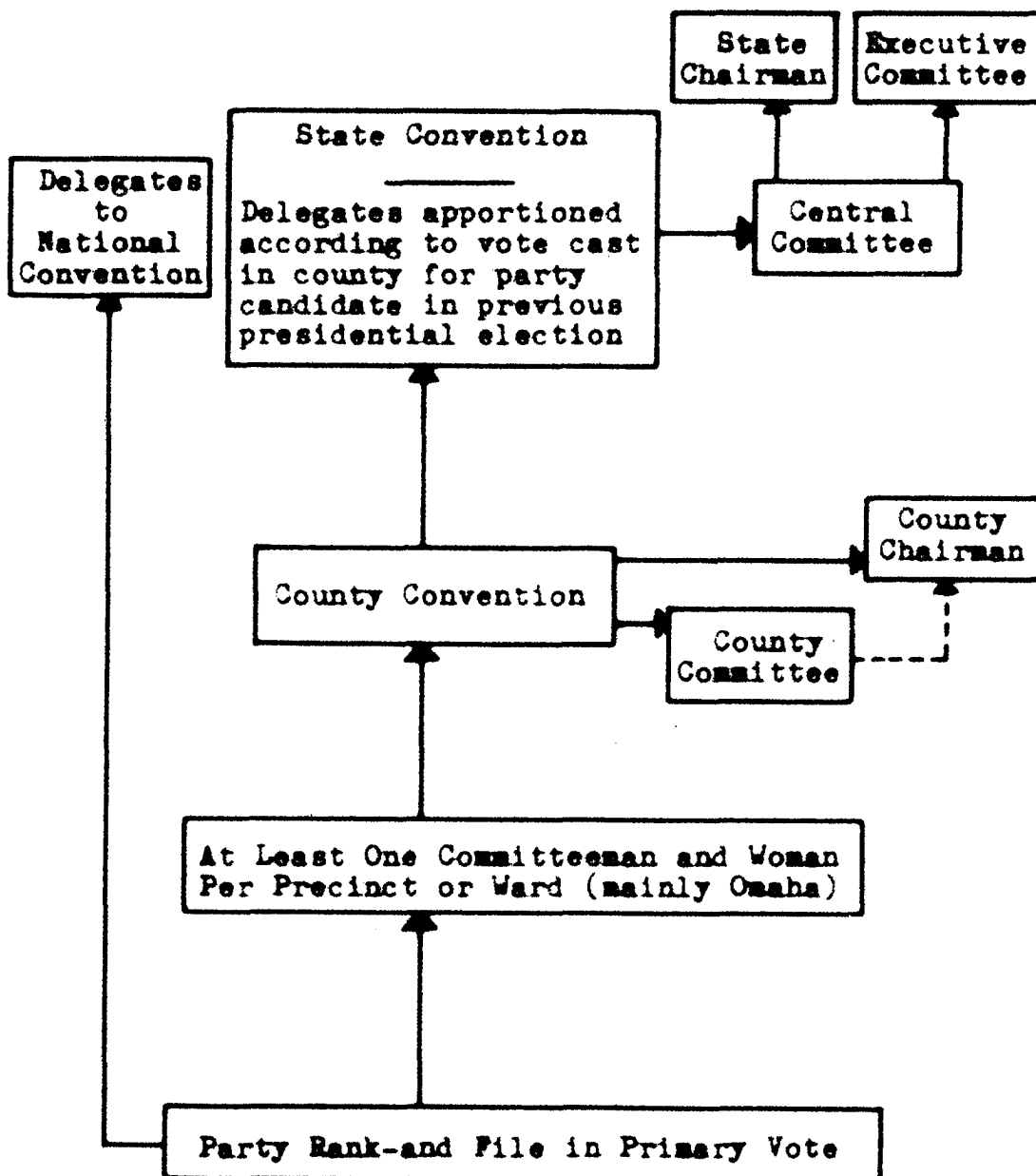
The formal organization of both major parties is almost completely regulated by law in Nebraska.²² Political party organization and the method of choosing various party governing bodies is specifically set down in the statutes. Thus, the basic organizational chart (see Figure VI-1) is the same for both the Republican and

²¹Rufus Terral, The Missouri Valley: Land of Drought, Flood, and Promise (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), pp. 247-248.

²²Nebraska, Revised Statutes of Nebraska 1943, Chap. 32, Article 5. Hereafter cited as Statutes.

FIGURE VI-1

REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC PARTY ORGANIZATION



Democratic parties. Party structure is based on a primary system of choosing party officials: committeemen and women, at least two per precinct or ward,²³ elected at the party primary, make up the delegates to the county convention. The county convention has the power to elect a "county chairman, secretary, treasurer and such other officials as it deems necessary" and to choose delegates to the state and congressional district conventions.²⁴

The county conventions elect delegates to the state convention, representation apportioned by the state

²³The law provides that "each precinct shall be entitled to at least two delegates to the county convention." (Nebraska, Statutes, Chap. 32-551.) In practice, the people elected in the Republican primary are the precinct committeemen and women. This is generally true for the Democrats, but there are some exceptions. In Lancaster county, for instance, the party apportions the precinct convention delegates according to the vote for President in the previous election. Thus, some precincts may be entitled to as many as 25 delegates. The committeemen and women may be elected at the convention or as happened in 1968, the county chairman was given the power by the convention to appoint the precinct committeemen and women. (Interview with party official, Democratic State Central Committee Headquarters, July 1, 1968; David M. Stone, "Democratic Party Organization in Nebraska" [unpublished manuscript, June 1967, in possession of author], p. 2. Hereafter cited as "Democratic.")

²⁴Nebraska, Statutes, Chap. 32-551. Both parties elect a county chairman and a county committee consisting of a vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer or, in the case of the Republicans, a finance chairman (in many smaller counties Democrats consolidate the secretary-treasurer position). (Lists of party officials supplied author by respective party state headquarters.)

central committee on the basis of the vote cast for president in the last preceding election.²⁵ The state convention "shall formulate and promulgate a state platform, select a state central committee and select electors for President and Vice President of the United States, . . ."²⁶ Both parties' state conventions elect a central committee, consisting of one man and woman per state legislative district (a total of 98 members).²⁷ The central committee elects the state chairman. Since the central committee is so large, both parties provide for a smaller "executive committee," which actually administers the party and exercises the central committee's powers.²⁸

²⁵ Nebraska, Statutes, Chap. 32-554. The Republicans provide for 400 delegates to the state convention; the Democrats approach that number, but no party official is positive of the exact number of persons involved. (Stone, "Democratic," p. 1; David M. Stone, "Republican Party Organization in Nebraska," [unpublished manuscript, June 1967, in possession of author], p. 1. Hereafter cited as "Republican.")

²⁶ Nebraska, Statutes, Chap. 32-556.

²⁷ Stone, "Democratic," p. 1; Stone, "Republican," p. 1.

²⁸ Ibid. The Republican Executive Committee numbers twenty-four and includes the State Chairman, Vice-Chairman, National Committeeman and Committeewoman, Assistant Vice-Chairman, the District Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen, immediate past State Chairman, the State Woman's Federation President, an elected Young Republican, a member of the Finance Committee, plus one member from each Congressional District (selected by the resident Central Committee members in the respective districts),

By statute, at all conventions each delegate is guaranteed the right to register his vote "and it shall be unlawful to attempt to bind any delegate by any party or convention rules requiring the delegates from any political subdivision to such convention to vote as a unit."²⁹

Nominations for all elective political offices must come via the direct primary route. Thus, anyone who acquires a necessary number of signatures on a petition (never very large) and pays the required filing fee (again quite small, generally based on a percentage of the salary of the office sought) is entitled to a place on the primary ballot. The party has no voice in determining who these individuals are, and enters the picture only if a vacancy occurs between the primary and general election due to death, resignation or some such situation.³⁰

All delegates to the national party convention, with the exception of the National Committeeman and Committeewoman, are elected in the primary. This dates back

and three members-at-large (appointed by the State Chairman). (Constitution of the Republican Party of Nebraska 1966, Art. IX, sec. 7.) The Democrats have a thirty-member Executive Committee made up of the State Chairman, State Vice-Chairman and Chairwoman, the National Committeeman and Committeewoman, State Secretary, State Treasurer, Young Democrats State Chairman and seven representatives from each of the three Congressional districts. (Nebraska Blue Book 1966, pp. 706-707.)

²⁹Nebraska, Statutes, Chap. 32-558.

³⁰Ibid., Chap. 32-522, 32-524, 32-525.

to the 1911 Legislature which provided for specific requirements for the election of delegates in the primary.³¹ In 1951 the law was amended to permit the parties to determine whether the delegates were to be elected at-large or by congressional districts.³² The Legislature amended the law in 1963 to permit the party a voice in delegate choice: two delegates were to be elected from each Congressional district in the primary and the remainder of the authorized number of delegates were to be chosen by party convention. The introducer of the legislation moved in 1965 to repeal the amendment and, though opposed by the Republican party, the choice of all delegates was returned to the primary process.³³

³¹Mary E. H. Wright, "Primary Election Laws in Nebraska: Popular Control of the Political Parties Through Legal Regulation" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1967), p. 63.

³²Ibid., p. 64.

³³Ibid., pp. 67 ff. Political considerations were not without significance in the turn-about maneuver. The introducer of the amendment and repeal was a Nixon supporter who found that although the former Vice-President received 40 percent of the vote in the 1964 presidential primary, Barry Goldwater received all sixteen votes at the national convention. The repeal bill provides for delegates' names on the primary ballot to be accompanied with a statement that they are uncommitted or support a particular candidate. This, it is no doubt hoped, would minimize the possibility of a recurrence of the 1964 situation, at least in the mind of the introducer. (Ibid., pp. 70 ff.)

Following adoption of the Unicameral in 1934, thus excluding the parties from the legislative branch of government, the political parties sought means to increase their influence in the remaining offices. In the first three sessions of the new Unicameral the parties sought amendment of the primary law to permit a pre-primary convention endorsement of candidates, this endorsement then appearing on the primary ballot next to the aspirant's name.³⁴ Finally in 1943 the parties were successful and the pre-primary endorsement law was passed. It was operative in four elections--1946, 1948, 1950, 1952--and was repealed in 1953.³⁵ The experience with the endorsement procedure was too short to provide any substantive conclusions concerning its operation. Most of the endorsed candidates won in the primary, though many were incumbents and probably would have won anyway.³⁶ The fact that two candidates could receive endorsement (the Republicans did so frequently) makes it even more difficult to assess the

³⁴John P. Senning, "The Legislature and the Lobby," (unpublished manuscript, n.d., Nebraska State Historical Society, Senning Collection), pp. 8 ff. Hereafter cited as "Lobby."

³⁵Nebraska, Laws of Nebraska 1954, Chap. 108, sec. 4. The Republican party opposed repeal, but the Democrats favored returning to the no-endorsement primary. (Wright, op. cit., p. 76.)

³⁶Adam C. Breckenridge, "Pre-Primary Trial Dropped," National Municipal Review, LIIII (April, 1954), 186-191.

degree to which party responsibility for making nominations was strengthened.³⁷

In Nebraska the political parties are quite rigidly controlled by law and the statutes provide little opportunity for independent action. The primary system leaves little room for party decision-making beyond appeal to the party rank and file in the voting booth. With a primary largely free of organizational influence, the party leadership is hampered in efforts to enforce its policy or to punish dissidents. Parties have been unable to circumvent the primary through informal means or by pre-primary slate-making to ensure the success of the candidates the party organization supports.³⁸

Nebraska's primary laws are, therefore, more than the nomination of candidates by popular election. Nebraska's primary election laws are the popular control of the political parties through legal regulation--legal regulation of the political parties to procure popular control of the nominating process; legal

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Despite the primary, parties in other states are still able to put the organization man over more times than not. It is rare that the non-organization man in Pennsylvania or Illinois, for instance, does not emerge as the primary victor and this, in many cases, is true on the local as well as state level. (Austin Ranney, "Parties in State Politics," in Politics in the American States, ed. by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines [Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965], p. 76; Robert F. Sittig, "Party Slatemaking and the Direct Primary in Illinois and Other States" [unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1962].)

regulation of the political parties to express the will of the electorate; and legal regulation of political parties to protect the elective franchise.³⁹

Party Politics in Nebraska

Whatever measure of party strength one cares to use, the fact of Republican success in winning elective office is impressive. Whether it be the vote for Governor over the years (Figure VI-2 for all years and Figure VI-3 for non-Presidential years), the vote for state offices excluding Governor (Figure VI-4 for all years and Figure VI-5 for non-Presidential years), total offices captured (Figure VI-6 for national and Figure VI-7 for state offices), or the legislative seats won prior to the Unicameral (Table VI-1), the Republican party emerges as the undisputed victor.⁴⁰ An examination of these various

³⁹Wright, op. cit., p. 89.

⁴⁰These charts are based on electoral statistics gathered from various sources. Unfortunately, there is no one source available incorporating comprehensive voting statistics for the state. Nebraska State Canvassing Board, Official Report: Primary Election and General Election, 1916-1966 provide most of the statistics for state elections though some gaps are evident. General election returns for the pre-1916 period are available in the Journal of the Legislature of the State of Nebraska and Addison S. Sheldon, Nebraska: The Land and the People. The Nebraska Blue Book (1915 to present) fills some of the gaps of the other sources. The most difficult statistics to come by are for the legislative races, particularly the first three decades of this century. The author was unable to obtain official results for many legislative races in this period, the Nebraska Secretary of

FIGURE VI-2
PARTY INDEX 1910-1966 (GOVERNOR VOTE)

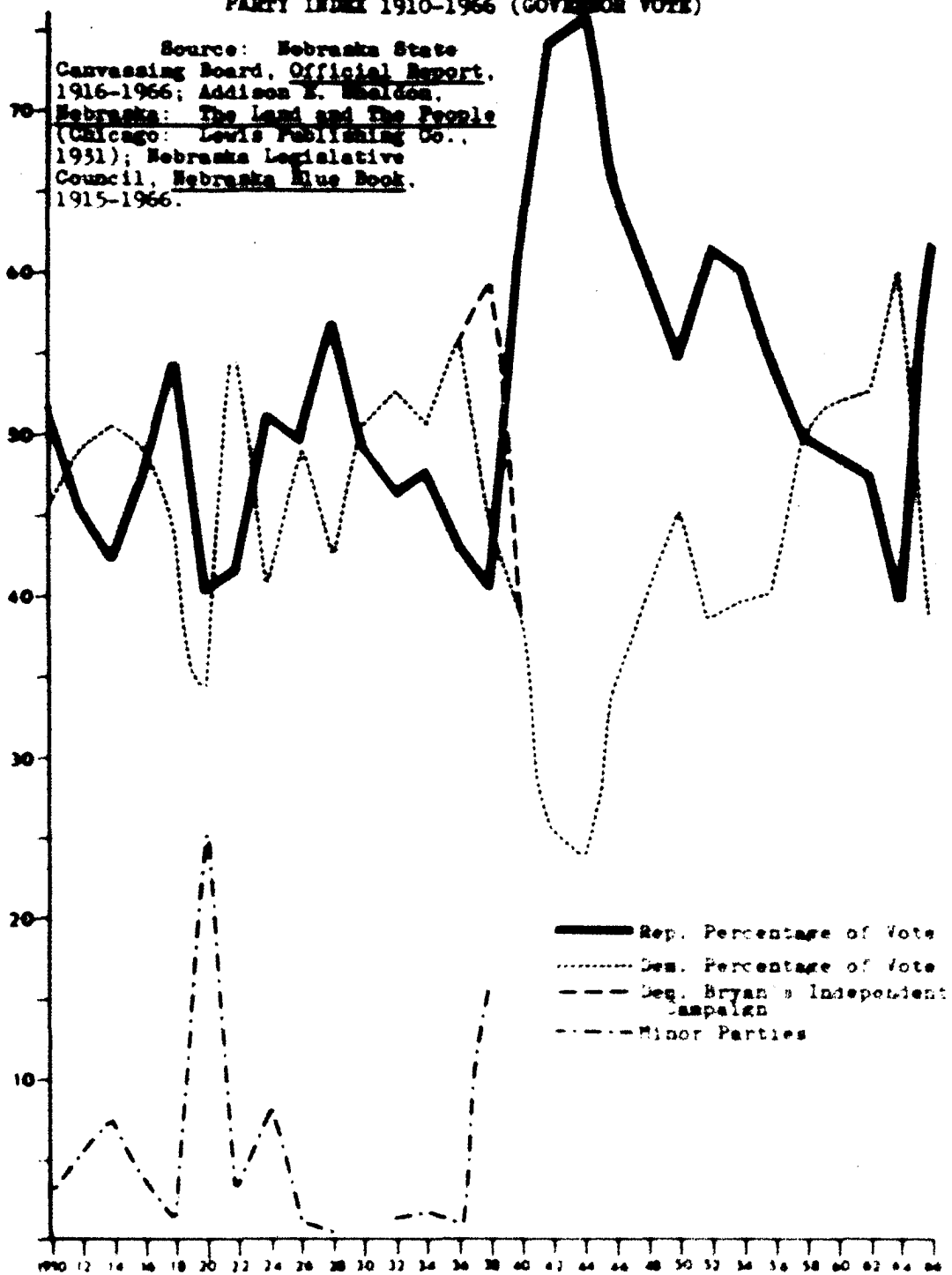


FIGURE VI-3
 PARTY INDEX 1910-1966 (NON-PRES.
 YEARS, GOVERNOR VOTE)

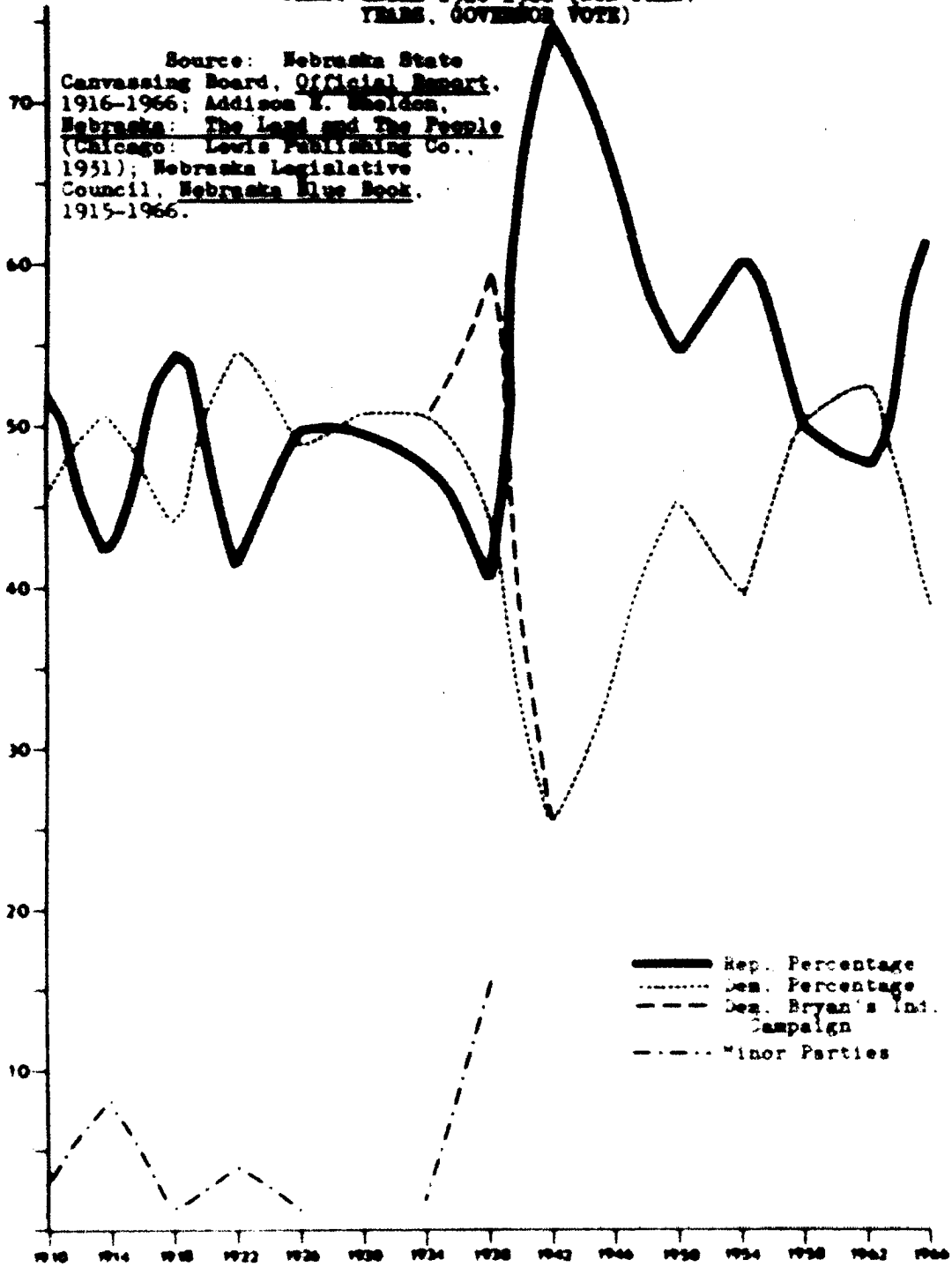


FIGURE VI-4
 PARTY INDEX 1910-1966 (MINOR OFFICE VOTE)

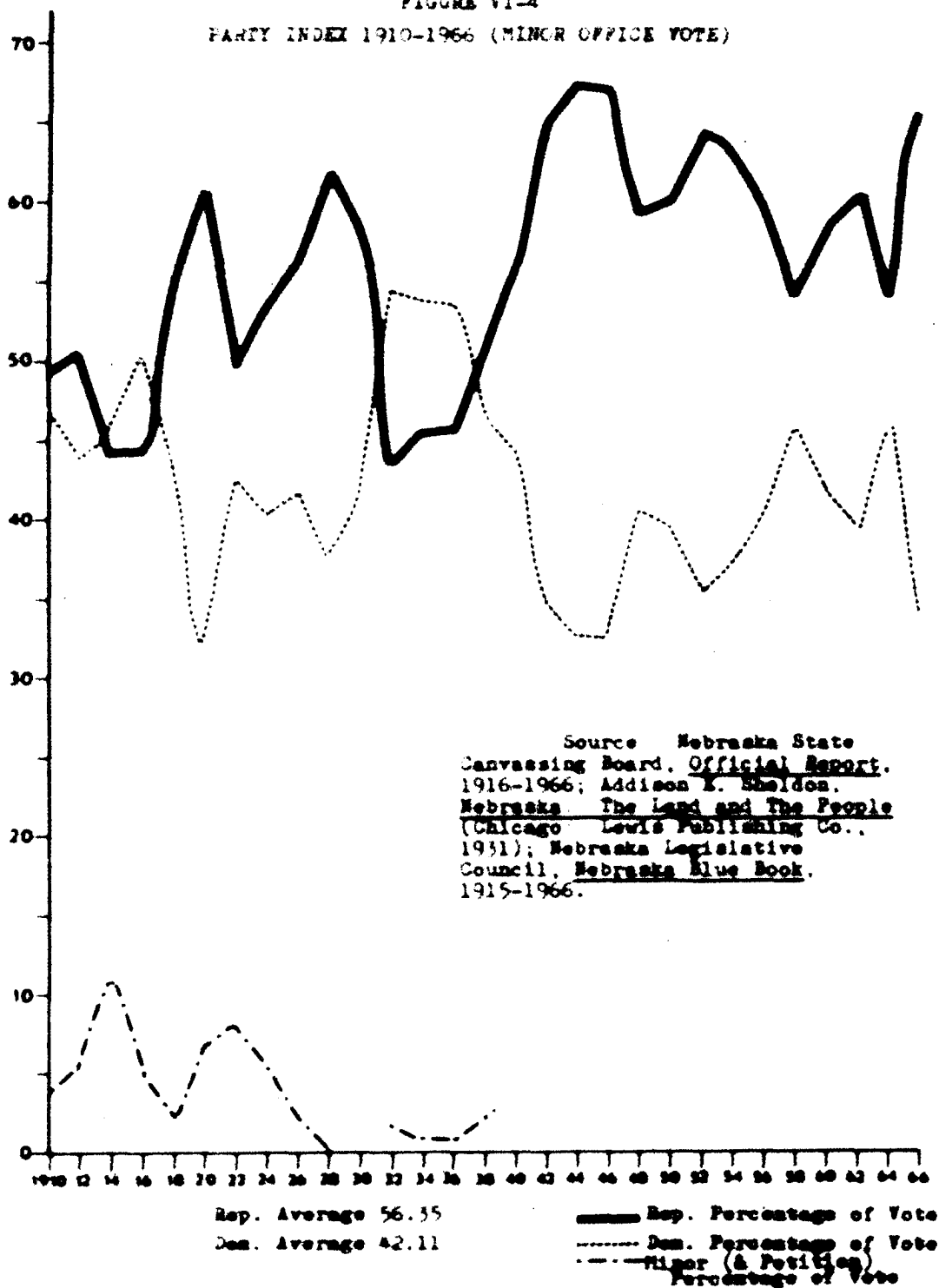
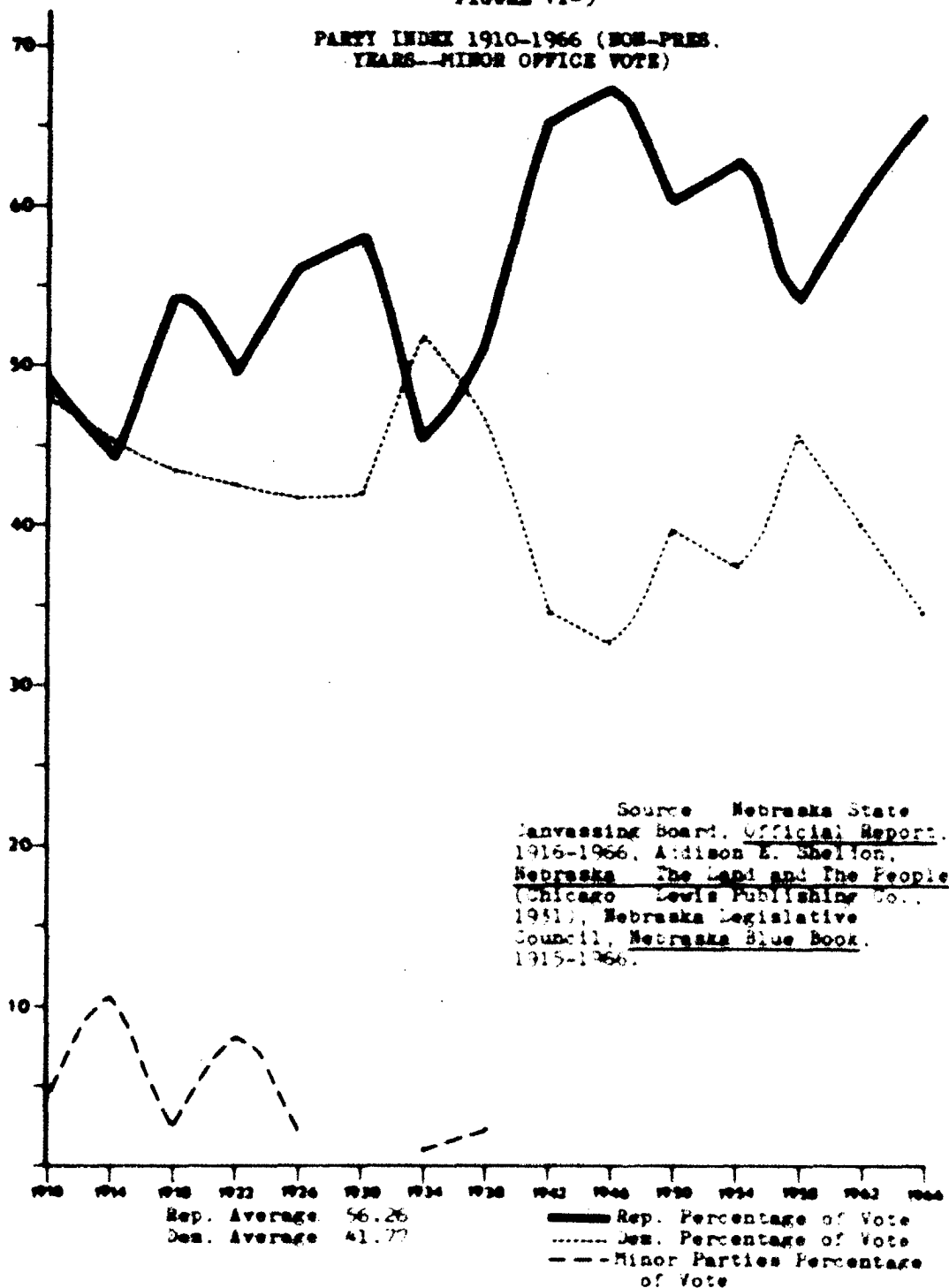


FIGURE VI-5

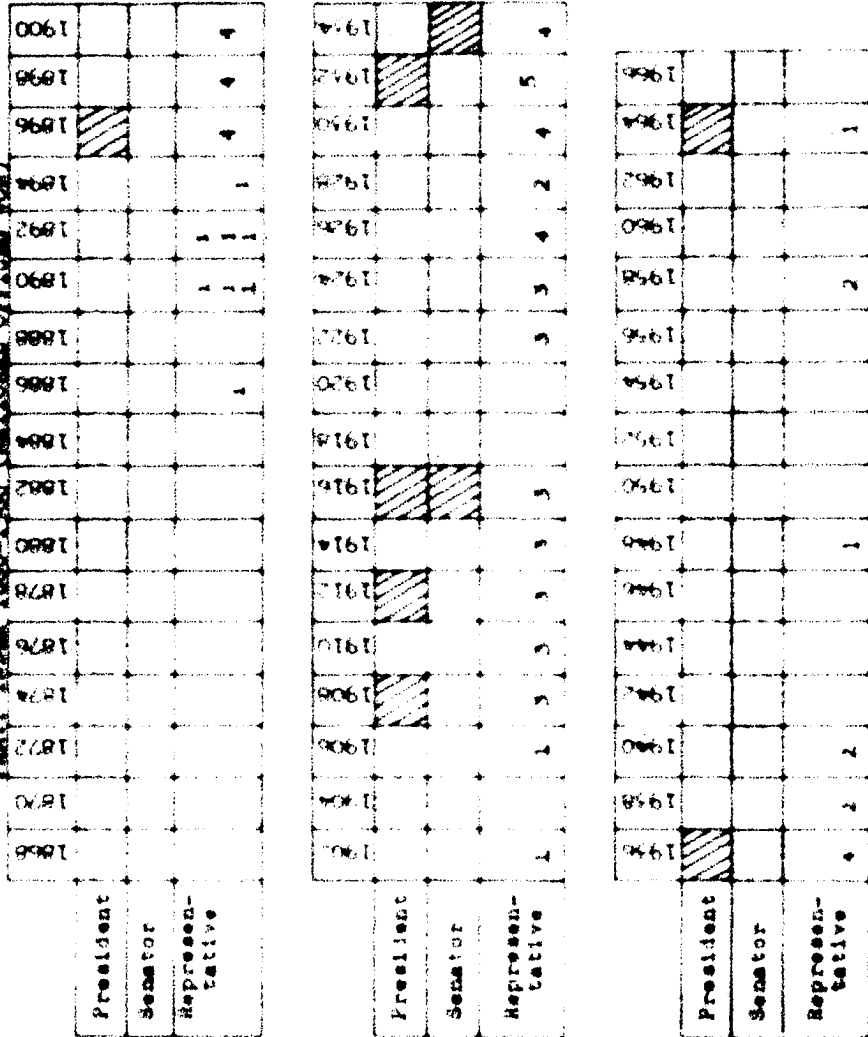
PARTY INDEX 1910-1966 (BOB-PRES.
YEARS--MINOR OFFICE VOTE)

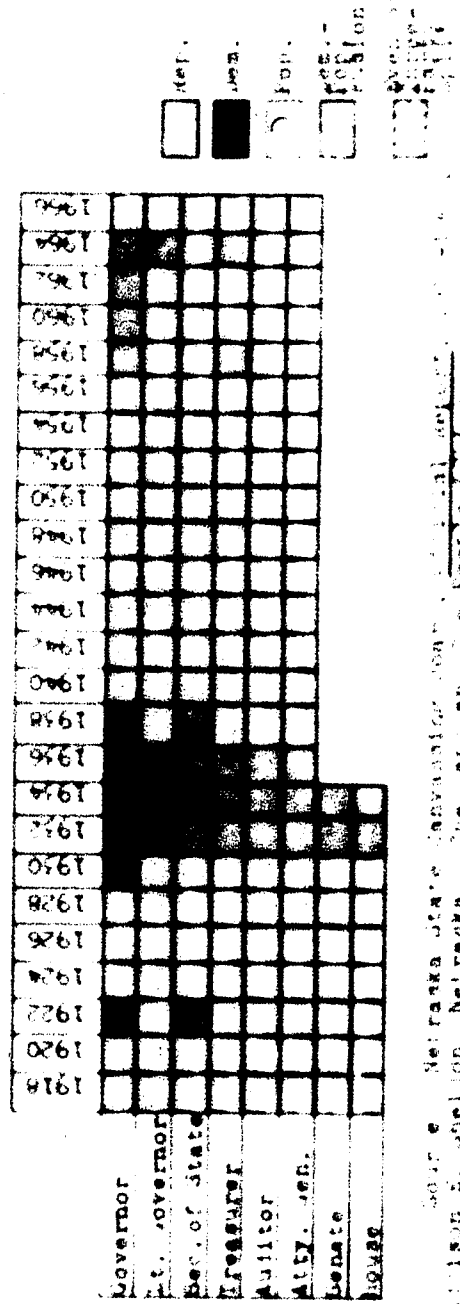
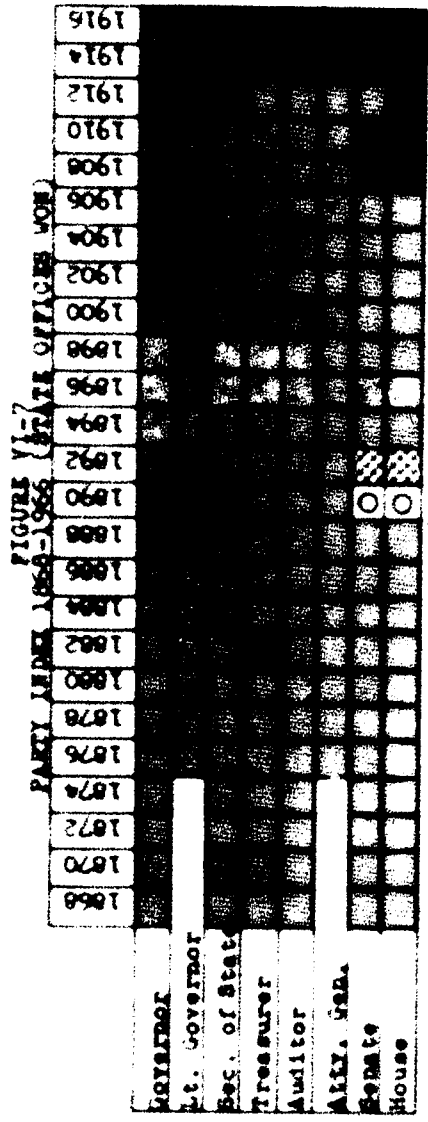


Source: Nebraska State Canvassing Board, Official Report, 1916-1966; Addison K. Sheldon, Nebraska: The Land and The People (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1931); Nebraska Legislative Council, Nebraska Blue Book, 1915-1966.

Rep.
Ind.
Rep.
Dem.
Pop.
Dem.-Pop.
Fusion

FIGURE VI-6
PARTY INDEX 1868-1966 (NATIONAL OFFICERS ONLY)





Source: Nebraska State Legislative Committee on Political Parties, "Political Parties in Nebraska: A Study of the Party System in Nebraska," 1966, pp. 1-10.

Legend:
 [] Rep.
 [] Dem.
 [] Pop.
 [] Prohibition
 [] Other

TABLE VI-1
PARTY INDEXT--LEGISLATIVE SEATS: 1901-1935

Year	Senate			House			Total Legislative			Percentage Dem.	Control of Legislature
	Rep.	Dem.	Other	Rep.	Dem.	Other	Rep.	Dem.	Other		
1901	19	14	.	53	44	3	72	58	3	43.61	Rep.
1903	29	4	.	76	24	.	105	28	.	21.05	Rep.
1905	33	0	.	91	9	.	124	9	.	6.76	Rep.
1907	28	3	2	69	26	5	97	29	7	21.80	Rep.
1909	13	19	1	30	68	2	43	87	3	65.41	Dem.
1911	14	19	.	45	54	1	59	73	1	54.89	Dem.
1913	18	15	.	44	56	.	62	71	.	54.13	Split
1915	14	19	.	40	60	.	54	79	.	59.39	Dem.
1917	10	23	.	39	61	.	49	84	.	63.15	Dem.
1919	30	3	.	85	15	.	115	18	.	13.53	Rep.
1921	33	0	.	96	4	.	129	4	.	3.01	Rep.
1923	23	10	.	58	40	2	81	50	2	37.59	Rep.
1925	26	7	.	64	36	.	90	43	.	32.33	Rep.
1927	23	10	.	66	34	.	89	44	.	33.08	Rep.
1929	24	9	.	74	26	.	98	35	.	26.32	Rep.
1931	20	13	.	53	47	.	73	60	.	45.11	Rep.
1933	2	31	.	19	81	.	21	112	.	84.21	Dem.
1935	11	22	.	32	68	.	43	90	.	67.68	Dem.
							1,404	947	16	40.68	Rep: 11 Dem: 6 Split 1

Source: Nebraska, House Journal of the Legislature of the State of Nebraska, 27th session through 50th session, 1901-1935; Nebraska, Senate Journal of the Legislature of the State of Nebraska, 27th session through 50th session, 1901-1935. (Percentages computed by author.)

measures would lead to an assessment of relative party strength in Nebraska at better than 55-45 Republican considering the entire period 1910-1966.

Even in bad years, the Republicans have made respectable showings. The year 1932 was the most disastrous in Nebraska Republican history. The Democrats carried the state for President Roosevelt, captured all five Congressional seats, won every statehouse office and overwhelmingly controlled the Legislature.⁴¹ Yet the Republican gubernatorial candidate garnered 46.3 percent of the vote and the minor state office candidates averaged 43.8 percent of the vote.⁴²

For the entire period, 1910-1966, there can be no doubt of the Republican dominance. However, if one breaks

State's office and various County Clerks notwithstanding. The only source available is local newspapers of the period and though helpful, many of these contain only incomplete returns or merely provide the winning candidate's name.

⁴¹The Republicans were represented by only two members in the thirty-three man Senate and nineteen in the hundred-member House (Table VI-1).

⁴²The gubernatorial candidate lost by 35,229 votes out of a total of 562,738 votes cast in this election at the height of the Depression and consequently probably the height of voter dissatisfaction with the "ins"--the Republicans. (Nebraska State Canvassing Board, Official Report: General Election 1932, p. 2.) Two years later, the 1932 candidates were in a rematch, the Republican losing this time by only 17,388 votes out of a total of 558,794 votes. (Nebraska State Canvassing Board, Official Report: General Election 1934, p. 2.)

the period down into two periods--1910-1936 and 1938-1966--a different pattern appears which warrants closer examination. The choice of the mid-1930's as the dividing line is not arbitrary but is based on an examination of the various indices. Up to the mid-1930's two-party competition was a fact and although the Democrats lost the ball game more than they won it, they were always in the game. After the mid-1930's, the Democrats not only lost the game most of the time, they were frequently completely out of the park.

The party index for minor state offices for all elections (Figure VI-4) in the period 1910-1936 indicates that only twice (1920 and 1928) did the Democratic average fall below 40 percent. If one excludes the presidential years (Figure VI-5), the worst the Democrats did was in 1926 when they averaged 41.84 percent. In the period 1938-1966, for the same indices, the Democrats fell below 40 percent in eight of the fifteen elections, and six of the eight non-presidential elections. Examination of the other figures reveals a similar pattern.

Table VI-2 summarizes the party strength for these two periods, based on the various party indices utilized. In every case, the sharp decline of Democratic strength in the 1938-1966 period is apparent. It would seem plausible to conclude that the political complexion of the state

changed sharply in the 1930's, resulting in a significant weakening of the Democratic party to the extent that two-party competition could rarely be viewed in the operation of the political system.

TABLE VI-2

**REPUBLICAN-DEMOCRATIC STRENGTH
SUMMARIZED: 1910-1966**

	1910-1936		1938-1966	
	Rep.	Dem.	Rep.	Dem.
Avg. vote for Gov. (% all elections)	48.39	47.87	57.06	41.54
Avg. vote for Gov. (% non-pres.)	48.19	49.31	56.91	41.16
Minor off. (% all elections)	51.26	44.95	60.43	39.43
Minor off. (% non-pres.)	50.95	45.13	60.91	38.81
Natl. off. seats won (number)	49	47	64	9
State off. seats won (number)	50	34	66	9
Legis. seats won (number)	963	763	..	..
Legis. seats won (percentage)	55.69	44.13	58.90 ^a	30.00 ^a

^aThough the members are elected on a nonpartisan ballot, these figures of party affiliation were gathered from biographical data, past partisan activity, or previous partisan offices sought and/or held. Determination of political affiliation was accepted only upon firm evidence and in cases of doubt was held as "unknown" (10.4 percent of the total individuals who have served in the Unicameral fell into this category).

What happened in the 1930's to effect this widening of the Republican-Democratic gap to the point where the Democrats rarely were able to compete in the political struggle to win office? A number of

possibilities exist in seeking an answer. As has been noted, the decade of the 1930's resulted in a population decline, but more importantly, a population redistribution with the small-town, older population playing a significant role in the demographic make-up of the state. This pattern would be expected to reflect a more conservative, hence Republican, voting bias. The commercialization of agriculture along with more stability due to government participation would favor a more conservative, hence again Republican, political outlook. Thus, the demographic and economic changes of the 1930's would seem to explain plausibly the pro-Republican shift evident in the post-1930 period. Finally, the institutional changes cannot be overlooked. The nonpartisan Unicameral drastically reduced the number of political offices being contested. The loss of 133 legislative contests every two years had to affect the organizational viability of both parties, for the raison-d'être of political parties is vying for political office. As the minor party, the Democrats were hurt more seriously than the Republicans. With the passage of time, the organizational viability of the party became weaker as the successes were fewer and more widely spaced. The party could not even count on securing the lesser plums of political office, like legislative seats, to sustain

and carry them through the lean years.⁴³

The Republicans were also hurt by the loss of legislative contests, but their continued successes in what remained, coupled with the Democratic weakness, sustained the party organization. But this strength may well have been deceptive--with the small number of offices available, it would appear difficult to sustain a large and well-organized mechanism. In short, both parties were hard hit, but the Republicans appeared to have suffered less because of their preferred position, and their strength was due in part to the ever-weakening Democratic opposition.

With each loss, it was that much harder for the Democrats to bounce back and much easier for the Republicans to continue to win without strengthening the party apparatus. The break came in 1958 when the Democrats finally broke a twenty-year drought, capturing the Governorship and State Treasurer's office. A revitalization of

⁴³In the pre-Unicameral period the Democrats had disastrous legislative years: only nine representatives in the 1905 Legislature, eighteen in the 1919 body, and a mere four in the Legislature of 1921. But the party was able to bounce back and, if not again control, at least increase its legislative representation to where it was a viable minority, a loyal opposition capable of criticism, of presenting alternatives, always ready to take over should the Republicans falter. Thus, the Democrats, even in lean years, had a forum and base of power from which to operate and this had to provide some sustenance, albeit merely crumbs some years, for the party organization.

the party was now possible and further successes added new life to the party. Faced with defeat, the Republicans were forced also to organize and revitalize their party and a more balanced party competition followed. This appears to be the trend at the present time, but it remains to be seen whether the Democrats can recover from the debacle of 1966.⁴⁴

The new statewide voter registration law has given some indications as to the relative party strengths. Voters had until May 3, 1968, to register to be eligible to vote in the primary. Though the Republicans dominated as expected, the strength of the Democrats was rather surprising. The Republicans claimed 51.6 percent of the registrants, the Democrats 45.7 percent, with 2.5 percent listing themselves as Independents.⁴⁵ Compared to the

⁴⁴Both parties are working with limited resources--political offices--and the continued resurgence of the Democratic party is seriously threatened by a strong Republican organizational effort. The present Republican Governor is apparently intent on strengthening the party, revitalizing it with new blood, making it a more permanent organization and using the tools available to him to achieve these ends. In short, the Governor is aggressively pursuing his role as party leader. (Dick Herman, "Governor's Partisan Involvement, Leadership Causing Friction?" Lincoln Evening Journal, December 21, 1967, p. 5.) The previous Democratic incumbent chose not to play so aggressive a role and consequently the 1966 Republican victory was perhaps more decisive than it would have been if the efforts to build the Democratic party had been more pervasive.

⁴⁵Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star, May 12, 1968, p. 2B.

various indices based on party performance, the Democrats emerge much stronger in the registration figures than one would expect. The Democratic strength would tend to support speculation on the fluidity of partisan voting behavior on the part of the state's electorate.

Nebraska's "Free for All"
Primary

The inability of political parties to substantially influence the primary nomination phase has been noted. As a result, parties have been faced with the prospect of supporting candidates who are less than enthusiastically accepted by the leadership elite of the party organization. This was a prime argument used by the political parties in arguing for the pre-primary endorsement law.⁴⁶ It was contended that the people voted for names,⁴⁷ not men, that

⁴⁶Senning, "Lobby," p. 8.

⁴⁷The concept of name voting is a recurring theme in Nebraska political mythology. It is often contended that Scandinavian names have a particular attraction for voters. A study done by the University of Nebraska School of Journalism in 1964 revealed little to support the Scandinavian myth. The study, however, traced the origin of surnames of candidates over the years. Thus, a name which might sound Scandinavian, such as Anderson, was primarily traceable to England or Scotland, according to surname dictionaries. No account was taken of the fact that the name may have sounded Scandinavian. One theory is that the Scandinavian myth dates to the 1938 election when an inordinate number of Scandinavian like names appeared on the ballot. (Bob Moraczewski, "'Sons' That Win Elections Are Not Necessarily Scandinavian," Lincoln Evening Journal, April 9, 1964, p. 5.)

It is difficult to document the name voting idea, but the overabundance of Scandinavian-type names dates

minority candidates were elected because of the large number entered in the primary, and that the party in the November election was saddled in many cases with men who were undesirable.⁴⁸

back prior to 1938. In the 1922 general election, for instance, a Johnson ran for Lieutenant Governor, a Larson for Secretary of State, a Swanson for Commissioner of Public Lands and Buildings, a Robinson for Treasurer, and an Anderson for Congress. In 1924 a Johnson, Anderson, Larson, Swanson, Robinson, and Jamieson appeared on the ballot for state and Congressional offices. In 1928 there were two Johnsons, a Swanson, Larson, and Sorensen. A record must have been set in 1934 with the appearance of Jurgensen, two Johnsons, two Swansons, and a Jensen. The parade continued in 1936: Jurgensen, three Swansons, Olson, Jensen, and Johnson. Finally the famous 1938 elections: three Johnsons, two Swansons, and a Jensen.

The name voting theory may well be tied in with the high degree of success exhibited by incumbents over the years. The minor state offices particularly have been susceptible to this inclination of voters to retain incumbents. Similarly the losers tend to become perennials and appear on the ballot for a number of elections, thus their names also become familiar to the voters. Since the turn of the century, ten individuals have served as Secretary of State (an average of 3.4 terms or 7 years), and a father and son have held the office 30 of the last 40 years. In the same period eleven men have served as Auditor (3.1 terms or 6 years) with the present incumbent in office since 1939; twenty-two persons have held the position of Treasurer which is constitutionally limited to two terms (1.5 terms or 3 years); seventeen individuals have held the office of Attorney General (2.0 terms or 4 years); and, nineteen served as Lieutenant Governor (1.8 terms or near 4 years). Between 1906 and 1962, three positions on the State Railway Commission were up for election every two years. Twenty-seven men served through the total of 87 elections, an average of 3.6 terms or over seven years. Since 1936 political parties on the state level have had few offices to contend in elections and, with the high rate of incumbency, it is understandable why parties have little control over candidate nomination.

⁴⁸ Senning, "Lobby," p. 8.

The inability of the parties to control the primary selection process is evidenced by their insistent efforts in the late 1930's and early 1940's for the pre-primary endorsement law. Had informal slate-making procedures been operative and effective, the need for the formalized endorsement procedure would have been unnecessary. The sanctity of the "independent primary" (that is, voter choice unhampered by party leadership activities) probably dates to the 1919-22 period when the voters, through referenda, defeated party attempts to weaken the primary and increase party influence.⁴⁹ These defeats, coupled with the anti-party spirit built up in the Populist-Progressive eras, were apparently adequate to weaken any formal party role in the primary process.

The success of the independent primary is evidenced by the number of mavericks, unknowns, and politically unacceptable (to the party organization) that have emerged victorious in the primary. The almost "hands-off" attitude permits an individual with initiative, some money and perhaps little else to win the party nomination. The best the party can do to overcome this is to persuade a name candidate to run, and even this is not always successful.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Supra, p. 135.

⁵⁰ The most recent example is the defeat of former three-term Governor Val Peterson in the primary in 1966 by

Role in Legislative
Elections ⁵¹

One of the traditional roles that political parties theoretically fill is that of recruitment of candidates for political office.⁵² In the context of the nonpartisan electoral procedure for members of Nebraska's Legislature, the presence or absence of party influence in these elections is significant. If parties are indeed active and there is little significant difference from the partisan environment, then the nonpartisan device is but a sham. If parties are not active, then questions arise as to the

a virtual unknown, Norbert Tiemann. In 1960, the incumbent Democratic Governor narrowly won the party nomination for U.S. Senator, but his choice for Governor to succeed him lost in the primary to Frank Morrison, an oft-unsuccessful candidate for various offices. In the same year in the Republican primary, the gubernatorial nominee won despite the opposition of many leading party officials. The career of Terry Carpenter is perhaps the best illustration of the success of the political maverick who has time and again spurned parties. Carpenter has switched parties three times since 1932 and been successful in primaries of both parties, winning the Democratic primary for U.S. Senator in 1936, and Republican delegate to the national convention in 1956. Since 1957, except for one term, he has held a seat in the Unicameral and is one of the more flamboyant political figures on the Nebraska scene.

⁵¹The bulk of the material in this section is based on a questionnaire sent in the summer of 1967 to party leaders in Nebraska. Appendix C contains a copy of the questionnaire, detailed information on the distribution and return of the questionnaire and an explanation of the methodology utilized in analyzing the data.

⁵²Clyde F. Snider, American State and Local Government (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965), p. 135.

nature of the legislative recruitment process, particularly who or what does fulfill the recruitment role.

The literature on nonpartisan elections is voluminous, and the role of parties within the nonpartisan framework varies from one political system to another. In Chicago city council elections, the party influence is strong despite the "nonpartisan" electoral procedure.⁵³ Studies of other nonpartisan local elections indicate party influence is weak or nonexistent.⁵⁴

Arguments concerning nonpartisanship are likewise conflicting. Some of the liabilities for nonpartisanship include restriction of the channels for recruitment of candidates for partisan as well as nonpartisan offices, restriction of facilities for fund-raising, encouragement of avoidance of issues in campaigns, tendency to frustrate protest voting (no "ins" to be thrown out), and lack of

⁵³ Ibid., p. 152.

⁵⁴ Maurice M. Ramsey, "Some Aspects of Nonpartisan Government in Detroit 1918-1940" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1944). Though party activity may be lacking, cleavages may still be present which bear a close resemblance to partisan cleavages in the community. (Robert Salisbury and Gordon Black, "Class and Party in Partisan and Non-Partisan Elections: The Case of Des Moines," American Political Science Review, LVII [September, 1963], 584-592.) The weakening of party influence is indicated in two general studies on nonpartisanship, one on the state level and one on the local. (Charles R. Adrian, "The Nonpartisan Legislature in Minnesota" [unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1950]; Eugene C. Lee, The Politics of Nonpartisanship [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960].)

collective responsibility in a nonpartisan body.⁵⁵ Others see the actual ballot device--partisan or nonpartisan--as less important than the political complexion of the governmental entity. A study of nonpartisan elections in some California cities revealed there was little to indicate there would be any drastic change in the campaigns with a return to the partisan ballot.⁵⁶ Other studies hypothesize that partisanship will survive any ballot changes if favorable structural conditions are present; that is, the intensity of party identification and the social structure of the community will determine the local party system more than the institutional mechanisms.⁵⁷

Thus, the effects of nonpartisanship must be assessed in terms of the ends desired and the political environment in which it operates. Nonpartisanship, in and

⁵⁵Charles R. Adrian, "Some Characteristics of Nonpartisan Elections," American Political Science Review, XLVI (September, 1952), 766-776.

⁵⁶Lee, op. cit., p. 169.

⁵⁷J. Leiper Freeman, "Local Party Systems: Theoretical Considerations and a Case Analysis," American Journal of Sociology, LXIV (November, 1958), 282-289; Phillips Outright, "Nonpartisan Electoral Systems in American Cities," Comparative Studies in Society and History, V (January, 1963), 212-226. Outright found nonpartisan elections to be associated with several structural conditions: (1) great voter support for one party; (2) weak party identification; (3) lack of an economic base which encourages class-based organizations and class alignment to political parties; (4) lack of a religious base adequate for religious cleavage to support political parties. (P. 266.)

of itself, may do no more than dilute political parties, but in an environment where parties are weak, the addition of nonpartisan electoral features may well destroy the parties. If one accepts parties as "a basic element of democratic institutional apparatus,"⁵⁸ and believes they perform an essential function in the process of succession to power, then he must support their use, regardless of the fact that no drastic changes in the body politic may be forthcoming by replacing nonpartisan ballots with partisan ones. If the issues of state and local government are political (and all agree they are, though many disagree as to whether they are partisan), then parties are an asset and should provide long-term benefits.⁵⁹

In Nebraska, what role do political parties play in the nonpartisan legislative elections? Based on a

⁵⁸V. O. Key, Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups (New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1958), p. 12.

⁵⁹It is often contended that there is "no Republican or Democratic way to pave the streets," indicating the general idea that the Republican-Democratic cleavage has little relevance in state and local matters. Though this may be true in the implementation of a program or policy, it is also true that there may be important differences in the formulation of policy and program priorities and that there may be meaningful cleavages even down to the local level. The party structure need not be based on Republican and Democrat if one still feels it is necessary to separate national political issues from those of state and local government. State and/or local parties designated Liberals or Conservatives, Reds or Whites, or what have you, would still provide the institutional apparatus of a party which many feel essential, while at the same time being separated from the national issues.

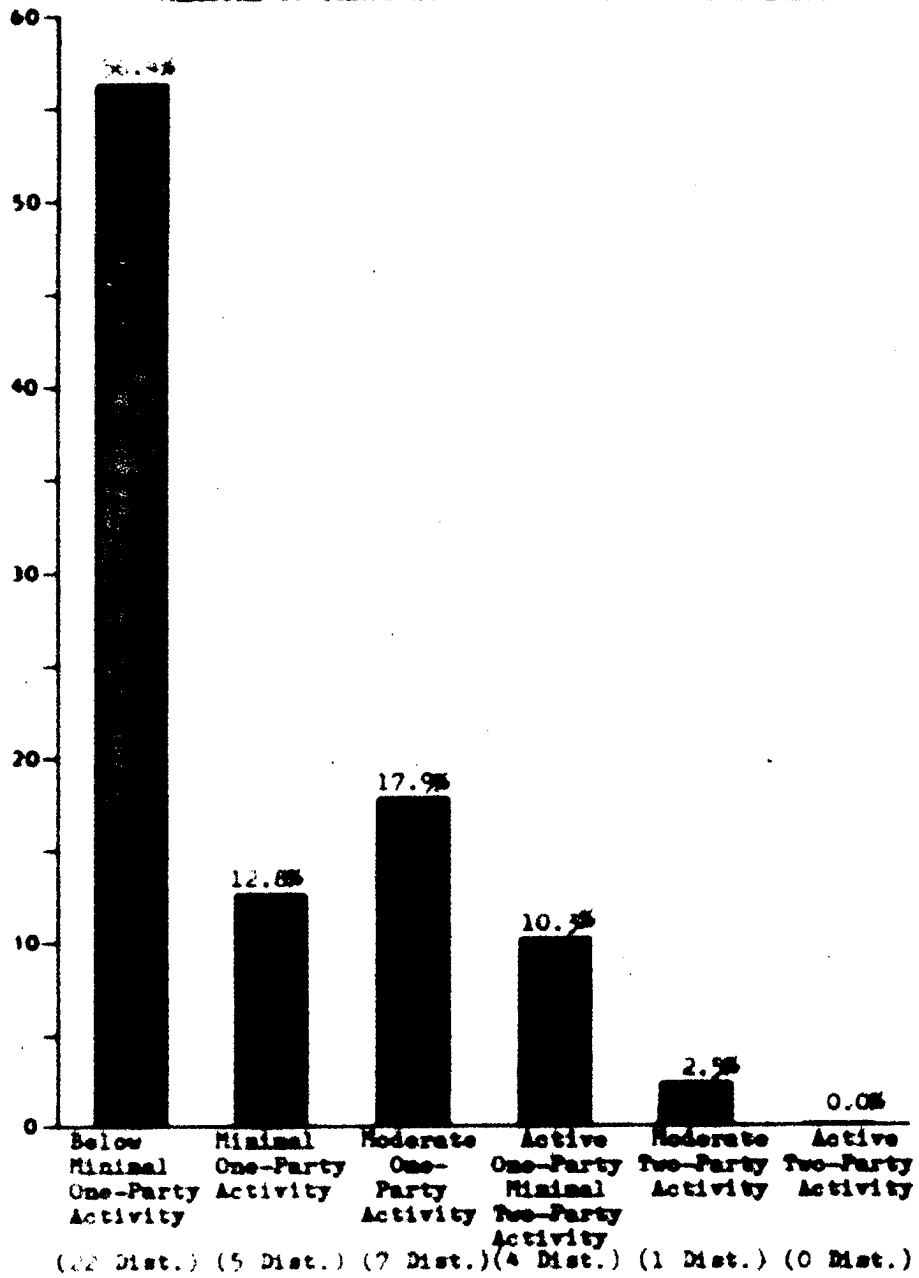
questionnaire used in this study, political parties play a very limited role in the state's legislative elections. The measure of party activity (MPA) devised to assess the degree of party involvement in legislative elections⁶⁰ indicates that party activity in over 56 percent of the legislative districts⁶¹ did not even reach the minimal point of what was accepted as party activity. The minimal point was designated as one where there was activity in one election (either primary or general election) which occurred at least sometimes, involved one activity on the part of one party and at least some leaders in one party were active. From this point, various levels of party activity were designated up to the high point, active two-party. Figure VI-8 summarizes the percentage of districts by the MPA categories.

If anything, persons holding party positions would be expected to enhance their status and if any distortion of the assessment of party role by its members were involved, it would probably be toward accentuating the party's activities. Even accepting this, the degree of

⁶⁰See Appendix C for an explanation of the basis for the MPA.

⁶¹Of the total 49 legislative districts, 39 were utilized for the study. This included 35 districts in which over 50 percent responded representing both parties, and four districts with less than 50 percent response but with both parties represented (three of these had better than a 40 percent response).

FIGURE VI-8
MEASURE OF PARTY ACTIVITY IN LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS



party activity in Nebraska's legislative elections is not large. Only 43.6 percent of the districts even reach the minimum point, and only 12.8 percent fall into or above the midpoint on the devised scale of party activity. This tends to substantiate the hypothesis of a limited role for political parties in Nebraska's legislative elections.

Looking at how each party assesses its own level of activity and that of the opposition (Table VI-3), we find that in 30 of the 39 districts both parties agree on which is more active.⁶² Three districts are assessed as even, and in the remaining six, the two parties fail to agree on which is more active.

Of the 30 districts in agreement, 24 of these have a higher level of Republican activity and six a higher level of Democratic action. The Republicans tend to assess Democratic strength in the Democratic districts as greater than the Democrats assess their own strength. The Republicans also tend to assess their own strength in Republican districts as greater than the Democrats do, but this is not pronounced (Table VI-4).

In measuring the level of activity, if one accepts as the lowest acceptable minimum activity which includes at least one formal or informal activity and some leaders

⁶²See Appendix C for the basis for the assigned value of individual party activity (IPA).

TABLE VI-3
INDIVIDUAL PARTY ACTIVITY (IPA)

District	Dem. Respondents		Rep. Respondents		Total District ^a
	Dem. IPA	Rep. IPA	Rep. IPA	Dem. IPA	
01	1.40	3.60	10.33	10.33	+ 2.20 R
02	0.33	2.00	6.25	0.00	+ 7.92 R
06	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	+ 1.00 R
08	0.00	0.00	5.50	0.50	+ 5.00 R
10	6.00	5.00	3.50	0.00	. . .
12	9.00	1.50	3.00	3.00	- 7.50 D
15	6.33	7.00	1.50	0.00	+ 1.17 R
16	3.33	2.67	11.00	11.00	- 0.66 D
17	3.33	3.33	5.67	6.00	- 0.33 D
18	6.33	7.33	1.50	0.00	+ 2.50 R
19	1.00	1.00	1.50	2.00	- 0.50 D
21	2.00	2.00	3.00	2.50	+ 0.50 R
22	1.33	1.33	0.00	0.00	EVEN
23	2.50	0.25	6.00	9.00	- 2.25 D
24	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	EVEN
25	12.00	8.00	2.00	2.00	- 4.00 D
26	3.00	3.00	2.50	2.50	EVEN
27	1.50	1.00	2.33	0.67	. . .
28	3.00	3.00	4.50	1.00	+ 3.50 R
30	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.00	+ 0.50 R
31	5.00	5.67	1.33	0.67	+ 1.33 R
32	1.67	1.67	3.00	2.33	+ 0.67 R
33	0.67	2.33	1.00	1.00	+ 1.66 R
34	5.00	7.50	4.50	2.00	+ 5.00 R
35	1.00	2.00	1.67	2.50	. . .
36	0.50	4.00	7.25	3.25	+ 7.50 R

TABLE VI-3--Continued

District	Dem. Respondents		Rep. Respondents		Total District ^a
	Dem. IPA	Rep. IPA	Rep. IPA	Dem. IPA	
37	2.00	9.25	6.25	1.50	+12.00 R
38	2.00	3.00	3.00	0.50	+ 3.50 R
39	0.50	0.50	4.00	3.00	+ 1.00 R
40	6.50	7.00	4.00	1.00	+ 3.50 R
41	8.00	4.00	5.33	4.67	. . .
42	2.60	3.00	2.17	1.00	+ 1.57 R
43	3.25	3.75	2.33	2.67	. . .
44	0.00	0.75	4.60	2.20	+ 3.15 R
45	9.33	9.67	4.00	0.50	+ 3.84 R
46	9.00	0.00	1.00	0.50	. . .
47	5.33	9.00	0.75	0.75	+ 3.67 R
48	0.33	1.00	9.67	0.33	+10.01 R
49	0.50	4.00	5.50	0.50	+ 8.50 R
Total	126.56	131.10	144.93	82.37	

^aTotal difference between the total party IPA, 0.00 meaning equal party activity, with "+" indicating Republicans more active and with "-" indicating Democrats more active. The closer to 0.00 the more nearly equal the two-party activity is.

active (translated into a numerical value of 4.0), then one finds a very low level of party activity (Table VI-5).

TABLE VI-4
IPA BREAKDOWN BY PARTY

Category	Number
Both parties agree Republicans are more active	24
Reps rate selves higher than Dems do	13
Dems rate Reps higher than Reps do selves	10
Both rate Rep strength the same	1
Both parties agree Democrats are more active	6
Dems rate selves higher than Reps do	2
Reps rate Dems higher than Dems do selves	4
Total	30

TABLE VI-5
LEVEL OF PARTY ACTIVITY

Category	Rep.	Dem.
	Districts	Districts
	(based on the IPA)	
Both parties assess activity at minimal point or better (4.0)	7	0
Average of both parties reaches minimal point or better (4.0)	13	5
Below minimal point	4	1
Total districts	24	6

In only seven of the twenty-four Republican districts and none of the Democratic districts, did both assess the dominant party as undertaking activity which

was equal to or above the minimum point. Or conversely, in twenty-three of the thirty districts agreed party activity fell below the minimal point of acceptable party activity.

Table VI-3 also reveals a perceived higher total level of activity by Democratic respondents than Republican ones. While the Democratic assessment of total Republican activity was near that of the Republican assessment of this activity (131.10 to 144.93), Republican assessment of total Democratic activity was far below that of the Democratic assessment (82.37 to 126.56). Table VI-6 shows this perceived higher level of activity by the Democratic respondents.

TABLE VI-6

MPA BY POSITION AND PARTY OF RESPONDENT

Position(s) of Respondent	Republicans		Democrats		Both Parties	
	No.	MPA	No.	MPA	No.	MPA
Executive Committee	8	5.00	5	9.90	13	6.84
Exec. & Central Com.	3	8.67	7	8.57	10	8.60
Exec., Cen. Com. & County Chairman	3	0.33	1	29.00	4	7.50
Exec. Com. & Co. Chm.	.	.	4	6.75	4	6.75
Central Committee	48	7.06	42	9.17	90	8.04
Cen. Com. & Co. Chm.	6	16.33	8	8.12	14	11.64
County Chairman	51	7.67	37	9.24	88	8.33
Total	119	7.51	104	9.77	223	8.40

The Democrats almost consistently score higher than the Republicans. This would indicate that the Democrats either overestimate the level of their activity or Republicans underestimate the degree of Democratic activity.⁶³ One possible explanation is that the Democrats as the minority party must work harder and the Republicans, because of their dominance, do not exert as much effort and thus do not see all the Democratic efforts. In a partisan framework this would be plausible, but in a nonpartisan atmosphere and given the general low level of total party activity, this explanation pales somewhat. It may be that the Democrats, as the minority party, report more activity to offset the accepted Republican dominance, and the Republicans, knowing they are dominant, play down the Democratic role so as not to endanger this accepted Republican dominance. The data, however, do not permit any conclusions on the perceived higher level of activity by the Democratic respondents.

Despite the low level of party activity indicated, a majority of the respondents indicated they have encouraged fellow party members to run for the legislature (57.0 percent). Of these, 26 percent said they did so

⁶³Since both assess the Republican strength nearly the same, it would seem safe to exclude the possibility that Democrats see the Republicans engaging in more activity than they actually do.

regularly, about another 26 percent did so frequently and the balance did so only sometimes or once in awhile. However, only 21.6 percent indicated the people contacted consented always or frequently, and 21.6 percent said these people never consented to run. Of those who did consent, only 30 percent were judged to have been successful better than some of the time (26 percent were never successful). Tables VI-7 through VI-10 summarize the respondents by party and position on these questions about recruiting legislative candidates.

The most active individuals in this area of recruitment are those who hold offices in the higher echelons of the party structure. These persons also tend to pursue such efforts more frequently though they do not seem to have better success, from the standpoint of an affirmative response or an eventual electoral victory, than do the "grass roots" party officials. In fact, the results would tend to support the conclusion that, while lower echelon officials are less involved in recruitment processes, they are more successful in those cases in which they do take the initiative.

In reference to voter cognizance of the political affiliation of the "nonpartisan" candidates for the legislature, the party leaders felt that the people were generally aware of the affiliation of those running

TABLE VI-7
ENCOURAGEMENT OF PARTY MEMBERS TO RUN

Position(s) of Respondent	Yes		No		Unans.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Republicans						
Executive Committee	7	87.50	1	12.50	0	0.0
Exec. & Central Com.	3	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.0
Exec., Cen. Com. & County Chairman	2	67.67	1	33.33	0	0.0
Exec. Com. & Co. Chm.	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.0
Central Committee	26	54.20	21	43.80	1	2.1
Cen. Com. & Co. Chm.	3	50.00	3	50.00	0	0.0
County Chairman	24	47.10	27	52.90	0	0.0
Total	65	54.60	53	44.5	1	0.8
Democrats						
Executive Committee	3	60.00	2	40.00	0	0.0
Exec. & Central Com.	7	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.0
Exec., Cen. Com. & County Chairman	1	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.0
Exec. Com. & Co. Chm.	3	75.00	1	25.00	0	0.0
Central Committee	23	54.80	18	42.90	1	2.4
Cen. Com. & Co. Chm.	7	87.50	1	12.50	0	0.0
County Chairman	18	48.60	18	48.60	1	2.7
Total	62	59.60	40	38.50	2	1.9

TABLE VI-8
FREQUENCY OF EFFORTS TOWARD
LEGISLATIVE RECRUITMENT

Position(s) of Respondent	Regu- larly	Fre- quently	Some- times	Once in a while
Republicans				
Executive Committee	0	2	4	1
Exec. & Central Committee	2	0	0	1
Exec., Central Com. & County Chairman	1	0	0	1
Exec. Com. & Co. Chairman	0	0	0	0
Central Committee	6	13	4	3
Central Com. & Co. Chairman	1	0	2	0
County Chairman	8	8	5	3
Total	18	23	15	9
Democrats				
Executive Committee	1	0	2	0
Exec. & Central Committee	2	1	2	1
Exec., Central Com. & County Chairman	0	0	1	0
Exec. Com. & Co. Chairman	0	0	3	0
Central Committee	4	5	7	7
Central Com. & Co. Chairman	3	3	1	0
County Chairman	5	4	4	5
Total	15	13	20	13

TABLE VI-9
AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE TOWARD
LEGISLATIVE CANDIDACY

Position(s) of Respondent	Always	Fre- quently	Some- times	Never
Republicans				
Executive Committee	0	0	5	2
Exec. & Central Committee	0	2	1	0
Exec., Central Com. & County Chairman	0	0	0	2
Exec. Com. & Co. Chairman	0	0	0	0
Central Committee	1	5	14	5
Central Com. & Co. Chm.	0	1	1	1
County Chairman	1	8	13	1
Total	2	16	34	11
Democrats				
Executive Committee	0	0	3	0
Exec. & Central Committee	0	0	3	3
Exec., Central Com. & County Chairman	0	0	1	0
Exec. Com. & Co. Chairman	0	1	1	1
Central Committee	0	2	15	5
Central Com. & Co. Chm.	0	1	3	2
County Chairman	1	3	9	4
Total	1	7	35	15

TABLE VI-10
SUCCESS OF PERSONS RESPONDING AFFIRMATIVELY
TOWARD LEGISLATIVE CANDIDACY

Position(s) of Respondent	Most times	Half time	Some- times	Never
Republicans				
Executive Committee	2	0	3	0
Exec. & Central Committee	2	0	1	0
Exec., Central Com. & County Chairman	0	0	0	1
Exec. Com. & County Chairman	0	0	0	0
Central Committee	3	5	8	4
Central Com. & County Chairman	2	0	0	0
County Chairman	12	1	3	6
Total	21	6	15	11
Democrats				
Executive Committee	0	0	2	1
Exec. & Central Committee	0	0	3	1
Exec., Central Com. & County Chairman	1	0	0	0
Exec. Com. & Co. Chairman	0	1	1	0
Central Committee	5	0	7	8
Central Com. & County Chairman	0	0	4	2
County Chairman	6	0	4	4
Total	12	1	21	16

(56.1 percent). The most frequently mentioned reason for this voter knowledge was "the candidate's past activity" (98 out of a possible 125), followed by "political party activity" and "private persons and/or groups activities" (both 63 out of a possible 125). Republicans gave considerable weight to the choice "candidate's actions during the campaign" (24 out of a possible 68) compared to the Democrats (15 out of 57) as another reason for voter awareness of candidates' political affiliation.

Tables VI-11 and VI-12 summarize the findings on constituent awareness of political affiliation.

TABLE VI-11

**VOTER AWARENESS OF CANDIDATE
POLITICAL AFFILIATION
(DEMOCRATIC RESPONDENTS)**

Position(s) of Respondent	Yes	No	Un-ans.	Reasons				
				Past Act.	Party Act.	Camp. Act.	Group Act.	Other
Exec. Com.	3	2	0	3	2	0	2	0
Exec., Gen. Com.	2	5	0	2	1	1	1	0
Exec., Gen. Com. & Co. Chm.	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Exec., Co. Chm.	1	3	0	0	1	0	1	0
Gen. Com.	23	18	1	19	11	7	15	0
Gen., Co. Chm.	5	3	0	5	3	0	2	0
Co. Chm.	22	14	1	14	11	7	11	1
Total	57	45	2	43	30	15	33	1

TABLE VI-12
**VOTER AWARENESS OF CANDIDATE
 POLITICAL AFFILIATION
 (REPUBLICAN RESPONDENTS)**

Position(s) of Respondent	Yes	No	Un-ans.	Reasons				
				Past Party Act.	Party Act.	Camp. Act.	Group Act.	Other
Exec. Com.	3	5	0	2	2	1	1	0
Exec., Gen. Com.	3	0	0	2	0	2	0	0
Exec., Gen. Com. & Co. Chm.	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Exec., Co. Chm.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gen. Com.	25	21	2	21	15	9	12	2
Gen., Co. Chm.	4	2	0	4	2	2	1	0
Co. Chm.	33	18	0	26	14	10	16	4
Total	68	49	2	55	33	24	30	6

The strongest support for the belief that the voters are generally aware of the candidate's party affiliation comes from the lower echelon leaders, particularly the county chairmen (64.7 percent compared to the total Republican sample of 57.1 percent; for the Democratic county chairmen, 59.5 percent to the total Democrat sample of 54.8 percent).

In sum, the role of parties in the nonpartisan legislative elections in Nebraska is small. There are indications that it has only been recently that the parties have been taking a more active role in these

elections.⁶⁴ If true, this would mean that the party role in the past was even less than the present rather minimal level. In any case, it is fairly evident that the nonpartisan electoral process is pretty much just that as far as political party influence is concerned in state legisla-

Political Parties' Attitude
Toward the Nonpartisan
Legislature
Political Parties' Attitude
Toward the Nonpartisan
Legislature

Despite its apparent attack on parties, the 1934 Unicameral drive did not find both political parties formally against adoption of the Norris proposal. Since support and opposition were split within party lines,⁶⁵ neither party took a stand on the proposal in their 1934 platforms.⁶⁶ From the time of its acceptance until 1950, neither party apparently showed much interest in the

⁶⁴This view was expressed by the Chairman and Executive Secretary (since resigned) of the Republican party who felt that in the last election more attention was given to the legislative races. Aid and assistance was given to those who were receptive to it, but the activity was restricted to the general election and to those races where opposing party members were contesting the seat. The party chose not to take sides where both aspirants were Republicans. (Interview with Mrs. Lorraine Orr and Mr. Jack Schuetz, April 25, 1967.)

⁶⁵John P. Senning, The One-House Legislature (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1937), p. 58.

⁶⁶Jack W. Rodgers, "One House for 20 Years," National Municipal Review, XLVI (July, 1957), 339.

Unicameral; at least no changes were sought as no bills were introduced seeking any revision as to the manner of election and neither party took a stand in its platforms in this period.⁶⁷

Since 1950 there has been increasing attention given by the political parties toward altering the structure of the Unicameral. Bills calling for a partisan legislature have become more frequent;⁶⁸ party platforms, particularly the Republican ones, have called for a partisan legislature,⁶⁹ and a number of attempts have been made to get the question on the ballot via the initiative route.⁷⁰

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Supra, p. 131.

⁶⁹The Republican platform of 1952 was the first mention of the issue since the Unicameral was adopted. "We favor amendment of the Constitution of Nebraska to provide for the election of members of the Legislature of this state on a partisan basis . . ." (Nebraska Blue Book 1952, p. 463.) The issue was backed in the 1954, 1956, 1962 and 1964 Republican platforms. (Nebraska Blue Book 1954-1966.) The Democrats first came out explicitly for a partisan legislature in their 1960 platform. "Legislative experience suggests that the 'non-partisan' or 'non-political' feature of the Unicameral Legislature has been frustrated. We suggest, therefore, that consideration be given to the election of our legislators on the party ballot in order that the people may be able to indicate a unified directive to both the legislative and executive departments of our State government." (Nebraska Blue Book 1960, p. 601.) The 1962 and 1964 Democratic platforms repeated their support of a partisan legislature. (Nebraska Blue Book 1962-1966.)

⁷⁰The attempts were made in 1954, 1964, and 1968.

While both parties' support for a partisan Unicameral is on the record, the Republicans have been more fervent in their attempts to bring this about. The Democrats have become less enthusiastic about a partisan Unicameral; though they still favor such a measure, they are not as solidly behind the issue as the Republicans apparently are. The changing Democratic attitude is perhaps best seen in the three drives to get the question on the ballot through the initiative process.

Following adjournment of the 1953 Legislature, the Republican and Democratic State Chairmen announced the creation of a bipartisan committee to sponsor a drive to make the Unicameral partisan and to study the desirability of returning to a bicameral system.⁷¹ In late 1953 it was announced the bipartisan committee was ready to circulate petitions calling for the return to a partisan, bicameral legislature for Nebraska. The Republican State Central Committee endorsed the proposal, but the Democrats took no definitive stand.⁷² Support for the petition campaign was slow in coming, and in early 1954 the bipartisan committee announced it had dropped the idea of a bicameral system and would seek instead to put the question of an enlarged,

⁷¹Rodgers, op. cit., p. 239.

⁷²Ibid., p. 340.

partisanly-elected Unicameral on the ballot.⁷³ "This campaign fared no better. It was difficult to get people to carry the petitions, few signatures were gotten and the movement soon collapsed."⁷⁴

Thus, the first move, which had the support of at least the top leadership within both parties,⁷⁵ failed to get the some 60,000 signatures necessary to put the question on the ballot.

The split within the Democratic party on the partisan Legislature was evident in the 1964 petition drive. In the fall of 1963 the Nebraska Federation of Republican Women began a move to secure the 48,000 signatures needed to put the partisan question on the ballot.⁷⁶ The Democratic Governor and a number of other prominent party members voiced their opposition to a partisan Legislature, though the party State Chairman backed the move and in April 1964 joined his Republican counterpart in

⁷³ Adam C. Breckenridge, "Partisan Legislative Setups Bought in Nebraska," National Municipal Review, XLIII (March, 1954), 139; Lincoln Star, February 2, 1954, p. 1.

⁷⁴ Rodgers, op. cit., p. 340.

⁷⁵ Democratic State Chairman William Meier claimed that a poll of the Central Committee and County Chairmen revealed that 94 of the 111 polled (84.6 percent) favored "immediate steps" to bring about election of state legislators on a partisan ballot. (Lincoln Star, February 2, 1954, p. 1.)

⁷⁶ Lincoln Star, September 5, 1963, p. 12.

naming a bipartisan committee to aid the drive.⁷⁷

Support was less than enthusiastic and as the deadline approached it appeared the required number of signatures might not be met. As the deadline passed, the number was barely over the minimum and upon validation the petition was ruled to have fallen 156 signatures short.⁷⁸ Backers immediately went into court seeking an interpretation of the state's initiative process claiming signatures were declared void only because of technicalities.⁷⁹ The District Court ruled in favor of the petition backers and ordered the Secretary of State to put the question on the ballot.⁸⁰

The entire matter was promptly challenged in another suit brought by a Democrat who had been publicly

⁷⁷At the same time the Democratic Chairman indicated a growing reluctance to support the petition campaign among the people. One of the Democrats opposed announced an attempt to have the state platform committee oppose the partisan drive because it was an attempt "to give the GOP state chairman and national committeeman broad influential powers over the Legislature which they do not currently enjoy with the non-partisan body." (Lincoln Star, March 26, 1964, p. 1; April 17, 1964, p. 1.)

⁷⁸Lincoln Star, July 3, 1964, p. 1.

⁷⁹The suit revolved around the validity of signatures of women who used their husband's name rather than their own first names and signatures of those who used ditto marks following the signatures of those above them on the petition. (Lincoln Evening Journal, July 8, 1964, p. 24; July 14, 1964, p. 1.)

⁸⁰Lincoln Evening Journal, July 28, 1964, p. 1.

prominent in opposition to the petition drive. The suit charged the entire petition drive was fraught with illegalities which were sufficient to void the entire petition.⁸¹ The District Court found it unnecessary to rule on the plaintiff's allegations since it was found that the sponsoring organization had not filed a statement of expenditures, as required by law, and on this basis the Secretary of State was enjoined from putting the question on the ballot.⁸² On this note the second attempt to bring the question of a partisan Legislature before the people via the initiative process came to an abrupt halt.

The 1964 move was marked by deep division within the Democratic ranks and a great deal of overall confusion. The failure to secure a comfortable margin of signatures and the last minute rush contributed to the failure of the move.

In early 1968 the Republicans announced the formation of a committee to sponsor a petition drive to attempt once more to put the question of a partisan Unicameral on the ballot.⁸³ Only one Democrat appeared on the

⁸¹Lincoln Evening Journal, August 1, 1964, p. 3.

⁸²Ibid., September 11, 1964, p. 1.

⁸³Lincoln Evening Journal, February 1, 1968, p. 1; Omaha World-Herald, February 4, 1968, p. B9.

committee⁸⁴ and all members of the Republican Central Committee were members of the initiative committee.⁸⁵ The impetus for the new move, as the one in 1964, came predominantly from the Republican party. The drive encountered problems and the chairman resigned. The Republican State Central Committee took over the drive and named the executive secretary of the party to head the new effort. Despite public statements of support from the two United States Senators and the Governor, the reorganized campaign failed to pick up momentum. The deadline passed and the effort was estimated to be 10,000 to 15,000 signatures short.⁸⁶

Party attitudes toward the nonpartisan Unicameral are also revealed in the questionnaire sent in the summer of 1967 to members of the Central Committee, Executive Committee, and County Chairmen of both parties. In reply to the question whether they favor a partisan Legislature, 70.0 percent of the party leaders replied in the affirmative, 25.6 were opposed, and 4.5 percent did not answer. By party, Republican support was greater than Democratic

⁸⁴ He was state Senator Ross Rasmussen who cosponsored LB 299 in the 1967 session calling for submission of the question to the people (Lincoln Evening Journal, February 1, 1968, p. 1).

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., May 18, 1968, p. 3; May 27, 1968, p. 1; July 3, 1968, p. 1.

(79.8 percent to 58.7). Table VI-13 summarizes the attitudes of the party leaders.

TABLE VI-13
PARTY ATTITUDES TOWARD A PARTISAN LEGISLATURE

Position(s) of Respondent	Favor		Oppose		Unans.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Republicans						
Executive Committee	8	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Exec., & Central Com.	3	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Exec., Cen. Com. & County Chairman	3	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Exec. Com. & Co. Chm.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Central Committee	39	81.3	8	16.7	1	2.1
Cen. Com. & Co. Chm.	5	83.3	1	16.7	0	0.0
County Chairman	37	72.5	12	23.5	2	3.9
Total	95	79.8	21	17.6	3	2.5
Democrats						
Executive Committee	4	80.0	1	20.0	0	0.0
Exec., & Central Com.	6	85.7	1	14.3	0	0.0
Exec., Cen. Com. & County Chairman	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0
Exec. Com. & Co. Chm.	2	50.0	2	50.0	0	0.0
Central Committee	27	64.3	11	26.2	4	9.5
Cen. Com. & Co. Chm.	3	37.5	4	50.0	1	12.5
County Chairman	19	51.4	16	43.2	2	5.4
Total	61	58.7	36	34.6	7	6.7

Again, the strongest opposition to a partisan Legislature came from the lower echelon leaders, the county chairmen in both parties being the weakest supporters of a partisan Legislature.

Each respondent was asked to state why he did or did not favor a partisan Legislature.⁸⁷ Tables VI-14 and VI-15 summarize the answers given.

Those favoring the partisan Legislature most often mentioned as a reason for this position the belief that this would develop a better two-party system in the state. The opponents were less agreed on their rationale, though the Democrats gave strong support to the belief that a partisan Legislature would result in a one-party state and the minority party (the Democrats) would have no voice in legislative affairs.

The findings seem particularly significant in that a substantial minority in both parties, the Democrats more so, oppose a partisan Legislature. The Republicans are solidly on record in favor of such a development and have led three petition campaigns to bring it about; yet twenty percent of the leaders oppose, or refused to commit themselves in favor of, this development. The Democrats

⁸⁷This was an open-ended question and for purposes of tabulation, general categories of answers were devised and each respondent was credited with as many of these categories as his answer fit. See Appendix C for a more detailed explanation of these categories.

TABLE VI-14
REASONS FOR FAVORING A PARTISAN LEGISLATURE

Reasons	Republicans		Democrats		All	
	No.	Percent- age Support ^a	No.	Percent- age Support ^a	No.	Percent- age Support ^a
Structural improvements	11	11.6	6	9.8	17	10.9
Develop two-party system	60	63.1	35	57.4	95	60.9
Strengthen internal party structure	16	16.8	10	16.4	26	16.9
Develop political leadership	6	6.3	4	6.5	10	6.4
Better candidate recruitment	18	18.9	7	11.5	25	16.0
Lessen Interest Group influence	15	15.8	7	11.5	22	14.1
Coordinated executive-legislative program	9	9.4	4	6.5	13	8.3
Voter guide	14	14.7	7	11.5	21	13.5
Formalize existing situation	3	3.1	7	11.5	10	6.4
Apple pie	5	5.3	3	4.8	8	5.1

^aComputed by dividing the number who mentioned the reason by the total number of respondents favoring the partisan Legislature.

TABLE VI-15

REASONS FOR OPPOSING A PARTISAN LEGISLATURE

Reasons	Republicans		Democrats		All	
	No.	Percent- age Support ^a	No.	Percent- age Support ^a	No.	Percent- age Support ^a
Eliminate minority party	3	14.3	16	44.4	19	33.3
Hinder recruitment	4	19.0	7	19.4	11	19.3
Confuse merits of issues	4	19.0	3	8.3	7	12.2
Structural changes	4	19.0	2	5.5	6	10.5
Lessen constituent influence	6	28.6	4	11.1	10	17.5
Status quo	5	23.8	4	11.1	9	15.8

^aComputed by dividing the number who mentioned the reason by the total number of respondents favoring the partisan Legislature.

have been less enthusiastic about a partisan Legislature and this is reflected in their attitudes. It can be seen why the party cannot, as an organization, come out in favor of partisanship since over 40 percent of the leaders oppose, or refuse to commit themselves in favor of, such a legislature.⁸⁸ If the leadership is not solidly behind a

⁸⁸In a poll conducted by the State Chairman in 1954, over 84 percent of the Democratic leaders favored a partisan Legislature. (See fn. 75, supra.)

partisan legislature, what of the rank-and-file members? This would seem to raise serious doubts as to the success of the partisan question were it finally to reach the ballot.

Conclusion

Parties in Nebraska are hampered by legal restrictions, a paucity of raw materials (i.e., political offices), and a restricted forum for the airing of public issues. On top of this, parties must contend against a pervasive anti-party attitude which encompasses even some of the party leadership. Denied formal influence in the primary candidate selection process (and unable to achieve this informally), denied formal influence in the legislative election process (and apparently unable to exert such influence informally), and denied the majority of state offices to contest, the parties find that their influence as viable organizations is significantly lacking in the political process. Bypassed as they are to a large extent in the electoral procedure, it would seem plausible to conclude that they probably will be bypassed in the decision-making process. Their role as channels of communication, as access vehicles, in the latter phase must of necessity be restricted by their limited role in the former process. Constituents expressing demands to the decision-makers would rely less on a group whose access to

these decision-makers is necessarily limited by its role in the elective process in favor of groups whose access is greater because of influence in that process. In short, the constituent would tend to rely more on those persons and/or groups who have access to the decision-makers-- himself as a constituent or the more organized constituents, i.e., interest groups.

Interest Groups

Introduction

The preceding remarks on the status of political parties in Nebraska logically lead to the hypothesis that the role of interest groups should be substantial, particularly in the legislative realm. If it is true that "nature abhors a vacuum," then something must fill the gap created by the minimal role played by parties. As the other most important channel of communication, interest groups plausibly could be expected to exercise a great deal of influence. In this section we will examine just what are the Nebraska interest groups, what role, if any, do they play in legislative elections, and what is their attitude toward the nonpartisan Unicameral. Their role within the legislative arena, as well as that of political parties, will be examined in the next chapter.

Nebraska Interest Groups

The state's interest groups are not dissimilar from those found in sister states, particularly in the Midwest. The usual business, labor, farm, taxpayer, education and citizen groups are represented. But the state does possess some unique groups. Because of its extensive public power system, the various public power groups form an influential grouping not found in other political systems. Because of its nonpartisan Legislature, various state officials are found on the lobby registration lists as well as political party officials, who are relegated to but another interest group.⁸⁹

In the early sessions of the Unicameral, the most active groups were the Federation of County Taxpayers League, the A.F. of L., and business groups, particularly private telephone companies and light and power companies.⁹⁰ Farm organizations were also very active,

⁸⁹In the 1967 session, a number of officials of the State Game Commission were registered as lobbyists. The parties were formally represented by only one member apiece, a Lancaster County Republican and the Executive Secretary of the Democratic State Central Committee. (List of registered lobbyists, Office of the Clerk of the Legislature.)

⁹⁰Lawrence W. Dahl, "Pressure Groups Before the Nebraska Legislature" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1939), p. 19. The private utility companies were fighting any expansion of public power in the state at this time. With the widespread acceptance and use of public power these groups no longer are so important.

particularly in reference to tax issues revolving largely around the amount and use of the gasoline tax. Road improvement and petroleum groups were also vitally interested in the gas tax issue.⁹¹ The gas tax issue extended into the 1950's when farm and petroleum groups successfully negated legislative action raising the gas tax and motor vehicle registration fees.⁹²

An observer of the Unicameral in the mid-1950's found the most active interest groups to be:

. . . a variety of farm organizations, transportation associations, so-called taxpayers groups, labor organizations, liquor interests, a variety of professional associations, the public school organizations, and petroleum interests. Equally strong are the agencies of government itself, especially those concerned with matters of health, welfare, highways, and education.⁹³

The general grouping has not changed much since the mid-1950's, though the success of various groups has fluctuated. In the last session, educational groups were very successful, and the most active of these were the Nebraska Education Association and the Omaha Education Association.⁹⁴ Douglas County (Omaha and represented by

⁹¹Senning, "Lobby," pp. 10 ff. ⁹²Supra, p. 176.

⁹³Adam C. Breckenridge, One House for Two (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1957), p. 42.

⁹⁴The latter seems particularly effective among the Omaha delegation which represents a substantial bloc in the relatively small body.

the County Attorney) ranked high in the number of successes scored in the legislative arena, and here the twelve-vote bloc of the Omaha delegation was an important factor.⁹⁵ Other groups satisfied with the legislative performance, though there were no "big" issues involved, must include the liquor interests, the Nebraska Wholesale Liquor Distributors and U.S. Brewers Association, the banking interests represented by the Nebraska Bankers Association and the various insurance groups. Many other groups were active, but their involvement was more of a watchdog role, keeping an eye out for developments which might affect their interest.⁹⁶

Labor generally has not fared very well in its legislative program and the rural-farm bias of the Unicameral prior to reapportionment in the early 1960's probably played a large part in labor's weak position. Since reapportionment, coupled with a continuing growth of the urban centers, labor has increasingly improved its position and in the last session was successful in part of its program.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Dundee and West Omaha Sun, July 13, 1967, p. 8.

⁹⁶ Many lobbyists perform just such a function which in many instances comprises the bulk of their effort. Less time is spent on pushing affirmative legislation and more on modifying, or if necessary killing, proposals adverse to the interest represented.

⁹⁷ Interview with a labor lobbyist, October 25, 1967.

Governmental organizations engage in a great deal of activity as interest groups. The success of Douglas County (Omaha) has already been noted. The State Game Commission carried on extensive lobbying efforts and such organizations as the League of Nebraska Municipalities were particularly effective. In the 1967 session the Governor's Office was conspicuous in its presence before the Legislature, with two administrative assistants frequently seen conferring with Senators. This was a departure from the practice of the previous Democratic Governor who was conspicuous by his absence from the legislative arena at this level.⁹⁸

By far the largest numerical category of interest group is that associated with business.⁹⁹ However, because of the large diversity within this broad category, business does not present a united front on all questions. Nevertheless, the influence of such organizations as the Nebraska New Car Dealers Association, Associated Retailers of Omaha, Inc., Associated General Contractors of Nebraska, and Nebraska Petroleum Marketers, Inc. is not small.

⁹⁸Interviews with various Senators, May-July 1967.

⁹⁹In 1964, of the total 150 organizations registered, 73 were business associated groups. (Harmon Zeigler, "Interest Groups in the States," in Politics in the American States, ed. by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines [Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1965], p. 110.)

Interest Groups and Legislative Elections

In the absence of party influence in legislative elections, do interest groups fill the gap created by the party void? In a nonpartisan electoral system, parties are formally excluded from the political arena. We have seen that this restriction is not overcome to any great extent in Nebraska through informal means. This raises the question whether interest groups then actually do get involved in legislative elections and to what degree.

Party leaders were asked to assess the role of nonparty groups in legislative elections by indicating who they thought was instrumental in encouraging people to run for the Legislature in the absence of party activity.¹⁰⁰ Thirteen choices were provided and Table VI-16 summarizes the support given each category.¹⁰¹

The party leaders saw businessmen as the most significant nonparty group.¹⁰² The influence of businessmen is accentuated when one considers that 57 respondents

¹⁰⁰The question read: "If the political parties, either collectively or through its individual members, play little or no part in the selection of candidates for the state legislature, who in your opinion in your district is instrumental in encouraging people to run?"

¹⁰¹Since respondents could check as many as they felt necessary the totals exceed the number of respondents.

¹⁰²The category "candidates' personal desire to run" is excluded as it obviously is not a nonparty group.

enumerated "chamber of commerce" as the specified group. This is seen in Table VI-17 in the relative measure of nonparty group influence.¹⁰³

TABLE VI-16
PARTY LEADERS PERCEPTION OF THE
ROLE OF NONPARTY GROUPS IN
LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

Group	Republicans		Democrats		All	
	No.	Percent- age Support ^a	No.	Percent- age Support ^a	No.	Percent- age Support ^a
Businessmen	69	57.9	61	58.6	130	58.2
Lawyers	23	19.3	28	26.9	51	22.8
Doctors	4	3.3	7	6.7	11	4.9
Farmers	28	23.5	22	21.1	50	22.4
Ranchers	17	14.2	14	13.4	31	13.9
Contractors	2	1.7	2	1.9	4	1.8
Realtors	7	5.9	7	6.7	14	6.3
Bankers	25	21.0	33	31.7	58	26.0
Farm organizations	38	31.9	31	29.8	69	29.9
Service organiza- tions	14	11.8	10	9.6	24	10.7
Fraternal organi- zations	0	0.0	2	1.9	2	0.9
Religious organi- zations	3	2.5	3	2.9	6	2.7
Candidates' personal desire	94	79.0	67	64.4	161	72.2
Other	34	28.5	32	30.7	66	29.6

^aComputed by dividing number answering category by total number of respondents.

¹⁰³See Appendix C for the basis for this measure.

TABLE VI-17

**RELATIVE MEASURE OF NONPARTY GROUP INFLUENCE
(PARTY LEADERS' ASSESSMENT)**

Group	All		Republicans		Democrats	
	Influ- ence	Rank- ing	Influ- ence	Rank- ing	Influ- ence	Rank- ing
Personal desire	440	1	250	1	190	1
Businessmen	344	2	181	2	163	2
Farm organizations	149	3	83	3	66	3
Bankers	125	4	61	5	64	4
Farmers	114	5	75	4	39	7
Lawyers	113	6	50	6	63	5
Chamber of Commerce	88	7	40	7	48	6
Ranchers	67	8	35	8	32	8
Service organiza- tions	40	9	25	9	15	9
Labor	35	10	20	10	15	9
Realtors	24	11	14	11	10	11

The primary influence of businessmen is a salient feature of these findings. The questionnaire, however, does not permit any good measurement of the degree of nonparty influence in legislative elections. Some impressions are possible. Almost 58 percent of the party respondents reported no visible party organizational activity and almost 18 percent reported no individual leaders in either party active. Thus, close to one-fifth saw no party activity whatsoever, about another two-fifths saw only party individuals active, and the remaining

two-fifths saw party organizations and individuals active. If one assumes nonparty influence is inversely proportional to party activity, then one can assess substantial nonparty influence as 20 percent, moderate influence as 40 and small influence as 20. This, of course, does not allow for individual districts or for possible cases where the candidates' personal desire is the only influence, neither party nor nonparty groups being a significant factor.

Another rough measure of nonparty activity is provided by Table VI-18 which shows the number of respondents per legislative district who indicated that nonparty groups (excluding candidates' personal desire) are instrumental in legislative recruitment.

TABLE VI-18

NONPARTY GROUPS AND LEGISLATIVE RECRUITMENT

Percentage of Respondents Reporting Nonparty Group Activity	Number of Districts
Less than 50.0	1
Between 50.0 and 59.9	1
Between 60.0 and 79.9	14
Between 80.0 and 99.9	9
All (100.0)	14
Total	39

In 37 of the 39 districts, sixty percent or more of the respondents reported nonparty group activity and in

well over half of the districts, eighty or more percent of the respondents perceived nonparty group activity. Since the frequency of this activity was not included in the questionnaire, one cannot conclude whether this occurs frequently or not. However, the high number of respondents perceiving such activity is significant and it would seem plausible to believe that nonparty groups are fairly active at least sometimes in the recruitment process.

In a questionnaire sent to lobbyists,¹⁰⁴ a series of questions in the area of interest group activity in legislative elections was included. Of those who responded, 81.4 percent felt that interest groups take an active interest in the legislative campaigns and the candidates running. Of these affirmative respondents, 89.5 percent saw this interest extending to both primary and general elections. In assessing the number of groups engaging in this interest, 9.7 percent saw this extending to almost all groups, 31.2 percent to many groups, 40.9 percent to some, and 17.2 percent to a few. Thus, the lobbyists perceived a great deal of activity by interest groups in legislative elections, and did not believe this was restricted to a few groups, but rather represented substantial across-the-board interest groups participation.

¹⁰⁴ Appendix C contains a copy of the questionnaire along with data on its distribution and return and methodological information in connection with analysis of the data.

The extent of interest group activity was perceived to be fairly broad by the lobbyists as 68.7 percent of those who felt interest groups were active indicated this activity included financial help in the campaign. Activity such as "encouraging people to run" and "campaign aid other than financial" also scored high, 84.3 percent in both cases indicating interest group involvement at these levels.

Interest group activity in legislative elections is relatively high and these findings support the hypothesis of extensive interest group activity in legislative elections. Thus, it does seem plausible to conclude that interest groups do in fact tend to fill the gap created by political party nonactivity in this area. Certainly the interest group representatives (the lobbyists) see their parent organizations much more active than the political party representatives (party leaders) see their parent organizations. The difference is so substantial that the dominance of nonparty group activity clearly stands out vis-à-vis party activity.

The Interest Group Representative: The Lobbyist

What sort of individual is the Nebraska lobbyist and how does he compare with those operative in other political systems? On the national scene, lobbyists tend

to avoid partisan activity and attempt to be nonpartisan.¹⁰⁵ This pattern holds true in some state legislatures, but in one-party states the opposite seems to be true--the lobbyists identify with the dominant party and find party activity an asset in goal achievement.¹⁰⁶ In Nebraska's nonpartisan system, lobbyists seem to follow the partisan as opposed to nonpartisan pattern. In other words, Nebraska lobbyists are politically more active than lobbyists on the national scene, though perhaps not as active as lobbyists in some of the strong one-party states. Nevertheless, it is significant that in a nonpartisan setting, the lobbyists remain rather highly partisan.

Just under 62 percent of the lobbyists responding to a questionnaire sent in the summer of 1967 indicated they personally participated in partisan politics beyond merely voting. In reference to the type of partisan activities engaged in, 79.4 percent indicated this included financial help in the campaign. Non-financial campaign help was engaged in by 84.9 percent, and 64.4 percent encouraged fellow party members to run for office. Direct party activity was less pronounced though 51.5 percent held, at that time or in the past, party office and

¹⁰⁵Lester Milbrath, The Washington Lobbyist (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1963), p. 77.

¹⁰⁶Zeigler, op. cit., p. 131.

60.2 percent attended party conventions or other party meetings.

The high degree of lobbyists' political partisanship is further evidenced in a question concerning party affiliation. The respondents were given choices ranging from merely registered to strongly active for both parties plus independent. Table VI-19 summarizes the results.

TABLE VI-19
LOBBYISTS' POLITICAL AFFILIATION

Category	Number	Percentage
Strongly active Republican	15	12.7
Moderately active Republican	48	40.7
Merely registered Republican	10	8.5
Independent	3	2.5
Merely registered Democrat	4	3.4
Moderately active Democrat	17	14.4
Strongly active Democrat	17	14.4
Unanswered	4	3.4

Close to one-third of the respondents (27.1 percent) identified themselves as strong partisans, another half (55.1 percent) as moderate partisans, and only less than one-fifth (17.8 percent) could be characterized as weak partisans or nonpartisans.

There is certainly no attempt to mask partisanship on the part of Nebraska lobbyists and the majority evidently are able to carry out partisan political activities to a moderate degree without impairing legislative effectiveness. Two possible explanations for the rather high partisanship of Nebraska lobbyists present themselves. One is that the Unicameral is partisan in fact and thus lobbyists use their own high degree of partisanship for access and goal achievement (as in one-party states). The other possibility is that partisanship is absent from the Unicameral arena and thus lobbyists can engage in partisan activities without fear of weakening their legislative effectiveness. There is little evidence to support the belief of a high degree of partisanship in Unicameral operations. The second possibility seems a more plausible explanation. Since partisanship is absent in the legislative decision-making process, lobbyists need not appear nonpartisan so as to offend no one. Instead they can be as active politically as they desire (in either party) without this apparently affecting their lobbying position. Thus, while in a highly competitive situation lobbyists avoid partisan activity because it would impair their work, and in a dominant one-party environment seek partisan activity because it increases effectiveness, in a nonpartisan atmosphere the degree of partisan activity would

tend to be dictated by personal desire, as partisanship apparently plays no role in legislative effectiveness.

However, one question still remains. Why are Nebraska lobbyists so highly partisan and so highly Republican? They may merely reflect the population at large, though recent registration figures do not indicate as large a Republican edge. Since so many business-oriented groups are represented among the interest groups, the lobbyists may merely reflect the business-Republican bias of the lobbyist's group. Another explanation may lie in the character of the state's administrative bureaucracy. Since lobbying involves all branches of government, and the executive branch is, and has been for many years, predominantly Republican, the pro-Republicanism of the lobbyists may be a useful tool in increasing access and effectiveness, much the same as in the dominant one-party states. Thus, it could well be that Nebraska is a modified one-party pattern, but that the partisanship of lobbyists reflects the executive as opposed to the legislative party bias.

Milbrath found that on the national scene many lobbyists were lawyers,¹⁰⁷ but state studies reveal a low

¹⁰⁷Milbrath found that 39.5 percent of the lobbyists followed law as their career preparation, though only 20.2 percent had followed law careers. (Milbrath, op. cit., pp. 72-73.)

percentage of lawyer-lobbyists with the exception of some southern states.¹⁰⁸ Of the lobbyists registered for the 1967 Nebraska legislative session, 22 percent were readily identifiable as following law as their over-all career pattern and this included many of the most active lobbyists as well as those who reported the largest lobbying receipts.¹⁰⁹ Thus, Nebraska appears to rely more heavily on lawyers than many of the other states for lobbying talent and, if reported receipts are a measure of success, these lawyers are apparently effective and successful.

Numerous studies indicate that relatively few ex-legislators ever become lobbyists.¹¹⁰ Many lobbyists have had governmental or political experience, but this experience seems to come from non-legislative, governmental careers rather than from the legislative arena.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸In Virginia and North Carolina, lawyers made up 46 and 41 percent of the lobbyists, but in Oklahoma only four out of a sample of forty-three were lawyers and only twelve percent of the Michigan lobbyists were lawyers. (Zeigler, op. cit., p. 130.)

¹⁰⁹The legal background was established by merely referring to city directories and only those individuals who were listed as lawyers were so occupationally classified. No doubt others possess legal training but their present job may not reflect this training. The largest lobbying receipts reported were by one lawyer who represented fifteen clients (\$56,915.85) and a law firm which represented seventeen clients (\$21,277.61), both the lawyer and the head of the law firm having been former state Senators. (Lincoln Evening Journal, February 7, 1968, p. 29.)

¹¹⁰Zeigler, op. cit., p. 130. ¹¹¹Ibid., p. 131.

In Nebraska, however, the pattern is altered somewhat in that a sizable number of ex-legislators do go into lobbying and in some cases the pattern is reversed: lobbyists go into a legislative career. In 1967, thirteen ex-Senators served as lobbyists and this group included some of the more active interest group representatives. One member of the 1967 Legislature declined to seek reelection in favor of a post as executive officer of the Nebraska Association of County Officials. In that capacity he will no doubt appear as a lobbyist during the 1969 session. At least three other members of the 1967 Legislature were themselves former lobbyists who successfully moved up into the legislative arena.¹¹²

Thus, in Nebraska, not only are ex-legislators a significant source for potential lobbyists, but lobbyists themselves are a source for potential legislators and the interchange of these careers is not uncommon. This pattern prompted the Lincoln Evening Journal to comment editorially:

There is nothing of record to indicate that there was any abuse by the former senators, but it is obvious that firms and organizations believe that legislative experience is valuable for a lobbyist.

The practice of hiring former senators as lobbyists is becoming prevalent enough that Nebraskans should look with concern lest government service become a stepping stone to a

¹¹²Lincoln Evening Journal, February 7, 1968, p. 29.

powerful combine of former senators and specialized interests.¹¹³

Interest Groups' Attitude
Toward the Nonpartisan
Unicameral

One of the arguments in favor of the Unicameral was that the influence of lobbyists would be reduced and actually would be brought into the open.¹¹⁴ Interest groups and their representatives, the lobbyists, were generally opposed to the Unicameral idea and many felt that it would make their job more difficult.¹¹⁵ After the first session an observer remarked:

The procedure in the unicameral body is so direct, and open that a legislator, even though he might be willing to yield to lobby influence, can not conceal his vote, and no member wishes to be dubbed the tool of a lobby. Under the simplified rules and the right of a single member to ask for a record vote, the lobbyist can do nothing without exposing his friend in the house, and such publicity curbs his power.¹¹⁶

Nevertheless, the lobbyists adjusted to the Unicameral and, although some modifications were required,

¹¹³February 10, 1968, p. 4.

¹¹⁴John P. Senning, The One-House Legislature (New York: McGraw-Hill and Co., 1937), pp. 87-88. Hereafter cited as Legislature.

¹¹⁵Senning, "Lobby," pp. 5 ff.

¹¹⁶John P. Senning, "Nebraska's First Unicameral Legislative Session," Annals, CXCIV (January, 1938), 163.

in time seemed to find the atmosphere to their liking. At least interest groups were not active in seeking any changes and, if only by their inaction, signaled their satisfaction with the Unicameral arrangement. Interest groups were not prominent in any of the initiative drives for a partisan Legislature and this may well be a factor in the failure to date of these moves.

Despite their initial opposition to the Unicameral, present-day lobbyists seem satisfied with the institution. There is no great sentiment, for example, among lobbyists for a partisan Legislature. The 1967 questionnaire revealed that 66.1 percent of the lobbyists responding opposed a partisan Legislature with 25.4 percent in favor and the remaining 8.5 percent taking no position on the question. The most frequently mentioned reasons for the opposition were that party ties would prevent independent decisions on the part of the Senators and that on many issues factors other than partisan considerations were important.

Correlating political affiliation with lobbyist attitude toward a partisan Legislature (Table VI-20), we tend to find that the stronger the party identification the stronger the acceptance of a partisan Legislature, though this is more marked among the Republicans than the Democrats. The fact that the Republican party is so

firmly on record in favor of a partisan Legislature may well explain the greater consistency on the Republican side between party identification and attitude toward a partisan Legislature. The Republican lobbyists also favor a partisan Legislature more strongly than the Democrats (29.0 percent to 14.7 percent), thus following the pattern of support evident among the political party leaders.

TABLE VI-20

**LOBBYIST ATTITUDE TOWARD A PARTISAN LEGISLATURE
BY POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

Political Affiliation	Attitude Toward Partisan Legislature			Total
	No Answer	Favor	Oppose	
Strongly active Republican	1	8	5	14
Moderately active Republican	3	11	31	45
Merely registered Republican	1	1	8	10
Independent	0	2	1	3
Merely registered Democrat	1	2	13	16
Moderately active Democrat	0	3	13	16
Strongly active Democrat	0	0	2	2
No Answer	2	0	1	3

It is apparent that the lobbyists feel that their effectiveness would be weakened with the appearance of

parties. Whether this would be true in fact or not is problematical and they may well oppose any change, as they did in 1934, merely because this introduces uncertainties and necessitates changes in a system which they understand and to which they have become accustomed. In any case, the lobbyists seem well satisfied with the status quo though there is no question as to their ability to operate within the partisan framework as they did in the past.

Conclusion

As channels of communication, interest groups in the Nebraska political system enjoy a more advantageous position than political parties. This is true at least as far as the electoral process is concerned in relation to the Legislature. Parties have been formally banned from this area, and informally have not achieved the influence apparently exerted by interest groups. The findings reveal fairly clearly that interest groups are more influential than parties in the legislative recruitment and election process.

It has also been noted that party influence in the election process as a whole is weak on a number of points and that the primary system does not, on the whole, operate as a party-dominated affair. Party registration figures do not reflect past party performance, the latter

showing greater Republican strength than the former. This could tend to substantiate a fluid partisan voting behavior on the part of the electorate. All in all the picture is far from encouraging as far as party influence in the Nebraska political system is concerned.

CHAPTER VII

DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES: THE LEGISLATURE

Introduction

The focal point of a political system is the decision-making structure, for it is here where the essence of the political process emerges. It is here where the demands, communicated through the channels of communication, are translated into the vital outputs of the system--decisions. The next two chapters will examine the Legislature and the Executive in Nebraska in terms of the actors, the arena, and the actors operating within the arena.

Perhaps one of the more salient features of the Nebraska Legislature, other than the nonpartisan unicameral feature, is the rather powerful position it has maintained vis-à-vis the executive. The general decline of legislative bodies and growth of executive power and prestige in the United States is a well-established fact. This has been the case on the national scene and in many of the states. In Nebraska, however, the idea of coordinate branches remains operative both in theory and fact, and

the legislative body remains a powerful institution within the decision-making structure of Nebraska.

The Legislative Actor

Recruitment and Election

The general role of political parties and interest groups in the recruitment and election process has been noted. In general, parties play a limited role and nonparty groups tend to play a more significant role in the electoral process. This conclusion is based on observations made by political party leaders and lobbyists. How do the Senators themselves view the recruitment and election process and the forces involved in it?

In a questionnaire sent to members of the 1967 Legislature,¹ the level of party activity perceived was somewhat higher than that of the party leaders themselves. Of the Senators, 56.8 percent perceived organizational party activity as compared to the party leaders' 40.4 percent. Utilizing the same measure of party activity as was devised for the party respondents,² the Senatorial sample as a whole assessed party activity at a level

¹Appendix C contains a copy of the questionnaire plus other information pertaining to the results and analysis of the data.

²This was deemed valid, since both were asked the same series of questions in reference to party activity.

of 6.43, below the 8.0 minimal one-party activity point as well as the total party leaders' assessment of 8.40. Thus, while more Senators perceived organized party activity than the party leaders did, the level of this activity was not rated as high by the Senators as by the party leaders. Individual party leader activity (as opposed to organizational activity) was assessed by the Senatorial sample at 3.10 which put it midway between a few leaders in both parties and some leaders in both parties active.³ Thus, the Senators on the whole did not see any appreciable difference in party activity from that perceived by the party leaders themselves. The level of activity was seen as relatively small.

Just over half of the Senatorial sample (51.4 percent) felt that their candidacy was the result of encouragement from others as opposed to a personal desire to run. In other words, close to half of the Senators believed their decision to run was entirely a personal one devoid of party or nonparty group influences. For those who admitted non-personal influences, the category "businessmen" emerged as the most important. Table VII-1 summarizes the non-personal influences in Senatorial recruitment.

³Again using the same values as for the party leaders' questionnaire, 6.0 would be many in both, 4.0 some in both, and 2.0 a few leaders in both parties active.

TABLE VII-1
NON-PERSONAL INFLUENCES IN CANDIDACY DECISION

Influence	Ranking	Strength ^a
Businessmen	1	24
Farmers, Ranchers	2	16
Bankers	3	14
Political party leaders	4	13
Lawyers	5	12
Doctors, Dentists	6	9
Teachers	7	8
Ministers	8	6
Realtors	8	6

^aThis was computed by assigning a value of one if the category was checked by respondent and two if in addition to checking the category, the respondent assessed this group to be the most influential in the decision to run.

Businessmen were mentioned by all of the respondents reporting non-personal influences and close to half specifically mentioned business groups as being the most influential in their ultimate decision to run. Political party leaders ranked about midway on the scale, again indicating the less influential role played by parties vis-à-vis nonparty groups.

Though businessmen were by far the most important influence in the decision to enter the campaign, educational and women's groups emerged as very helpful in the successful pursuit of the legislative seat (Table VII-2).

Business groups, however, were again the strongest, though only with the addition of bankers and realtors in the large business grouping. Political party groups ranked near the bottom of those helpful in the campaign.

TABLE VII-2
GROUPS MOST HELPFUL IN CAMPAIGN

Category	Ranking	Degree of Help ^a
Business groups (merchants, bankers, realtors)	1	24
Educational groups	2	17
Personal efforts (own, friends, relatives)	3	16
Women's groups	4	14
Civic, fraternal groups	5	12
Professional groups (lawyers, doctors)	6	11
Agricultural groups	7	10
Labor	8	8
Religious groups (minister, church groups)	9	7
Political party groups	10	6
Press	11	3

^aThis was computed by assigning a value of one if the category was checked by respondent and two if in addition the respondent assessed this group to have been the most helpful in the success of the campaign.

Asked what groups' support would be essential were the respondent to run again, the Senators ranked the groups somewhat differently than those helpful in the past campaign (Table VII-3). Greater strength was shown by the civic, fraternal groups, and religious groups while personal efforts and agricultural groups emerged weaker.

Business, education, and women's groups, however, retained their relative importance in both areas, past help and essential future aid. Political party groups emerged last in the Senatorial assessment of essential re-election assistance.

TABLE VII-3
GROUP SUPPORT ESSENTIAL IN RE-ELECTION BID

Category	Ranking	Degree of Support	Help in Last Campaign Ranking
Business (merchants, bankers, realtors)	1	20	1
Educational	2	18	2
Civic, fraternal groups	2	18	5
Women's groups	4	16	4
Professional (doctors, lawyers)	5	14	6
Religious (minister, lay groups)	5	14	9
Personal efforts	7	11	3
Agricultural groups	8	9	7
Labor	8	9	8
Press	10	8	11
Party	11	6	10

What seems to emerge from the Senatorial sample is a strengthening of the picture of weak party influence and strong nonparty group influence in the legislative recruitment and election process. Business groups dominate

the nonparty categories, but educational and women's groups are not far behind. It would appear that businessmen are most active in the recruitment phase, and educational and women's groups bear the brunt of the campaign phase.⁴

The strength of educational groups may be over-emphasized due to the great success these groups enjoyed in the 1967 session of the Legislature. Thus, many Senators may have given this group a little stronger place than the facts justify. Nevertheless, there are other indications which reveal a great deal of activity by educational groups. The Omaha Education Association (O.E.A.) is very active in election campaigns working through an adjunct organization, Friends of the Schools, in candidate selection and election. In recent years the level of activity in legislative elections has been almost as great as in school board elections. Education officials in the Omaha area are well satisfied with their legislative representation with one exception. The exception devoted part of his campaign literature to "expose" the election

⁴The two groups--education and women--may not be mutually exclusive as the majority of teachers are women and as such are probably active in numerous other organizations which fall into the "women's organization" category; i.e., League of Women Voters, Garden Clubs, various hospital auxiliaries, and so forth. In the absence of party organizations, it may well be the vacuum in grass-roots campaign activity is picked up by that segment of the population which has more time to devote to these activities--women.

efforts of the education associations, particularly the Omaha Education Association, and there is little doubt this Senator and the O.E.A. will tangle should he decide to seek another term.⁵

Some groups are very active in the recruitment and election phase to the extent of keeping files on Senators, seeking opinions from prospective candidates, and formally endorsing individuals. Labor groups in Nebraska are probably best known for these efforts.⁶ Most groups, however, are content to enter the picture after the election process and generally become involved only if they are unable to gain much success through existing personnel. If a present incumbent, for instance, is quite anti-labor, it is probable labor groups would make an effort to encourage a less intransigent individual to seek the seat. Other groups devote more attention to cultivating friendship and building up mutual confidence, finding this a more beneficial approach than electoral activity. The Nebraska Bankers Association, for instance, through its local representatives holds testimonial dinners throughout the state at various times, to merely "get acquainted"

⁵Interviews with education representatives, October 25, 1967, and campaign material furnished author by Senator Clifton Batchelder.

⁶Interviews with various lobbyists including labor representatives, Fall 1967.

with new Senators or renew friendships with old ones. Nothing political is generally discussed, but personal contact is established, contact which can be very valuable in future legislative activities particularly since Nebraska Senators listen quite closely to the "people back home."⁷

Despite a little political party activity and some nonparty activity, personal factors emerge as a strong determinant in the recruitment and election process. The high ranking given by party leaders to "personal desire" as a factor in legislative recruitment has been noted. Close to half of the Senatorial sample saw their decision to run as a purely personal one without any party or non-party group influence. Personal efforts scored high among Senators who were asked to determine who was most helpful in the success of their last campaign. Senatorial opinion concerning support for a re-election bid did not rank personal effort as a high scorer, but this in part can be attributed to the desire to lessen past campaign burdens by replacing some personal effort with organized group efforts. In short, strictly personal factors play a significant role in the recruitment and election process.

⁷Interviews with various lobbyists including business representatives, Fall 1967.

The campaign strategy of one Senator is illustrative of the personal effort approach.

. . . I started out completely unknown politically. Instead of campaigning by contacting various organizations, I used direct mail which involved the use of a series of letters sent into every household, regardless of Party, in my District. This involved a mailing list of about 12,000. I started out with an introductory letter in which I introduced myself and stated my qualifications and reasons for running for the Legislature. This was followed up by a series of letters in which I very clearly stated my position on all issues which I thought were of interest. . . .

This method of campaigning met with amazing success, although I should add that as the campaign wore on I made more and more personal contacts. After every mailing I had a large number of phone calls and letters from the recipients. Upon receipt of such communications I immediately got in my car and made a personal visit to the people. These people became workers. You can see that after seven mailings I had built up a fairly large working force. These people put up signs and held coffees for me. . . .

I had a little help from a few Republican women who had held coffees for me; however, there were only a few such gatherings and they were attended by Republicans who would have voted for me anyway, so I think I can say with some accuracy that I had no help of any great value from any group.

The only disadvantage of campaigning as I did is the rather substantial cost of it. I am sure my campaign cost me more than most senators paid for theirs; however, it has the great advantage of putting a Legislator in a position whereby he is completely free of entanglement with any special interest group.⁸

⁸Letter from a Senator representing an urban district, July 25, 1967.

The personal effort and funds expended in this individual's campaign are not, as he admits, a typical situation. But it does point up the potential success of individual efforts, given adequate energy and funds. This could be possible in just about every political subdivision in the United States; but in a nonpartisan setting, the absence of party organization enhances this approach. The strong showing of personal effort in the various questionnaires among the different respondents indicates that the campaign pattern noted above is probably repeated in other Nebraska legislative races, though on a much smaller scale and with a less adamant stance toward party and nonparty group assistance. Most candidates would probably welcome such aid, but a serious question remains as to whether such aid is available. It may well be that personal effort scores so high because of the absence of other alternatives.

It would seem that the influences of legislative recruitment in Nebraska include equal doses of personal factors and nonparty group initiative with occasionally a smattering of political party involvement. Electoral success involves a good bit of nonparty group support and assistance, a healthy measure of personal effort and a dash or two of political party help.

.....

Typology of the Nebraska Legislator

Biographical data of members serving in the Unicameral since its establishment present a composite picture of the Nebraska legislator.⁹ Since the first session in 1937, a total of 280 individuals have served in the Unicameral through the 1967 session.

Sex.--The Unicameral has been male dominated. Only eight women have served in the legislature, four of these being elected in their own right and four appointed to fill vacancies but not seeking re-election. The 1967 session was the high point for women with three female members among the forty-nine member body. In the thirty-year period, only nine other women survived the primary election stage, losing to a male opponent in the general election. The small body, akin to the size of many upper houses in sister states probably works against females though the favorable legislator-population ratio would seem to lessen this factor. In any case, the male dominance of the Unicameral is well established.¹⁰

⁹The data were taken from information contained in biographical sketches in the Nebraska Blue Book since 1936, augmented in some cases by newspaper information. Larger than desired gaps appear in some categories (ethnic background, religion, and political affiliation), but time precluded the exhaustive efforts necessary to obtain complete information.

¹⁰Male dominance of legislative chambers is not unusual. Seldom do females make up more than five to

Age.--Using the age of a legislator upon his election to the Unicameral as the criterion, we find that the median age of the Nebraska legislator is about 50 years (Table VII-4). This compares favorably with the average age of upper house representatives among the American states.¹¹

TABLE VII-4
AGE OF NEBRASKA LEGISLATOR UPON ELECTION

Age	Number	Percentage
Under 30 years	15	5.4
30 through 35 years	17	6.1
36 through 40 years	28	10.0
41 through 45 years	42	15.0
46 through 50 years	36	12.9
51 through 55 years	42	15.0
56 through 60 years	34	12.1
61 through 65 years	27	9.6
66 years and older	29	10.4
Unknown age	10	3.6

One-fifth of the members, however, have been elected at age 61 or older, a time when most individuals

ten percent of any state legislature. (Thomas R. Dye, "State Legislative Politics," in Politics in the American States, ed. by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines [Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965], p. 167.) In Nebraska, this percentage is less than three if one includes all the women who have served and under two percent if one includes only those elected in their own right.

¹¹In 1951 the average age of the Minnesota Senator was 50 with a range from 27 to 75 years of age. (William P. Tucker, "Characteristics of State Legislators," Social Science, LXX [April, 1955], 95.)

are prepared for retirement. Only about one-fifth of the members have been elected prior to attaining age 40. Thus, the great bulk of Nebraska legislators move to the Unicameral at a mature age, at a time when most have probably attained their desired vocation and a legislative career thus is more of a second career. The absence of young members suggests the Unicameral is not looked upon as a step in career building. The median age has slowly risen over the years, going from the late 40's in the early sessions to the mid-50's in the more recent sessions.

Education.--Nebraska compares favorably with other representative legislatures as to the educational level of its legislators, though it seems to have a larger percentage of persons with only an elementary education and fewer college graduates than many other legislatures (Table VII-5). Since the Nebraska sample spans a thirty-year period and the other states are mid-1950 statistics, this may account for part of the difference. Using the 1957 session as a random sample, the elementary school level of the membership is about average, though the college graduate category falls below that of the entire period and quite far below the other states.

TABLE VII-5

**EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF LEGISLATORS: NEBRASKA
AND SELECTED STATES (PERCENTAGE)**

	Calif.	Ohio	Tenn.	Nebr. (all years)	Nebr. 1957
Elementary only . .		4	4	9.6	4.6
Some high school	15	19	22	14.6	23.2
Some college ^a	31	19	28	33.2	39.5
College graduate ^b	54	58	46	41.1	30.2

^aIncludes business school, night school and law school if at a post-high school level.

^bIncludes those with graduate, professional and legal work at the post-college level.

Source: The figures for California, Ohio, and Tennessee from John C. Wahlke, et al., The Legislative System (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962), p. 489; Nebraska Blue Book 1957, pp. 206-221.

Occupation.--Perhaps the most striking aspect of the occupational background of Nebraska legislators is the lack of lawyers in comparison with other states. The number of lawyers serving in the Unicameral has steadily declined over the years.

The high percentage of agriculture and business oriented occupations and lower percentage of professional groups, compared to other states, may be due in part to the malapportionment of the Unicameral. With recent reapportionment changes the rural character of the Unicameral

TABLE VII-6
OCCUPATION OF LEGISLATORS: NEBRASKA
AND OTHER STATES (PERCENTAGE)

	Nebr.	Hyneman 1925-35	Zeller 1949	Minn. Senate 1951	Minn. Senate 1959	Wahlke 1957
Businessman	21.1	17.2	14.2	16	19.4	19
Professional (includes teachers, com- munications)	27.2	35.9	26.5 ^a	46	44.8	47
Farmer/Rancher	31.8	21.5	19.6	16	25.4	10
Banker	3.6	2.8	1.9	2	. .	1
Insurance, real estate	7.5	6.8	7.0	2	3.0	10
White collar	6.1	4.1	2.9	. .	. .	5
Blue collar	2.5	1.6	1.9	. .	3.0	. .
Other and unknown	0.4	10.1	26.0	18	4.4	8

^aOnly lawyers.

Source: Charles S. Hyneman, "Who Makes Our Laws," in Legislative Behavior, ed. by John Wahlke and Heinz Bulau (Glencoe: Free Press, 1959), p. 255; John C. Wahlke, et al., The Legislative System (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962), p. 490; William P. Tucker, "Characteristics of State Legislators," Social Science, XXX (April, 1955), 94; Belle Zeller, American State Legislatures (New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1954), p. 71; G. Theodore Mitau, Politics in Minnesota (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1960), p. 65.

should change. Other states, however, have been plagued by the apportionment problem and a study of the 1963 Legislature showed Nebraska with a higher percentage of farmers and ranchers in the Legislature than surrounding states.¹² Thus, agricultural and business occupations have dominated the Unicameral and though a change may be in the offing, it is too early to determine if reapportionment will change this thirty-year pattern.

The low level of professional, particularly legal, occupations in the Unicameral suggests the Unicameral is not regarded as a career building vehicle. In many political systems, the legislature offers the young aspiring lawyer the means of professional advancement. This does not seem to be the case in Nebraska.

Religion.--The Unicameral reflects the general Nebraska population in that it is heavily Protestant, apparently even more so than the population at large. Roman Catholics have made up only eleven percent of the total Unicameral membership since 1937 (Table VII-7). Methodists and Lutherans are conspicuous in the Unicameral as they are in the population at large.

¹²In Nebraska, 56 percent were in the farming, ranching field compared to 50 percent in Iowa, 39 percent in Kansas, 29 percent in Missouri, 22 percent in Colorado, and 18 percent in Oklahoma. (James Risser, "Nebraska's Legislature Has Most Ranchers, Farmers in Six-State Region," Lincoln Evening Journal, April 27, 1964, p. 20.)

TABLE VII-7
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF
NEBRASKA LEGISLATORS

Denomination	Number	Percentage
United Methodist	75	26.8
Presbyterian	34	12.1
Lutheran	33	11.8
Congregational	20	7.1
Episcopal	14	5.0
Unitarian	2	0.7
Other Protestant	26	9.3
Roman Catholic	31	11.1
Jewish	2	0.7
Unknown	43	15.4

Ethnic Factors.--The Unicameral is Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic in ethnic background though the large percentage of "unknowns" precludes any firm conclusions. However,

TABLE VII-8
ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF NEBRASKA LEGISLATORS

Background	Number ^a	Percentage
Anglo-Saxon and Celtic (excluding Irish)	63	22.5
Irish	37	13.2
Swedish	22	7.9
Other Scandinavians	12	4.3
German	53	18.9
Other Continental Europeans	20	7.1
Czechs	13	4.6
Other Eastern Europeans	4	1.4
Negro	3	1.1
Unknown	120	42.9

^aSince more than one country was indicated in some persons, the total number exceeds the number of legislators.

this would be in line with the general population as a whole and thus seems valid.

Tenure and Turnover.--Nebraska shows no significant divergence from general patterns of tenure and turnover found in other legislative bodies, particularly upper houses. Table VII-9 shows Charles Hyneman's study of the length of service in ten state Senates between 1925 and 1935 and the length of service of the individuals serving in the Nebraska Unicameral since its founding.

TABLE VII-9

LENGTH OF SERVICE: NEBRASKA (1937-1967)
AND OTHER STATES (1925-1935)

	Sessions of Service						Total Number Legis- lators
	1	2	3	4	5-9	10 or More	
California	15.2	18.6	14.8	13.5	32.4	5.5	237
Illinois	19.6	18.3	13.4	10.8	27.1	10.8	306
Indiana	29.3	28.3	13.3	11.7	16.0	1.3	300
Iowa	25.0	23.4	17.3	19.0	14.3	1.0	300
Maine	15.8	21.6	30.5	18.9	13.2	0.0	190
Minnesota	18.4	21.6	10.7	11.7	30.9	6.7	402
New Jersey	15.4	18.7	12.2	11.4	35.8	6.5	123
New York	12.1	3.3	11.8	3.6	35.2	34.0	306
Pennsylvania	22.7	20.3	13.3	12.3	26.4	5.0	300
Washington	25.4	18.5	11.5	8.1	26.1	10.4	260
All ten Senates	20.3	19.3	14.3	11.9	25.6	8.6	2,724
Nebraska (1937-1967)	34.0	28.2	14.6	11.4	11.8		280

Source: Charles Hyneman, "Tenure and Turnover of Legislative Personnel," Annals, CXCIV (January, 1938), p. 23; Nebraska Blue Book, 1936-1966.

Compared to Hyneman's findings, Nebraska Senators tended to serve fewer terms and there were fewer legislative "war horses" who remained around the state's legislative halls term after term compared to the other states. An examination of the pattern among Nebraska's neighbors reveals the same tendency (Table VII-10). This suggests that the Unicameral is not regarded as a career occupation with few persons, for whatever reason, becoming professional legislators. This conclusion is strengthened by the incumbency figures. Hyneman found that only 14.7 percent of the Senators who quit during the 1925-35 period were eliminated by defeat in the general election.¹³ In Nebraska, the percentage was slightly higher, 18.0, but if one excludes those defeated by former Senators, the figure drops to 12.5 percent. Thus, it does not seem that the smaller number of legislative professionals in the Unicameral is due to electoral defeats, strengthening the belief that the position is not attractive as a career vehicle.

Turnover was quite high in the first few Unicameral sessions, but settled down to average under 40 percent each new session. Beginning in 1964, Senators were elected for four-year terms, half of the seats for the new four-year term then and the other half becoming four-year terms in 1966. The rise in turnover in 1965 (Table VII-11) is

¹³Hyneman, op. cit., p. 27.

TABLE VII-10

LENGTH OF SERVICE OF SENATE MEMBERS SERVING IN 1950

State	Terms of Service					Number of Senators
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five or More	
Kansas	25.0	12.5	15.0	10.0	37.5	40
Iowa	11.8	21.5	9.8	9.8	47.0	51
North Dakota	20.3	18.6	5.0	10.1	45.9	59
South Dakota	25.7	25.7	17.1	11.4	20.0	35
Colorado	25.7	14.2	14.2	11.4	34.2	35
Nebraska	32.5	20.9	20.9	13.9	11.6	43

Source: Belle Zeller, American State Legislatures (New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1954), pp. 66-67.
(Percentages computed by author.)

TABLE VII-11

TURNOVER OF NEBRASKA LEGISLATORS

Session	New Faces ^a	Percentage Turnover
1937	First Unicameral Session	
1939	23	53.5
1941	22	51.1
1943	19	44.1
1945	16	37.2
1947	17	39.5
1949	16	37.2
1951	17	39.5
1953	11	25.3
1955	15	34.9
1957	18	41.8
1959	15	34.9
1961	16	37.2
1963	13	30.2
1965	22	44.9
1967	8	30.7
Total	248	39.5

^aIncludes former Senators who did not serve in the preceding session.

probably due to the change-over in terms, but by the 1966 election turnover had fallen back to within the general average. The turnover percentage in Nebraska is in line with that of legislative bodies in the United States. In 1963 the average turnover for all state legislative bodies was 34 percent.¹⁴

Political Characteristics.--What degree and type of previous political and governmental experience do the Nebraska legislators possess when they come to the Unicameral? In a partisan context "the more competitive the state's party system, the more likely it is for legislators to have had some prior governmental experience, particularly service at the local level of government."¹⁵ Does the absence of parties in Nebraska legislative elections result in fewer individuals entering the legislative arena possessing prior governmental experience? The answer seems to be in the negative. Just over 62 percent of those entering the Unicameral possessed some sort of prior governmental experience on the state or local level. This compares to 58 percent in New Jersey, 43 percent in

¹⁴Duane Lockard, "The State Legislator," in State Legislatures in American Politics, ed. by Alexander Heard (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 104.

¹⁵Dye, op. cit., pp. 171-172.

Ohio, 33 percent in California, and 29 percent in Tennessee.¹⁶ Nebraska legislators rank fairly high on the scale of prior governmental experience (Table VII-12). School board experience ranked highest with about a fourth of the total members having city or county governmental experience. Political party positions ranked surprisingly strong with 11.8 percent having held some party office previous to entering the Legislature.

TABLE VII-12

POLITICAL EXPERIENCE OF NEBRASKA LEGISLATORS

Experience	Number	Percentage
Local school board	92	32.9
City government	68	24.3
County and/or township government	65	23.2
State government	12	4.3
Political party positions	33	11.8
No governmental experience	106	37.9

The political affiliation of the nonpartisan members revealed a strong Republican bias with 58.9 percent identified with that party, 30.0 percent with the Democrats; 0.7 percent proclaimed themselves as Independents, and 10.4 percent were unidentifiable.¹⁷ Thus, despite the nonpartisan feature of the Unicameral, members roughly

¹⁶Ibid., p. 172.

¹⁷If the political affiliation of a Senator could not be firmly identified, he was put in the "unknown" category.

reflected the party bias of the general population, though more in favor of the Republicans. In only two sessions (1937 and 1939) did the Democrats have a majority, both times by only one member. Nonpartisanship has not hurt in any way the Republicans from the standpoint of members who identify themselves with this party. If anything, it has been the Democrats who have perhaps suffered, at least in terms of the number represented in the Legislature from this party.

Competition for political office is a final consideration that needs to be examined. Even in a partisan context there is no assurance that there will be vigorous inter-party and intra-party competition. Uncontested elections are a rule rather than the exception in many political systems. Is this pattern accentuated, however, in a nonpartisan atmosphere as in Nebraska? Sorauf's study of Pennsylvania legislative politics found that in 1956 there was no intra-party competition in 66 percent of the races.¹⁸ A similar situation exists in many other states,¹⁹ though in general elections in New York and New Jersey, almost all the candidacies are filled.²⁰ A study of the number of primary candidates in

¹⁸ Frank J. Sorauf, Party and Representation: Legislative Politics in Pennsylvania (New York: Atherton Press, 1963), p. 111.

¹⁹ Lockard, op. cit., p. 109.

²⁰ Ibid.

Nebraska legislative elections (Table VII-13) reveals that in 298 of the 516 races from 1938 through 1960, there were no more than two candidates entered. In other words, in 57.7 percent of the races in this period there were no primary battles since under Nebraska law the two receiving the highest number of votes in the primary appear on the general election ballot. In only four of those twelve elections were there primary battles for more than one-half of the legislative seats. In this period just under 20 percent of the seats were uncontested in the primary, only one person filing for the legislative seat.

How does the Unicameral rate as a stepping-stone to higher political office? Some tentative remarks have been made indicating the inadequacy of a legislative career as an opportunity to move up the political ladder (few young men, lack of legislative professionals, the occupational bias). Examining the members who have served in the Legislature, only ten of the total 280 have succeeded in securing higher elective office.²¹ The Legislature is not regarded by its members as a recruitment

²¹This includes two Governors, three Lieutenant Governors, and one each U.S. Congressman, U.S. Senator (and later U.S. Secretary of the Interior), State Treasurer, State Attorney General and State Railway Commissioner. Only the State Treasurer, Attorney General, U.S. Congressman and one Lieutenant Governor moved directly from the Legislature to the higher office. For the others, an interval of time lapsed between their legislative careers and the higher office.

TABLE VII-13
**CANDIDATES IN LEGISLATIVE PRIMARIES IN
 NEBRASKA (1938-1960)**

Year	Candidates (no. of districts)				Percentage of Districts with Primary Battle ^a
	One	Two	Three	Four or More	
1938	0	10	22	11	76.7
1940	2	5	6	30	83.7
1942	9	11	11	12	53.5
1944	13	11	9	10	44.1
1946	7	12	10	14	55.8
1948	6	22	8	7	34.9
1950	8	16	11	8	44.1
1952	14	14	5	10	34.9
1954	10	33	0	0	0.0
1956	12	31	0	0	0.0
1958	10	20	3	10	30.2
1960	8	14	9	12	48.8

^aThree or more candidates.

Source: Nebraska State Canvassing Board, Official Report: Primary and General Election, 1936-1960.

vehicle for higher office, and in practice it has not so functioned. Party stalwarts claim the nonpartisan aspect is responsible for this situation and there is much to be said for the validity of this observation. The age of the membership is a salient factor, though one can argue that the nonpartisan aspect is responsible for this as well. Were the Legislature partisan, advocates of such a change maintain, more young persons would be attracted and reward for competent service would find more legislators moving into the other state and national elective and appointive

offices. Whatever the merits of the argument, the fact remains that the Unicameral holds little promise for the individual who hopes to embark on a political career.

Conclusion.--The typical Unicameral Senator is thus a man who comes to the legislative chamber around the age of 50 after a fairly successful career in farming or business. He is of a Northern European background, has spent some time in college, and is Protestant and Republican. Chances are he faced no primary battle and, now that he has been elected, has better than an 80 percent chance of retaining his seat as long as he wants it. However, he will probably not remain for more than two terms or so, though his retirement will be voluntary as opposed to being turned out by the electorate. He finds his colleagues possess similar backgrounds and he can easily identify with most of them because of their agricultural and/or business experience.

The Legislative
Actor: Summary

The Nebraska legislator does not differ greatly from legislators in other states; he is a microcosmic creature of his constituency and reflects in his own characteristics those of the people he represents. He runs for office because he has a personal desire to sit in the Legislature and local individuals and groups, mostly

businessmen, have encouraged him to run. He has received some help in the campaign from various groups but his own personal efforts have been extensive. He comes to the Legislature as a generally fulfilled individual; he has attained success in his chosen field and now enters the legislative arena as a second career or "something I have always wanted to do" rather than the beginning of his life's endeavor. The bulk of the members there he finds are not unlike himself and though perhaps lost at first because there is no formal organization upon which he can lean (as a political party), he quickly finds an "old-timer" with whom he can identify. Because of the small number, he expands his contacts fairly rapidly and soon begins to feel out the new surroundings in which he finds himself.

The Legislative Arena

Environment

The Nebraska legislator is paid \$200 a month for which he must spend at least six months every two years in Lincoln while the Unicameral is in its biennial session. Close to half of the Senators live within commuting distance and thus are not forced to undertake additional living expense. A number prefer, and can afford, to remain in Lincoln even though they are not far removed from their homes. The other half of the Senators find it

necessary to live in the state capital and content themselves with periodic week-end trips home. Senators are reimbursed mileage for one round-trip from home to Lincoln. Thus, living and travel expenses (the latter includes the commuters) must come from the Senator's salary. The legislative salary alone does not support an individual and other sources of income are necessary--a job which permits leaves of absence, a business or farm which can be run by others for periods of time, retirement or pension income, a law practice that can be sandwiched in during the peak legislative period, and similar such positions. That the Legislature is a part-time business for almost all the Senators is an accepted fact.

The legislator must conduct all his business from his desk on the floor of the Unicameral chamber. Offices are not provided and thus personal or public business is transacted on the floor of the Legislature, in the halls, or, if the Senator is fortunate, perhaps he can find a quiet place in some of the less frequently used facilities in the Capitol (Supreme Court library, Legislative Council chamber, committee meeting rooms). Secretarial help is provided from a secretarial pool. Research facilities and bill drafting services are available through the Legislative Council, but the staff is not large and the bulk of requests are in the area of bill drafting.

Legislative committees generally do not have a research staff. The Budget Committee relies heavily upon the staff of the Legislative Council's Fiscal Analyst's office. Thus, some continuity is provided. For the most part what continuity exists for the others is provided by returning legislators who have acquired background knowledge from previous committee assignments.

The legislative environment in reference to pay and working conditions is not the best and the annual expenditure on legislative salaries (\$117,600) is small in comparison with surrounding states.²² Because of the small number of legislators, salaries could be raised considerably and the total expenditure would still be comparable to surrounding states. But economy was one of the arguments in favor of the Unicameral and thus the increased savings of one small body, in all aspects including salaries, has come to be an accepted fact.²³

²²South Dakota spends \$165,000 per year, Kansas \$330,000, Colorado \$320,000, and Iowa \$457,500. Based on individual salaries Nebraska ranks about the middle of all the states. (Council of State Governments, Book of the States 1966-67 [Chicago: By the Author, 1966], pp. 43, 45.)

²³Economy is probably not the only reason why Nebraska legislative salaries are not higher. There still exists a great deal of sentiment that public office is public service and individuals should not seek office because of financial considerations; thus, the financial attachments should not be too attractive lest they impair the ideal of public service.

Rules and Procedure

Introduction.---The Legislature meets in the morning as a committee of the whole and devotes the afternoons to committee hearings. Toward the end of the session when the committees have completed their work, the Legislature meets in all-day sessions as the usual end of the session log-jam develops. The use of an electronic voting machine speeds the process and eliminates the laborious roll-call procedure common to so many legislative bodies. The use of the voting machine solves any problems which might otherwise exist due to a constitutional provision which permits any member to call for a record vote upon any question.²⁴ The deliberative and voting procedure is completely open and there is little opportunity for parliamentary obstructionism and vote hiding.

Legislative Organization.---The presiding officer of the Legislature is the Lieutenant Governor, and in his absence, the Speaker, elected by the membership. Administrative officers are provided, headed by the Clerk who oversees the administrative personnel hired for the legislative sessions and serves as secretariat between sessions.²⁵ Seventeen standing committees are operative

²⁴ Nebraska, Constitution, Art. III, sec. 11.

²⁵ Adam C. Breckenridge, One House For Two (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1957), p. 14.

plus the strategic Committee on Committees which assigns members to various committees subject to approval of the entire membership.²⁶ The entire membership comprises the Legislative Council, but the five-man Executive Board is the executive arm of the Legislature in overseeing the research activities of the Council as well as directing interim studies.²⁷

Thus, the key legislative offices are the Speaker, Chairman of the Committee on Committees, and the Executive Board of the Legislative Council. Though the absence of party makes the Speaker's position less powerful than in other states, his membership on the Reference Committee (which determines to which committees bills are assigned) and the Executive Board of the Legislative Council enhances the position above merely an honorary one.²⁸

Committee Structure. -- Assignments to the seventeen standing committees as well as their chairmen are worked out by the Committee on Committees whose chairman and membership is elected at the beginning of each session. The

²⁶ Nebraska, Rules of the Nebraska Legislature 1965, Rule 5, sec. 1, 2. Cited hereafter as Rules.

²⁷ The membership of the Board includes the Speaker, Chairman of the Committee on Committees, and three members chosen by the body when the other legislative officers are elected. (Nebraska, Revised Statutes of Nebraska 1943, Chap. 50-401.01.)

²⁸ Breckenridge, op. cit., p. 15.

membership caucuses by geographical areas (corresponding to the old four Congressional districts), each group electing three individuals to sit on the Committee. The Legislature elects a chairman to head the twelve members chosen by geographical area.²⁹

The customary committees are provided in the legislative structure,³⁰ with the more important including Agriculture, Budget, Judiciary, and Revenue. In recent sessions the Budget Committee has attained a high degree of influence, and in the 1967 Session the Revenue Committee was particularly important because of the struggle over a new tax system.

Generally all bills are referred to committee and before committee action can be taken a public hearing, with at least a five-calendar-day notice, must be held.³¹

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰The standing committees include: Agriculture and Recreation; Banking, Commerce and Insurance; Budget-Appropriations; Education; Enrollment and Review; Government and Military Affairs; Intergovernmental Cooperation; Judiciary; Labor; Miscellaneous Subjects; Public Health and Welfare; Public Works; Reference; Revenue; Rules; Salaries and Claims; and Urban Affairs. (Nebraska, Rules, Rule 5, sec. 2.)

³¹Ibid., Rule 6, sec. 3. The 1967 Legislature modified the complete public hearing procedure by permitting the Reference Committee to put bills directly on General File where they proceed as other bills with the provision that if one Senator requested a public hearing on the bill or bills, they have to be sent to committee and public hearings held. The elimination of a public hearing was not used greatly and was reserved for

Thus, almost all bills receive an open and public hearing where all interested individuals can present their views to the Senators. Following the public hearing, the committee goes into executive session and makes its recommendation: either that the bill be placed on General File or indefinitely postponed.³² A member can raise a bill killed in committee by majority vote, if such a motion is presented within three days of the committee report, or by two-thirds vote if the three-day period has passed.³³ Except for appropriation bills, a majority of the Legislature can call a bill out of committee any time after the committee has had the bill for more than twenty legislative days.³⁴ Any committee member may, if he so desires, append a minority report to any bill reported favorably by a committee.³⁵

noncontroversial bills toward the end of the session. Whether this practice continues or whether this device will be used to avoid public hearings must await further use. (Nebraska, Rules of the Nebraska Legislature 1967, Rule 14, sec. 1.)

³²Nebraska, Rules, Rule 6, sec. 8. Committee votes are not made public and though members of the press are present, they are bound to respect as confidential discussions and voting (sec. 11). Nevertheless, information concerning executive session activities does leak out, many times from members themselves. Those vitally interested, such as lobbyists, generally have no problem in becoming informed on executive session activity. (Interviews with various Senators and lobbyists, Summer and Fall, 1967.)

³³Ibid., sec. 9.

³⁴Ibid., sec. 7.

³⁵Ibid., sec. 10.

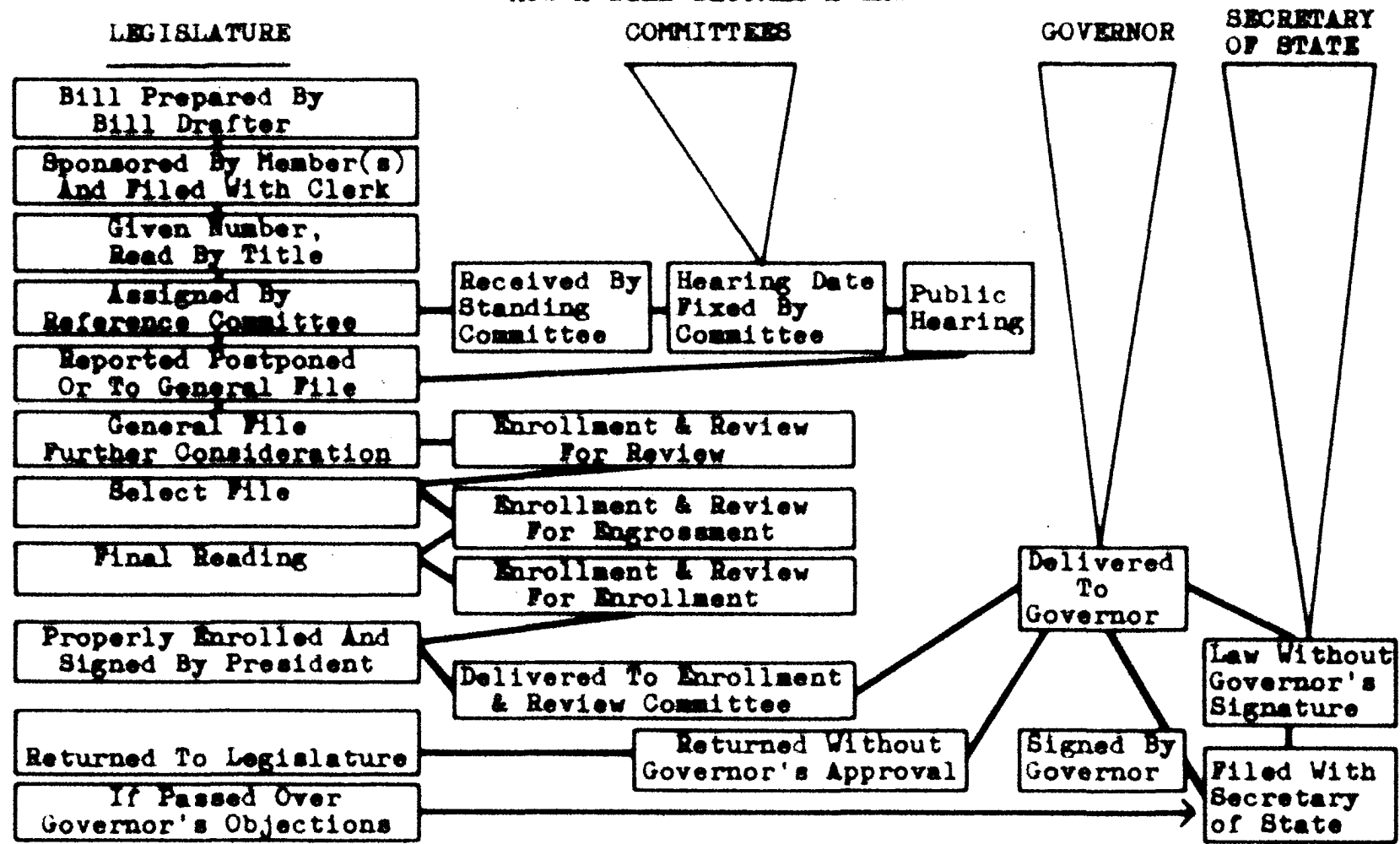
Procedure for Bill Passage.--Following introduction and favorable committee action, a bill goes through five procedural steps before reaching the gubernatorial action stage. A bill must pass through three deliberative steps (General File, Select File, and Final Reading) and two administrative steps (Enrollment and Review for Review, and Enrollment and Review for Engrossment). The rather lengthy deliberative process, with established time lapses between,³⁶ was designed as a check on hasty legislation, one of the arguments for a second house in the bicameral system. Bills are open to amendment at the General File and Select File stages and as a further check on hasty action, the entire bill must be read on Final Reading before the vote is taken, with all Senators required to be in their seats and no visitors permitted on the floor.³⁷

The Governor has five days (Sundays excepted) within which to return a bill to the Legislature with his

³⁶No bill can be considered on Select File until three legislative days after advancement from General File to Enrollment and Review. (Nebraska, Rules, Rule 12, sec. 8.) No bill can be placed on Final Reading until five legislative days have passed after reference to Enrollment and Review for Review, two legislative days after reference to Final Reading File, and printed copies of the bill have been on members' desks for at least one legislative day (sec. 11).

³⁷Ibid., Rule 4, sec. 7.

**FIGURE VII-1
HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW**



Source: Nebraska, Office of the Clerk of the Legislature.

veto;³⁸ otherwise the bill becomes law with or without his signature.³⁹ The Legislature can override a veto by a three-fifths vote.⁴⁰

Rules of the Game

As with any organization, the "Unicameral Club" sets its requirements for acceptance and admission to the inner circle.⁴¹ The Unicameral is not unlike other small legislative bodies in establishing unwritten rules, the acceptance of which will smooth the legislative path, and the rejection of which will remove the individual from the mainstream of influence. It is imperative that one bear his share of the work-load. With so few members and the ever increasing press of legislative work, a member who fails to carry his share of the load is not favorably

³⁸The Governor of Nebraska possesses an item veto on appropriations, but the courts have held this does not extend to gubernatorially submitted budget items after the latter have passed the legislature by a three-fifths vote. (Breckenridge, op. cit., p. 28.)

³⁹If the Legislature has adjourned in the interim, the Governor files his objections with the Secretary of State's Office within the five-day period. (Ibid.)

⁴⁰Nebraska, Constitution, Art. IV, sec. 15.

⁴¹These impressions on the unwritten rules are based on personal observations and interviews with participants and observers of the legislative system. It is not intended to be more than impressions as this would require greater personal involvement in the legislative process which the author's status and time do not permit.

looked upon by the membership. The manner in which one carries out his duties is also important. The bombastic, emotional approach is unsuccessful in the long run as is the penchant for trying to be too helpful which can easily cast one as a "nit-picker" or busybody. Hard work behind the scenes and in committee meetings will reap greater benefits than showy oratory during floor debates.

The new members must be satisfied to play the apprentice role. Looking to experienced members for guidance and deferring to those members who are recognized for their competence in certain areas is helpful. Cultivating friendships in the small body is a necessity and this includes honesty in all dealings with fellow Senators. A member who has failed to carry through on a promise or misled a colleague is quickly exposed and finds doors closed to him. A certain amount of socializing with the "boys" is demanded as an indication of mutual acceptance.

A balanced outlook and an ability to compromise are essential. A member who becomes too closely or passionately attached to a cause to the exclusion of all else quickly loses influence with his fellow members who find he is of little help in furthering their own interests. In the small body, and with the absence of party organization, mutual help is very important and the "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" approach is unavoidable. One who

cannot or will not play the game finds his influence diminished.

An individual who earns not only the respect but also the friendship of the majority of his fellow members is the man who travels in the inner circles and perhaps is elected to positions of power and influence. An individual who reflects the sociological and ideological biases of the body has a built-in advantage in the process and perhaps this, rather than his performance, may be the determinative factor in achieving successful acceptance.

The Actor Within the Legislative Arena

Introduction

The characteristics of the Nebraska legislator have been noted along with a brief description of the institutional arrangements of the Unicameral. Now the individual operating within this structure will be examined toward determining who gets what, how, and why; the caliber of leadership exercised in the body; the influence of parties, interest groups, and constituents; and the influence of the Governor in the day to day decision-making process in the Unicameral.⁴²

⁴²A great deal of this section is based on personal observation, interviews with the Senators, lobbyists, and political observers. The lobbyist section also draws heavily on a questionnaire sent to lobbyists in the late summer of 1967. During the 1967 session, the author interviewed 46 of the 49 Senators and submitted questions in writing to the other three, two of whom responded.

Leadership

In noting the formal absence of party identification, the first question which immediately arises is, how are the leadership positions filled? Tied closely to this is the nature and source of leadership exercised in the nonpartisan Unicameral. Only Minnesota and Nebraska elect their legislators without the aid of party labels. Minnesota provides for an organizational structure in lieu of parties through a formalized caucus procedure. In the first session, the wet-dry liquor issue was the focal point of the caucus, but since 1919 the legislators have caucused according to Liberals and Conservatives.⁴³ The degree of organization fluctuates but tends to be more extensive and formal in the lower house than in the upper chamber. Political parties took little interest in legislative contests up to about 1948,⁴⁴ but since that time the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL) has taken a more active interest in legislative contests.⁴⁵ The relationship between the legislative "parties" (Liberals and Conservatives) and the political parties (Republicans and DFL) is

⁴³Charles E. Adrian, "The Nonpartisan Legislature in Minnesota," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1950), p. 391.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵G. Theodore Mitau, Politics in Minnesota (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1960), pp. 57 ff.

established though this is a post-1950 development and is more true of the Liberal-DFL group than the Conservative-Republican one.⁴⁶

Thus, in the Minnesota Legislature there is a party-type structure which correlates somewhat with the Republican-Democratic cleavage at the other levels of the political system. At the very least some form of organized structure exists to cope with organizational and leadership necessities in lieu of the usual political party structure.

In Nebraska, the other state with a nonpartisan-elected Legislature, a formalized caucus structure does not exist as in Minnesota. The closest approximation is in reference to the choosing of the Committee on Committees where the members caucus by geographical areas (coinciding with the old four Congressional districts), each area electing three men to serve on the committee. Beyond this, no formalized structure exists for coping with the organizational and leadership problems.

⁴⁶ Mitau found that four-fifths or more of the Liberals openly identify themselves with the DFL and the latter's constitution provides for representation on the state central and executive committees for the Liberals. Only 40 percent of the Conservatives listed themselves as active Republicans, but some of the top-level legislative leaders have held similar positions in the Republican party. (Ibid.)

Leadership positions are filled through an informal process which fluctuates from session to session and is based on criteria that may also change. In short, an ad hoc approach is used. Several generalizations are possible, however, in describing the process. Blocs and coalitions do exist and, in any particular session, these may be the prime determinative factor in the "why" of organization. In the 1967 session, for instance, the Omaha delegation and some western Senators apparently were able to agree before the session on filling the positions and thus pretty well determined the personnel.⁴⁷ This is the first time that such a coalition has been operative, the more usual rural-urban split making such an arrangement impossible. The more common bloc arrangement operative in the past was the outstate Senators (plus Lincoln representatives at times) versus the Omaha area group.⁴⁸

⁴⁷The twelve-man Omaha delegation (plus neighboring Sarpy County representative) made up over half of the necessary legislative majority of 25 votes. Thus, the Omaha group, when united, represents a sizeable bloc on any question.

⁴⁸It may well be that the recent arrangement represents the realization of some rural interests of the "writing on the wall." With reapportionment and the continuing urbanizing trend, the pattern is unmistakable and rural interests may be using the coalition approach as a means of ensuring a continuing voice in legislative decision-making. Events in the next session will permit a better assessment of whether this coalition is a new trend or a one-shot measure.

The influence of political partisanship is difficult to determine. There is little to support the belief in any marked degree of political partisanship; yet it is not completely absent and instances are cited where partisanship was apparently operative. The 1965 Speaker's race is the most recent case frequently noted. Because of the election of a Democratic Governor and Lieutenant Governor, it was urged in the Legislature by some members that a Republican should be chosen Speaker to preserve the nonpartisan character. This was done, or in any case, a Republican was elected Speaker. In 1967, with a Republican Governor and Lieutenant Governor, talk was heard of the need to elect a Republican Speaker who would better serve as a liaison with the Executive. This was successful in that a Republican was elected Speaker. How deeply this was accepted, or whether it was the determinative factor in the individual member's final decision, is unknown. That the Unicameral is heavily Republican is well-known, as is the fact that the leadership over the years has come from members identified with that party. But the Democrats have served in enough positions to dilute this Republicanism and serve as a counter to arguments of Republican domination.⁴⁹

⁴⁹In the last session, a Democrat was not reappointed to a committee chairmanship, and some point to his unsuccessful candidacy for Lieutenant Governor as the

The apparent Republicanism of the leadership, however, may be due to ideological or social factors rather than political affiliation. The rural element has been in control, accentuated by malapportionment, and thus those favored for leadership positions would reflect the social-economic bias of the majority of the body--representing a non-urban area, from agricultural or business background, of a conservative bent--factors all favoring individuals apt to identify with the Republican party. A study of the backgrounds of the sixteen Speakers of the Unicameral tends to support this, though there are enough exceptions preclude any firm conclusions.⁵⁰

reason. Others claim he was deprived of the chairmanship because of poor past performance in that capacity, because of personality factors and/or because he sought higher political office while retaining his legislative seat. There is quite strong opposition among Senators relative to seeking other political office while retaining one's legislative seat, though apparently this does not extend to the primaries; i.e., if one loses out in the primary his non-resignation from the Legislature is not held against him. (Interviews with various Senators, May-July 1967.)

⁵⁰Of the total, seven came from the western two-thirds of the state, one was on the border between east and west, four were from the eastern-third, non-metropolitan areas, and four from the metropolitan area (though one lived on a farm near Lincoln). Four were lawyers, six farmers/ranchers, two in insurance and real estate, two in business, and two were white collar (one with a railroad and the other a dairy company). Fourteen were Protestants, with one Catholic and one of the Jewish faith (both non-Protestants had served in the Unicameral for many years and were serving their ninth term when elected). One was serving his second term, one his third, nine were in their fourth term and the other five in their

Examination of the former Chairmen of the Committee on Committees reveals a similar pattern, though once again exceptions make it difficult to establish the social-economic factors as primary determinants.⁵¹ In any case, the leadership reflects the social characteristics of the membership. Those who are exceptions have for the most part served in the early part of the Unicameral during the change-over period or are "old warhorses" who have been around the Unicameral for many years.

Other factors involved in the selection process are ability, confidence, seniority, and initiative. Some degree of ability is necessary to acquire a leadership position and this is demonstrated by past action which builds up confidence and respect in the eyes of fellow Senators, an ingredient that is necessary. Since a

fifth plus term (one in his sixth, one seventh, two ninth and one tenth, the latter the first Speaker who served in the old Senate for nine terms).

⁵¹Two men served two consecutive terms as Chairman (both the long-time Senators who were later elected Speakers) so only fourteen different individuals served in this capacity. Of the total fourteen, six came from the western two-thirds of the state, five from the eastern-third, non-metropolitan areas, and three from the metropolitan areas. Five were in farming/ranching, one in business, two in insurance/real estate, two were in banking, two were dentists, and two were white collar workers (one with a railroad and the other a dairy company). Nine were Protestants, three Catholic, one Jewish and one unknown. Three were serving their second term, six their third term, four their fourth term and one his fifth term.

freshman or even two-term Senator does not have the time to establish his ability (at least under the old two-year term), leaders tend to have seniority but this is by no means a guarantee of position as it is in many legislative bodies. A committee chairman is generally serving in his second or third term, Chairman of the Committee on Committees his third and the Speaker his fourth. One can move up earlier, but very few do; few move into the top positions if they are serving beyond their fifth term.⁵²

Finally, individual initiative in the form of pre-session campaigning is necessary, for rarely does the office seek the man. The amount of campaigning varies from session to session and position to position but is ever present.

The same general factors are operative in the selection of committee chairmanships, though ability and seniority at times take second place to geographical balance and internal harmony. At times simple availability may be the determinative factor in the choice of committee chairmanships. A certain amount of "trading" is present, particularly if members of the Committee on Committees have reached understandings within their district caucuses

⁵²Of the eighteen individuals who served six or more terms only six became Speaker or Chairman of the Committee on Committees. No doubt some chose not to seek these positions or chose committee chairmanships in lieu of them, but seniority is not a strong factor beyond a certain point in the leadership selection process.

in regard to desired committee assignments and/or chairmanships. Inevitably the balancing process falls short of perfection. People are assigned to committees dealing with subjects which they have neither the desire nor competence to understand; more able men are passed up for committee chairmanships because of the need for geographical balance or because two strong contenders necessitate the choice of a compromise candidate to promote legislative harmony.

Perhaps one of the most pervasive arguments against nonpartisanship is the failure of the system to provide for continuing and effective leadership.

The failure to develop leadership is undoubtedly one of the less desirable characteristics of the non-partisan system. The necessity of a continuing organization to develop, support and promote leadership exists. The non-partisan system makes no consistent provision for this.⁵³

Following the first session of the Unicameral in 1937, Governor Cochran commented: "The chief difficulty perhaps that developed arose from the nonpolitical character of the legislature. This resulted in a lack of responsible leadership, which intensified the difficulties."⁵⁴

⁵³Maurice Ramsey, "Some Aspects of Nonpartisan Government in Detroit 1918-1940" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1944), p. 296.

⁵⁴"Nebraska's Unicameral Adjourns," State Government, I (July, 1937), 131.

One of the men instrumental in the adoption of the Unicameral, Dr. John Senning, agreed that the first session lacked legislative leadership, but felt this would come with future sessions.⁵⁵ Whether the leadership has come or not is still a debatable question and the "leadership vacuum" argument remains to the present time.⁵⁶ The argument was well summed up by a long time Unicameral observer:

The non-partisan feature is frequently criticized on the ground that it does not provide adequate leadership in the legislature. . . . Under the present system, it is sometimes said that there are merely forty-three would-be leaders, and that the influence of the governor is minimized by the fact that there are no recognized leaders of his party in the legislature upon which he can rely to support his program or to sustain his vetoes.⁵⁷

Institutionally, there is no provision for legislative leadership in the Unicameral. Where it emerges and to what degree cannot be predicted from session to session. Legislative leadership is present, but it, like the major offices, is filled on a largely ad hoc basis. In the 1967 session leadership was aptly demonstrated on

⁵⁵John P. Senning, "Nebraska's One-House Legislature," Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, XVIII (September, 1937), 122.

⁵⁶Breckenridge, op. cit., p. 46.

⁵⁷Roger V. Shumate, "The Nebraska Unicameral Legislature," Western Political Quarterly, V (September, 1952), 511.

many fronts, not the least of which was the tax question, but this has not always been so in the past nor is there any guarantee it will be so in the future. The circumstances of the situation--able men in key positions plus an aggressive Governor who was able to lead without ruffling legislative feathers too badly, all in the context of a crisis situation--resulted in a good measure of legislative leadership.

The difficulty lies in the nature of leadership in the Unicameral. There are no floor leaders, no whips, no organized institutional opposition, no party platform, and no executive spokesmen unless someone appoints himself a floor leader or whip, becomes the opposition on a pending issue, or agrees to present and defend the executive's desires. Whether one or all of the latter conditions comes to fruition depends almost completely on the caliber of individuals in the body. Leadership is a fluid and ever-changing phenomenon in the Unicameral, dependent upon the issue at hand. Most Senators have an area of expertise, or at least competence, if they have been in the Legislature any length of time, and when an issue in their area emerges, chances are they will undertake the leadership. On another issue, a different Senator will grasp the reins of leadership. And so it goes, or rather, and so it may go.

A great deal of the senatorial expertise is tied to the committee system and chairmen are looked to by the other members for guidance within their particular area. Committee decisions are rarely overruled by the Legislature, and if respected, chairmen are deferred to on questions within their area. The selection process, we have seen, in no way assures that the best man is chairman and if such is the case, that particular area may suffer in the legislative process.⁵⁸

It is not contended that in a partisan context all the problems listed above do not exist or that similar leadership gaps do not occur. Less than able men occupy committee chairmanships in partisan bodies, men perhaps whose only asset is that they have managed to remain in the Legislature longer than their colleagues. What is contended, however, is that in a partisan body the institutional mechanisms for leadership exist on a continuing basis and reach beyond the individuals running these mechanisms at any point in time. In a nonpartisan situation, everything depends on the individuals involved and

⁵⁸Other forces are at work, not the least of which are the lobbyists and the Governor, and it is possible for the leadership gap to be bridged in alternative ways. For instance, one interest group was quite successful in the last session despite the fact that the chairman whose committee handled most of the group's bills was less than aggressive and, though not a negative factor, was not a positive one either. Working through other members of the committee and Senators at large, the group accomplished many of its objectives.

the effectiveness of leadership is tied so largely to an ad hoc selection procedure. With institutional mechanisms it is possible to rise above individuals' failings; this is less possible in the absence of such institutional mechanisms.

In the final analysis, the success of the one-house legislature will depend upon the character and competence of the men and women who are chosen to operate it. . . . Upon the wise selection of representatives depends the ultimate success of the unicameral legislature. The greater responsibility which the small, compact house places upon the individual member requires that he shall have the ability and moral fortitude to meet that trust.⁵⁹

Do institutional devices such as political party structures lessen "the ability and moral fortitude" of the individual to meet this greater responsibility? Indeed, is the individual faced with greater responsibility or does the absence of party permit him to enjoy greater authority with less responsibility? Grave questions have been raised as to the degree nonpartisan legislators are accountable and responsible. Or are we perhaps asking too much in expecting the majority of individuals to exercise greater individual responsibility by removing the institutional devices of collective responsibility?

⁵⁹Senning, op. cit., p. 125.

The Influence of Political Parties

Political parties, as organized groups, exert little or no influence in the legislative process. They are relegated to the role of just another interest group, and their representatives appear less frequently than most interest groups. Occasionally they appear quite active as in the pre-primary endorsement law efforts of the late 1930's and early 1940's,⁶⁰ the various attempts to have the question of a partisan legislature submitted to the people,⁶¹ and the reapportionment struggle of 1961.⁶² But

⁶⁰John P. Senning, "The Legislature and the Lobby" (unpublished manuscript, Nebraska State Historical Society, Senning Collection), pp. 7 ff.

⁶¹The parties have been unsuccessful in their efforts to get the Legislature to pass such a bill. In the 1967 session, the parties went through the ritual once again. The Republicans made a formal presentation before the committee and were represented by a number of party leaders including the State Chairman and National Committeewoman. The Democrats were not formally represented, except by the co-sponsor of the bill, a Democratic Senator, who took pains to make clear he represented no one but himself. After an hour or so of "friendly exchange" the hearing ended. The bill was reported out of committee, not because a majority favored the bill, but because the chairman believed that the issue should be debated on the floor and perhaps that the entire body should be forced to take a stand on the issue. The Legislature voted to kill the bill 26-14. (Author's notes, Hearing on LB 299 before the Government and Military Affairs Committee, March 10, 1967.)

⁶²The influence of the Republican party was felt and the battle revolved around the liberal-conservative split within the party. Conservative party elements joined western Nebraska Senators to push through a redistricting measure which favored the more conservative Republican incumbents. The redistricting plan substituted

apart from these single issues, the parties do not undertake any effort to influence legislative decision-making on a continuing and extensive basis.

The general withdrawal of parties from the legislative arena began with the establishment of the Unicameral. Because support and opposition crossed party lines, neither party took a stand on the Unicameral proposal. With its passage, the parties withdrew and focused their attention elsewhere as on the pre-primary endorsement law, leaving the Legislature to go its own way. "Not infrequently it would also appear that during debate on the floor of the legislature and in committees the political party in the accepted sense of the word does not exist."⁶³

The parties have been unsuccessful in the few attempts they have made in the legislative arena. Though the body has been predominantly Republican, the party has generally failed to be effective in influencing legislative action. It took four sessions to get the pre-primary

the traditional east-west district dividing line with a north-south, giving western Nebraska one seat, eastern Nebraska one, and the Omaha area one. The new First District threw two Republican incumbents into an election contest, the more liberal losing out to the conservative. For a detailed look at the legislative battle over redistricting, see Marvin Stromer, "Congressional Redistricting in Nebraska--1961" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1962).

⁶³Breckenridge, op. cit., p. 45.

endorsement law passed, and the Republicans failed to prevent its repeal. The lack of party influence is aptly demonstrated by the 1963-65 national convention delegate laws. In 1963 the parties were given a voice in delegate choice. But two years later, the parties were deprived of this voice by repeal of the 1963 measure despite the vocal opposition of Republican leaders. Both moves were largely the efforts of one man who was able to give the party this voice and to take it away. He, as well as the body, were Republican, yet the party could not retain the convention delegate law giving it a choice in the selection process. Despite its strength in the body, the Republican party has failed repeatedly to get a constitutional amendment through the Legislature calling for a partisan Legislature. In the last attempt it got fourteen votes and three of these were Democrats. Thus, while 71 percent of the body was Republican, only 31 percent of these followed party lines on the question of a partisan Unicameral. And this represents one of the party's better efforts.⁶⁴

From the beginning, the parties abandoned the legislative arena, and the few attempts they have made to influence legislation have not convinced them that they

⁶⁴The number includes some who, though they voted for letting the people decide, expressed the belief they would publicly speak against the move were it to appear on the ballot.

made the wrong choice. They make few appearances before the Legislature and both the parties and the legislators seem satisfied to let it remain this way.⁶⁵

The Influence of Interest Groups

Introduction.--The lobbyist influence is another area that has received much attention over the years. On the one hand, it is contended that lobbyists do not dominate "because the spotlight of publicity is on them in a single-house legislature as much as on the legislature itself."⁶⁶ Others contend it has indeed evolved into a "lobbyist paradise," as opponents contended, but few have been able to prove one side or the other. Nebraska is rated as having a strong pressure system,⁶⁷ and no one who has observed the Unicameral could conclude lobbyists are not ever-present and active. Whether they dominate or how influential they are in the legislative decision-making process is a more difficult matter to evaluate.

⁶⁵More party activity, particularly Republican, has been evident in the most recent sessions, but this has not been any more effective. The Democrats are more reluctant to get involved, feeling that the status-quo gives them as much influence as they could expect under any other circumstances.

⁶⁶Zeller, op. cit., p. 253.

⁶⁷Harmon Zeigler, "Interest Groups in the States," in Politics in the American States, ed. by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), p. 114.

The lobbying process is viewed essentially as a communication process. "Generally, his job [the lobbyist] can be little more than that of an agent serving to communicate the position of a group on a given issue to someone who he believes will have some control over the outcome."⁶⁸ How this communication is achieved, to whom and when are some of the factors which determine the effectiveness of lobbying activity. The legislator-lobbyist personal relationship is also significant in the lobbying process.

Lobbyists as a Source of Information.--The presentation of information is the prime job of the lobbyist and in most cases this involves presenting his group's position on some issue at hand. Ideally, the legislator evaluates this with information received from other groups and independent sources and thus gets a balanced picture of the situation. But this may not always be the case because of the legislator's biases, the absence of lobbyists for "the other side" or the scarcity of independent or non-involved sources. Thus, the first problem would seem to be to determine the sources of legislative information and the lobbyist's role in this process.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 135.

On the national scene, a study revealed that legislators believe they do not depend upon lobbyists for information to any great extent.⁶⁹ Because of the various research facilities and staff available to the Congressmen and Senators, they do not find it necessary to turn to other sources, the lobbyists being probably the most convenient ones, for the basic facts. In short, lobbyists are not generally utilized as a research tool by legislators on the national scene. In Nebraska, the opposite seems to be true in that lobbyists are used quite significantly as a basic research tool. Most Senators noted during the interviews that a majority of their number use lobbyists as an informational and/or research tool. Not only do lobbyists provide information in their own area of competence, they are called upon at times to provide information in areas outside their own field. It is not a rare occurrence for a Senator to ask a lobbyist for research aid of a general nature. When asked whether Senators use lobbyists as a source of information or research tool, 97.5 percent of the lobbyists queried replied in the affirmative.⁷⁰ Of these, 77.3 percent replied this occurred

⁶⁹Lester W. Milbrath, The Washington Lobbyist (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1963), pp. 307 ff.

⁷⁰This is based on a questionnaire sent in the late summer of 1967 to all lobbyists registered for the 1967 legislative session. See Appendix C for further data on the questionnaire.

"often" and 18.2 percent that it occurred "sometimes." Thus, less than five percent saw the Senators using lobbyists as an informational source less than "sometimes." As would be expected, this requested information is supplied if at all possible, with 95.6 percent of the respondents replying the information is supplied "most of the time" or oftener. Of those who responded to the question concerning senatorial requests for information outside the lobbyist's particular area of competence, 70.7 percent replied such requests occurred "once in a while," 21.7 percent "part of the time" and 6.6 percent "half of the time." Thus, lobbyists see themselves used as an informational or research tool quite heavily, at times extending to serving as a general research assistant, and take great pains to supply requested information.

How extensive is the information that is furnished by lobbyists? Do they merely present their side with those facts which tend to support their case? Questions dealing with this area met a great deal of resistance from the lobbyist respondents. Well over fifteen percent left these unanswered, compared to an average of five percent on other questions. Many others felt compelled to further explain their answers, and some believed that their integrity was being questioned. When asked whether they provide only the facts which strengthen their own case,

30.7 percent of those who did answer replied "rarely"⁷¹ and another 13.8 percent said "sometimes." However, 40.6 percent made one-sided presentations "most of the time" and another 14.8 percent did so "always." The response was similar to a differently worded question asking whether information which might be damaging to the interest represented is ever provided. Of those who answered 21.4 percent did so "rarely," 24.5 percent "once in a while," 45.9 percent "sometimes" and 9.2 percent "always." A correlation of the answers to these two questions reveals that although a large percentage rarely makes a one-sided presentation, only a third of these are as consistent in providing information that might be damaging to their interest. On the other side of the scale, a slightly higher percentage "rarely" present damaging information than "always" make a one-sided presentation. Though it may largely be a matter of semantics, it would appear that though lobbyists may present facts other than those which strengthen their case, there is more reluctance in presenting information of a damaging character. In short, a selectivity of factual presentation may well be the usual case.

⁷¹ Those who wrote in "never" were put in this category for coding purposes.

The selectivity theory is substantiated in material revealed in interviews with lobbyists and Senators. Both agree that basically to be effective a lobbyist must have the confidence of the Senator. An attempt at dishonesty and deliberate misinformation can seriously jeopardize a lobbyist's position. But a significant gray zone exists between the two poles of complete honesty and deliberate deceit and the amount of information presented will vary with the individuals involved. One lobbyist stated the situation well:

. . . There are issues and there are Senators where you provide only the facts called for. Judgment tells you occasionally not to produce anything more than the direct facts requested because it can confuse a Senator. It can encourage him to get too broad into associated subjects and it might be wise for the overall program to stay with the simple issues involved.

There are times when it is good to lay before the Senator, and particularly the wise Senator, all of the facts you have supporting the point you make and registering with him exactly your opinion. You then can provide him with arguments that might be posed against your position and attempt to supply counter-arguments at that time. Sometimes you are in contact with a great Senator who is going to dig out all the facts on both sides, and if you have these facts you could give them to him, hoping that he will feel an indebtedness to you.

. . . If there are facts which are undoubtedly going to come forward that is [sic] damaging to your case, one has to use judgment in whether to bring them out into the open. We do work for organizations that want progress on their positions. They sincerely feel that their positions are healthy for the overall good of the state. They naturally do not want these positions

damaged or threatened unless it is generally in good interest to do so.⁷²

Or as one two-term Senator put it, "If a lobbyist is doing his job he is only giving you his side and even if he gives you both sides, it is both sides as he sees them. There is no question about that."⁷³

Attitudes Toward Lobbyists.--The general legislative attitude toward the lobbyists is favorable. Very few adverse comments about lobbyists were voiced by the Senators beyond some selected individuals or groups and the influence was minimized by the majority of the legislators. Lobbyist usefulness as a source of information and/or research tool was generally acknowledged and many Senators looked upon them as "just guys trying to get a job done." Legislative attitudes toward lobbyists tended to be more positive after some legislative experience than before. A number of Senators admitted they were anti-lobbyist before their election, but have since found lobbyists to be a useful and constructive part of the legislative process.

⁷²Letter from a lobbyist representing a large business association, August 25, 1967.

⁷³Interview with a Senator with a business background who represents an eastern, non-metropolitan district, May-July, 1967.

Most of the Senators found their relationship with the lobbyists satisfactory. "I have never found a lobbyist who was dishonest. They cannot afford to be because it would affect their job here." Many Senators felt that the small body and the openness of the procedures made any less than honest activities impossible because of the ease of discovery.

The general belief was expressed by the Senators that the lobbyists' influence is exaggerated and perhaps overplayed. Most felt that they were generally exposed to both sides of the issue by opposing lobbyists, and possessed enough "common sense" to be able to make an independent decision after weighing all the facts.⁷⁴ A minority felt that both sides of the issue were not always presented, or at least not presented with equal intensity, and that independent judgment could not help but be colored by lobbyist efforts.⁷⁵

⁷⁴Whether they really believed this to be so or were merely saying this for the benefit of the interviewer is open to debate. That some honestly believed this to be the case is not doubted, and this includes members who are generally recognized, by lobbyist and Senator alike, as the least likely to change their attitude on an issue, regardless of the facts presented.

⁷⁵One Senator was quite emphatic about the influence of the so-called "5 to 8 social circuit" in attitude determination of many Senators. There was no hint that any dishonesty was involved, but rather the more subtle, unconscious influence that arises from frequent personal contacts, evolving perhaps into close friendships. Though the individual may honestly believe he is an

The overall legislative attitude toward the lobbyists was definitely positive. Few lobbyists are looked upon as outsiders; rather they are viewed as an asset and integral part of the legislative struggle. Their effectiveness was not assessed as great, the feeling being that inter-lobby efforts, the openness of deliberations and the caliber of the legislators combined to minimize the interest group influence. Lobbyist acceptance is borne out by the lobbyists themselves, 94.9 percent of whom felt that the Senators look upon their efforts as a positive and useful aid (over half--53.8 percent--felt that most of the time this even extended to Senators they knew were opposed to their interest).

Techniques of Lobbying.--The general lobbying techniques used before the Nebraska Unicameral are not unlike those used within other legislative bodies. Personal contact and presentation are the prime vehicles of the legislator-lobbyist communication process.

Of the eleven specific techniques, only two (personal presentation of arguments and appearing at committee hearings) scored above "some of the time" though

independent entity tied to no one, his actions reflect the biases and prejudices of his friends. (Interview with a long-time Senator representing an urban district, May-July, 1967.) Because of its smallness, the Unicameral is conducive to the building up of friendships and these are important elements of legislator-lobbyist influence.

TABLE VII-14
 LOBBYING TECHNIQUES: TYPE
 AND FREQUENCY OF USE

Technique	Frequency of Use				Over- all Use Rating ^a	Per- cent- age of Use ^b
	Most of the time	Some of the time	Once in a while	Never		
Personal presentation of arguments	84	22	6	. .	302	83.9
Appearing at committee hearings	65	33	13	1	271	76.5
Presenting research results	38	49	19	. .	231	65.2
Having an influential constituent contact the Senator	18	32	44	10	162	45.8
Socializing at noon or in the evenings	12	36	42	18	150	42.3
Obtaining assistance of other organizations	9	32	49	10	140	39.5
Letter writing or telegram campaign	7	29	43	29	122	34.4
Getting close to person who has ear of the Senator	2	26	56	22	114	32.2
Contributing work to political campaign	2	17	44	45	84	23.7
Publicizing voting records	4	10	25	61	57	16.1
Contributing money to political campaign	2	11	27	66	55	15.5
Other	8	7	. .	. .	36	10.1

^aComputed by assigning a value of three to "most of the time," two to "some of the time," and one to "once in a while" and summing the values.

^bComputed by dividing the value of the over-all use column by the highest possible value (total respondents times "most of the time" equals sum [118 x 3 = 354]).

"presenting research results" was just barely below this level. Five fell between the "once in a while" and "some of the time" categories, and four below "once in a while." Despite the dominance of the personal contact and presentation techniques, there was rather widespread use made of other techniques available, indicating that the lobbyists, as elsewhere, make use of all the possible approaches at one time or another when the situation warrants.

The socializing aspect of the legislative process receives a great deal of attention from some of the press and members of the Legislature themselves. It is no secret that various groups provide food and drink for the Senators as a group and many provide these services on an individual basis.⁷⁶ Many Senators feel they can avail themselves of these benefits without any strings being attached by adopting a policy of "eating off everyone's table," thus neutralizing indebtedness to any single group. Others point out that the interests generally pointed to as providing the services are not those necessarily the

⁷⁶The railroads provide facilities for a noon lunch for those Senators who wish to participate and the liquor interests provide samples of their wares as well. The existence of these facilities at a downtown hotel is no secret. Labor organizations host the Senators at breakfasts and other groups provide services during non-legislative periods. The Nebraska Bankers Association, for instance, makes a room available to Senators during the Fall football season when many interim week-end meetings are held in conjunction with the University of Nebraska football games.

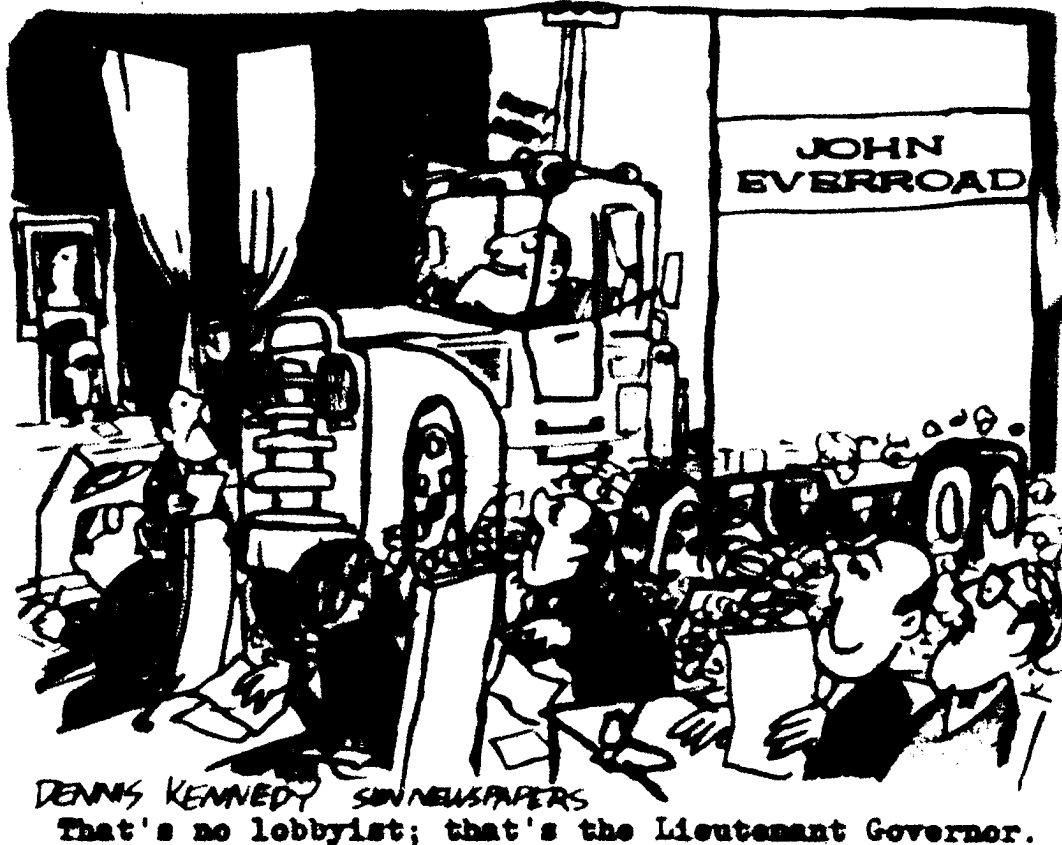
most effective in the lobbying process. There are no indications that the groups providing these services demand repayment but expect to gain nothing more than good will among the Senators. Some claim the food and drink circuit is a thing of the past and may soon disappear.

In any case, the technique of socializing does receive strong support among the lobbyist group, scoring near the mid-point on the scale of use. Perhaps the most important aspect of this technique is that of the long-range benefits. Few would contend any legislator votes according to who entertains him, nor do the agents providing these services expect this. What the so-called "wining and dining" circuit does achieve, however, is to provide the conducive environment in which more personal and informal contacts can be achieved, closer interpersonal relationships founded and personal confidences built up. In short, it provides the basis for legislator-lobbyist friendships and it is these which have relevance in the determination of influence in the individual decision-making process.

The lobbyists make least use of electorally associated techniques and rarely resort to threats of electoral defeat. "Groups will rarely (if they are represented by experienced lobbyists) threaten a legislator with electoral defeat and they will rarely flaunt economic

FIGURE VII-2

CARTOONIST'S VIEW OF LOBBYING IN NEBRASKA



The degree and extent of lobbying is well illustrated by events during debate in the 1967 session on a bill backed by trucking interests seeking to raise load limits on highways. The Lieutenant Governor, associated with trucking interests, relinquished his position as presiding officer to the Speaker. He was then seen in the rear of the chamber and in the halls actively "lobbying" for the bill. The event was well publicized and reported in the press, but few adverse comments were heard from the legislators. None thought the Lieutenant Governor had done anything wrong or even used poor judgment in this case. (Cartoon by permission of Dennis Kennedy, Omaha Sun newspapers.)

power openly."⁷⁷ On the other hand, more subtle techniques in this area are not unknown. Interest groups in Nebraska have been known to "emphasize" to a Senator past electoral aid in the context of an upcoming election campaign,⁷⁸ and have worked through local constituents, whose petitions may be more effective in the electoral process than the resident lobbyist, to strengthen their position. The latter is seen in the rather strong support given by lobbyists to the technique of "having an influential constituent contact the Senator" (45.8 percent). Because of the small legislator-constituent ratio, Nebraska Senators are highly district-oriented and thus interest groups find that constituent contact is effective.

Lobbying Success.--How well do the lobbyists achieve their goals? The lobbyists see themselves as fairly successful goal achievers. Over 59 percent of those replying to the 1967 questionnaire felt they were successful in influencing the Senators beyond merely being able to present their side of the issue. Thus, the majority felt they influenced the decision in a positive manner from their vantage point. In reply to whether this

⁷⁷Zeigler, op. cit., p. 139.

⁷⁸In situations where specific groups are in a position to exert this influence this may be effective though lobbyists use this method much like a labor strike, as a last resort on an issue seen as vitally important.

involved a "softening" of the Senator's position, 62.8 percent of those who rated their efforts as successful felt that "some of the time" they achieved this "softening." Seven percent achieved this only "once in a while" but 25.7 percent did so "most of the time" or oftener.

As to how often they felt they were actually able to get a Senator to change his mind, 54.7 percent of the successful raters saw this happening "some of the time" and another 41.4 percent "once in a while." None admitted they were never able to change a Senator's mind and only one said he always was able to do so.

In reference to actually determining how a Senator will vote, only 2.8 percent of the successful achievers indicated their influence "never" extended to this point. Over 28 percent felt they influenced the actual vote "once in a while" and another 58.5 percent felt they did so "some of the time." Only 7.1 percent saw the influence extending this far "most of the time."

Thus, well over half of the lobbyists rate their success better than just presenting their side. Of these, again well over half felt themselves successful (some of the time or more often) in "softening" a Senator's attitude, in changing his mind or actually determining his vote on the issue (this support was 88.5 percent on the softening aspect, 65.6 percent on vote determination and

55.7 percent on position change).

The lobbyists were also asked to rate which groups they felt were most successful in achieving their objectives⁷⁹ (Table VII-15).

TABLE VII-15
LOBBYIST ASSESSMENT OF INTEREST
GROUP SUCCESS

Group	Success Ranking	Percentage Support ^a
Education	188	39.8
State government	157	33.2
Banking	152	32.2
Ranching/livestock	101	21.4
Farming	93	19.7
Business	92	19.5
Public power	86	18.2
Local governmental	75	15.9
Railroads	68	14.4
Labor	67	14.2
Liquor	47	9.9
Communications	31	6.5
Real Estate	28	5.9
Citizen	27	5.7
Other	11	2.3

^aComputed by dividing the ranking value by the total possible value (total respondents times first choice equals sum [118 x 4 = 472]).

⁷⁹The lobbyists were given fifteen general groups and asked to check as many as necessary, but to indicate the three most important by numbering them 1, 2, and 3. In computing the success ranking, a value of four was assigned for the first choice, three for the second, two for the third, and one if the group was merely checked. The summation for each group is the success ranking.

No one group dominated the lobbyists' success ranking, though the general strength of the various groups reflected the success picture of the 1967 session given by other sources. Education received the highest rating and this is substantiated by the general picture of education group achievements during the last session. The activist role of the Governor is reflected in the strength of the state governmental group, though the efforts of the State Game Commission played a part in this category's high rating. The major supporters of the socializing aspects--railroads and liquor--scored toward the bottom indicating that the "wining and dining" circuit is less influential than some believe, at least as far as the body of lobbyists are concerned.

The Influence of Lobbyists: Epilogue.--The lobbyists, physically close to the Senators,⁸⁰ are ever-present, ever-active in the legislative arena. They are relied upon heavily for information, are favorably accepted by the Senators to the extent that their efforts are looked upon as a positive contribution to the legislative process, are active in post-session activities (social affairs) as well as during chamber deliberations.

⁸⁰The lobbyists sit on the floor of the Legislature in the rear of the chamber along the side walls and are physically separated only by a rope.

They are by far the most important access vehicle between constituent and legislator and generally the only competition vying for the senatorial ear are other interest groups. There is every reason to believe they are eminently successful in goal achievement given these favorable factors. There are few indications to demonstrate that they are not successful.⁸¹

Constituent Influence

Representatives in state legislative bodies tend to be district-oriented to a great extent. "Legislatures function to represent locally organized interests, interests which are manifested in local rather than statewide constituencies. Legislators have deep roots in their

⁸¹The use of the initiative and referendum, for example, has been minimal in Nebraska. Given the assumption that successful interest group goal achievement is inversely proportional to the use of the initiative and referendum, Nebraska interest groups apparently have had to resort to extra-legislative means very infrequently. The present nonpartisan, one-house structure is backed by the majority of the lobbyists. One comments: "Our Senators most directly represent their constituents. They are not there by responsibility to any party, Governor's office or such alliance. Ours is a clean legislation compared with other states. In working with these men, I find that their reactions and opinions can be counted upon more directly than where they have to go check with their leader of their party or system." (Letter from lobbyist representing a large business association, August 25, 1967.) In a recent study utilizing roll call analysis of three recent legislative sessions, lobbying emerged as a major influence factor. (Richard D. Marvel, "Decision-Making in the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature for the 1959, 1961, and 1963 Sessions" [unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1966].)

local constituencies."⁸² Studies of the influence of party vis-à-vis constituent influence indicate that constituency influences operate through the party system in competitive states but more directly on voting behavior in one-party states. In the latter situations permanent voting factions do not exist but shift from issue to issue.⁸³ What of Nebraska, where parties are absent? Most Senators revealed they received minimal constituent pressure and expressed a desire that the "people back home" would express their views more often. In general, the Senators were on their own as to what the people thought and thus felt constituent influence was at best a subjective guide for their voting patterns. Where it was pronounced, legislators followed district desires. Otherwise, other factors seemed more important to the individual Senator.

Observers indicated the great desire of Senators to receive constituent views and pointed to the great influence a letter from back home played. Many Senators apparently find these a convenient weapon to thwart other pressures, particularly various interest groups, or perhaps to convince other Senators that "this is what the people

⁸²Dye, op. cit., p. 201.

⁸³Ibid., pp. 188 ff.

want."⁸⁴ The importance of constituent pressure, when it can be generated, is well recognized by interest groups which consistently encourage members back home to "talk to your Senator about this." Some groups go further and have an intricate organization which provides for constituent contact should the people on the scene (the lobbyist) feel this is necessary.⁸⁵

⁸⁴One lobbyist related his experience with a particular Senator who insisted that the lobbyist "get me some letters from home" in support of a particular position before he would support it. It was evident that these were used for purposes other than learning constituent opinion.

⁸⁵Many organizations and associations alert their members to legislative problems through their publications and keep them posted on progress during the actual legislative session. The Nebraska Petroleum Marketers, for instance, alert their people through their monthly publication, Nebraska Oil Jobber, supplemented by newsletters and bulletins. The June 1967 edition of the magazine reported progress on bills of particular interest to the group and in reference to one bill stated: "This is the first vote on it, and it is going to need all of the work you can give to get it through. The first vote will tell us just how much work remains to be done. Your Association office will keep you informed on the measure and will, no doubt, be asking you to contact your Senator to give us his support." (Nebraska Oil Jobber, June, 1967, p. 13.) The following month, in a legislative wrap-up which indicated general satisfaction with the legislative results, it was stated: "Our thanks to all of you who contacted your Senators on our bills, who visited with them and gave them our side of the story, and to those who wrote the many letters that were written. It goes to prove that if we all get behind something, then it is bound to happen. It just takes a lot of work on the part of a lot of people." (Nebraska Oil Jobber, July, 1967, p. 12.)

The Nebraska Bankers Association has local contacts who can, and are, utilized when it becomes necessary that constituent influence be demonstrated. Similarly, by a few phone calls or letters, members across the state will

Despite the general acceptance of constituent influence as important, few can measure its effectiveness. Though interest groups use constituent influence, none are really sure how extensive it is or, when used, how effective. It would seem that in a situation of a relatively small number of constituents, where personal acquaintance is the rule rather than the exception (and many Nebraska districts are in this category), with limited channels of communication, constituent influence, where demonstrable, should have a powerful impact on the legislator. Groups that have the ability to tap constituent influence do so and some of the more successful groups fall into this category.

Conclusion

A number of conclusions emerge from this examination of the legislative decision-making process in Nebraska. First, the legislators not only reflect, but tend to accentuate, the socio-economic composition of the general population. This bias favors age, business and agriculture, Republicans, Protestants, white Anglo-Saxons, and northern Europeans to a larger degree than the society as a whole.

respond by personal or letter contact with their respective Senators. (Interview with representative of the Nebraska Bankers Association, October 18, 1967.)

Secondly, the leadership structure follows no rational plan and there are no built-in devices to provide for continuity and effectiveness of leadership. The nature of leadership is largely tied to the personnel of the body and thus fluctuates from session to session and issue to issue. A general, over-all legislative program is frequently lacking and thus the legislative process is largely one of interest group interaction, supplemented and occasionally superseded by executive direction.

Thirdly, the dominance of interest groups is striking. Their role in the legislative process is substantial, and lacking political parties, they fulfill a number of roles from research organs to recruitment of legislators. As the only channel of communication operative, outside of individual contact, interest groups enjoy a favorable position which, in more cases than not, fails to be offset by other factors (strong executive action, constituent influence independent of interest group stimulation, neutralization due to inter-group activities).

Finally, the system receives a great deal of support from those operating within the legislative process--the legislators, the lobbyists, and to some extent even the political parties. The one-house aspect has received almost universal acceptance; the nonpartisan

aspect is less accepted, but the failure to date to mount any serious challenge to the status quo indicates less than widespread dissatisfaction.

CHAPTER VIII

DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES: THE EXECUTIVE

Introduction

The concept of the executive as one of three coordinate branches of government remains strong in Nebraska, and it is only recently that the Governor has been increasing his power and prestige vis-à-vis the Legislature.¹ It is too early to tell whether the trend will continue or whether it is just a passing phase. In any case, the functions of the branches of government have been fairly well delineated, by officeholder and public alike, and this delineation generally respected.

The executive in Nebraska has been looked upon basically as an administrator, one who is to see that the laws are faithfully executed. The expansion of the executive's role into other areas such as legislative matters and political party leadership has been very slow in

¹In Minnesota, nonpartisanship has resulted in a stronger and more aggressive Governor, but in Nebraska nonpartisanship seems to have increased the power of the Legislature, rather than the Governor. (Charles R. Adrian, "The Nonpartisan Legislature in Minnesota" [unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1950], pp. 350 ff.)

emerging. In fact, it is only with the present incumbent that these non-administrative roles seem to be attracting executive attention.² The restricted view of the executive function was aptly expressed by a long-time observer of the Nebraska political scene.

. . . under the American three-branch system--legislative, judicial and executive--the Governor, as Chief executive officer, has no right to expect the Legislature to do his bidding. He is the chief administrator. His job is to administer the laws the Legislature enacts; not to dictate the laws. His recommendations, rightfully, should be limited to such measures as will make for better administration. Under the system he is to keep his fingers out of general policy matters.³

The image has changed little from 1952 and the above still describes well the general Nebraska view of the executive function. This image of an essentially "weak" Governor, as will be seen, stems largely from custom and usage rather than being the result of constitutional and statutory restrictions.

²It remains to be seen whether these expanded roles will be permanently incorporated into the system. Some resistance to this "new role" by the Governor has developed and a few contend that the next election may well involve a repudiation of this expanded executive image.

³"Prof. Senning Defends Unicameral, As Is," Omaha World-Herald Magazine, May 18, 1952, p. 3G.

The Executive Structure

Constitutional Development

Statehood Period.--The 1866 Constitution, hurriedly drawn up and quickly adopted,⁴ provided for a simple framework of government not unlike that of the territorial period. The executive branch was small in number of offices, pay was minimal, terms of office short, and powers limited.⁵ The executive provisions were at least simple and brief and few explicit limitations were written into the constitution--advantages which future constitutions could not claim.

No sooner was the hastily drawn up 1866 document passed than moves were initiated to write a new body of

⁴The events surrounding the 1866 document remain a mystery to the present day and the authorship of the constitution is unknown. The logrolling techniques in its passage must have set a modern record for speed. (James C. Olson, History of Nebraska [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955], pp. 128 ff.)

⁵The executive departments, and annual salary of each consisted of a Governor (\$1,000), Secretary of State (\$600), Auditor (\$800), and Treasurer (\$400). All were elected for a two-year term with the exception of the Auditor who had a four-year term of office. The Governor had appointment power, with the consent of the Senate, of offices established by the constitution or law, whose appointment or election was not otherwise provided for. He had powers of executive clemency, was commander-in-chief of the state militia and possessed a veto power including a pocket veto but not item veto, with two-thirds legislative vote needed to override the veto. (Addison E. Sheldon (ed.), Nebraska Constitutions of 1866, 1871, and 1875, Nebraska Historical and Political Science Series, Bulletin No. 13 [Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, 1920], pp. 64-91.)

organic law for the state. The result was the Constitution of 1871.⁶ The executive provisions failed to improve the 1866 version and in many ways were less adequate (at least in modern terms though perhaps considered progressive in that period). More elective administrative offices were included (Lieutenant Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Attorney General, and Commissioner of Public Lands and Buildings), along with a specific constitutional restriction against the creation of additional executive offices. Salaries were improved substantially over the 1866 level.⁷ The Governor's appointment powers were retained and a removal provision was added covering those personnel over whom he had appointment power. The veto power was changed with the dropping of the pocket veto, and the Governor was required, in case of legislative adjournment, to return a bill with his objections to the Secretary of State's office; otherwise, the bill became law without his signature.⁸ The 1871 document, however, never saw the light of day as it was rejected by the electorate, 8,627 to 7,986.⁹

⁶Olson, op. cit., pp. 185 ff.

⁷All offices paid \$2,000 a year except the Governor (\$3,000) and Lieutenant Governor (twice the compensation of a state senator). (Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 64-91.)

⁸Ibid.

⁹Olson, op. cit., p. 188.

Constitution of 1875.--Constitutional revisionists, however, were undaunted and moves for a new constitution to replace the 1866 one continued. Another constitutional convention was authorized in 1875.¹⁰ Electorate acceptance was forthcoming and the 1875 document, as amended, remains to date the basic organic law for the state of Nebraska. The executive article remained largely unchanged from that of the ill-fated 1871 document, except that drafters found it necessary to be more wordy and complex without radically changing the actual intent. As in 1871 the familiar provision of executive power appeared: "The supreme executive power shall be vested in the governor who shall take care that the laws are faithfully executed."¹¹

The veto power was changed in a way which both weakened and strengthened the executive's position. Three-fifths rather than two-thirds were sufficient to override an executive veto, but the power of an item veto on appropriations was added. "The governor may disapprove any item or items of appropriation contained in bills passed by the legislature, and the items so disapproved shall be stricken therefrom, unless repassed in the manner herein prescribed in cases of disapproval of bills."¹²

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 189 ff.

¹¹Sheldon, op. cit., p. 71. ¹²Ibid., p. 81.

The restriction against the creation of additional executive offices was retained from the 1871 document and was to create problems in the next forty years as circumstances changed and governmental responsibilities expanded.

Between 1875 and 1920, only eleven amendments were successfully adopted and only one of these directly affected the executive, the creation of a Board of Commissioners for state institutions (1912).¹³ The members of the body were appointed by the Governor for staggered terms with full power to manage, control and govern the various state institutions.¹⁴

The Constitutional Convention of 1919-20.--The 1919-20 Constitutional Convention made a number of significant changes in the executive article. First, provision was made for the creation of new executive offices through legislative action.¹⁵ No change was made in the Governor's

¹³The restrictive amending procedure of the 1875 document was responsible for so few approved amendments. Majority approval of all voters in the election was required, and only one amendment successfully passed this hurdle. With the addition of the so-called "party circle" law in 1901--all straight tickets were recorded as for or against a constitutional provision if the party had taken a stand in its platform--the amending process was eased. (Sheldon, op. cit., p. 3.)

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 83-84.

¹⁵A two-thirds majority of both houses of the Legislature was necessary for the creation of a new executive office. (Ibid., p. 89.)

appointment and removal powers, except the entire Legislature, rather than just the Senate, confirmed appointments. No change was made toward decreasing the number of constitutionally elected executive officials.¹⁶

An executive budget was included in which the Governor presented a complete itemized budget of the financial requirements of all state departments, and the Legislature, except with three-fifths vote, could not make appropriations in excess of the Governor's recommendations. If the required three-fifths action were successful, this would not be subject to the gubernatorial veto power.¹⁷

A Board of Pardons, composed of the Governor, Attorney General and Secretary of State, was created, restricting the pardon power of the Governor which was now to be shared with other constitutional officials.¹⁸

Executive officials' salaries were to be set by law rather than explicitly set down in the constitution as had been the case with all the previous documents, "but the salary of no officer shall be changed more than once in eight years."¹⁹

The Convention proposals were approved by the electorate in 1920 by an overwhelming majority, although

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 65 ff.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 77-78.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 87.

the total voter turnout was less than 20 percent.²⁰ By 1920, the constitutional provisions of the Nebraska executive were generally satisfactory on the basis of accountability potential. Salaries and reorganization were finally where they belonged--within the bounds of legislative action. Provisions for an executive budget existed and the gubernatorial veto power was quite progressive even in modern terms. Less than satisfactory aspects remained, however. No progress was made toward adoption of the short ballot, terms of office were short, necessitating frequent electoral contests, and the approach to the pardon power and supervision of state penal and welfare institutions was less than satisfactory from the standpoint of accountability.

Recent Constitutional Changes.--Some progress toward the short ballot has been made with the elimination of two constitutional offices, the Commissioner of Public Lands and Buildings (1936) and Superintendent of Public Instruction (1952).²¹ However, the short ballot is still

²⁰Olson, op. cit., pp. 286-287.

²¹At the same time, however, provision was made for election of a State Board of Education (six members elected by districts) which was to have general supervision and administrative powers over the state's elementary and secondary education system. (Nebraska, Constitution of the State of Nebraska, Art. IV, sec. 1; Art. VII, sec. 14, 15.) The 1919-20 Convention provided for the election of regents, by district, to govern the University of Nebraska. (Sheldon, op. cit., Appendix, p. 2.)

far from adoption in Nebraska.

Extended terms for executive officials were finally approved in 1962 and 1964 so that all constitutional officers now enjoy a four-year term with no limitation on the number of terms, except the Treasurer and Governor who are limited to two consecutive terms.²² Thus, while terms were lengthened on the one hand, a restriction on the number of gubernatorial terms was imposed on the other.

The veto power was slightly altered in that, in approving appropriations in excess of the Governor's recommendations, a two-thirds, rather than three-fifths vote by the Legislature is needed.²³

Administrative changes made include the abolishment of the Board of Control, leaving it to the Legislature to determine the method of control and administration of the state's penal and welfare institutions.²⁴ In 1964 an amendment was adopted which provided for the realignment of certain state executive offices. The two-thirds requirement for appropriations in excess of the Governor's budget

²²The restriction on the Treasurer dates back to the 1871 Constitution, but the two-term gubernatorial restriction was adopted in 1966, patterned after the United States Twenty-Second Amendment. (Nebraska Blue Book 1966, p. 106.)

²³Nebraska, Constitution of the State of Nebraska, Art. IV, sec. 7.

²⁴Ibid., sec. 19.

recommendations was approved at this time. Also the Legislature was empowered to provide by statute for the keeping of accounts and the reporting of agencies administering cash funds not subject to legislative appropriation, and the requirement that all expending agencies furnish requested information to the Legislature on the "condition, management and expenses of these respective offices."²⁵

Statutory Development

Statehood to 1919.--The constitutional restriction against the creation of new executive offices, incorporated in the rejected 1871 Constitution but carried over into the 1875 document, created numerous difficulties as state government was faced with new problems and responsibilities. Unable to logically solve the problems of administrative reorganization, it was necessary to use the subterfuge of the "board."²⁶ The administrative structure of the state by the second decade of the twentieth century was a maze of boards and commissions, presided over by the constitutional officers but run by deputies, independent

²⁵Ibid., sec. 22, 23. The eight-year limitation on salary raises was also abolished by amendment in 1956. (Nebraska Blue Book 1966, p. 105.)

²⁶Luella Gettys, The Reorganization of State Government in Nebraska, Nebraska Historical and Political Science Series, Bulletin No. 11 [Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, 1922], p. 5.

of each other with almost as many different appointment and removal procedures as existing boards.²⁷

. . . With the multiplication of independent agencies, there resulted a clumsy and disintegrated administrative organization, with an absence of definite responsibility causing inefficiency in the administration of state affairs and waste of public funds. The governor, constitutionally vested with the supreme executive power of the state, was, by being limited in his power of appointment and removal, deprived of effective control over the state administration as a whole. He was not always able to compel subordinate officials to act, and in such cases he could not be held responsible for their share in the administration.²⁸

A move toward reform began in the 1910's with numerous gubernatorial recommendations for action and legislative studies of the state's administrative set-up. Some consolidation of existing boards was made in 1915 and 1917, but the 1919 Legislature undertook a sweeping reform of the administrative structure.²⁹

²⁷The deputies of these boards, who actually carried out the day-to-day administrative tasks, were appointed in a number of ways: (1) by the Governor subject to certain qualifications or on the recommendation of a board limited to a list submitted by a professional organization or subject to no limitation whatsoever; (2) by a board, limited to a list submitted by a professional organization or subject to no limitation. Removal power was likewise diverse: (1) by the Governor for cause, at his pleasure, or on recommendation of a board; (2) by a board for cause or at their pleasure; (3) by a department for neglect of duty. (Ibid., p. 18.)

²⁸Ibid., pp. 5-6.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 20 ff.

The Civil Administrative Code of 1919.---This code abolished twenty-four boards and commissions replacing them with six departments, each headed by a secretary appointed by the Governor with senatorial consent.³⁰ The Code took effect in the midst of heightened controversy³¹ and was a hot political issue for a number of years to come, the Democrats using the repeal of the Code as a campaign issue for the next ten years.³²

The 1919 Code was a significant step in the direction of administrative reform, but the task had only been partly completed. Though a large number of the boards and commissions were abolished and many functions were consolidated and placed under the direct control and responsibility of the executive officer, a number of independent executive agencies still existed. A number of boards were not touched by the reorganization, the twelve constitutional offices and boards remained, and the

³⁰The departments were: finance, agriculture, labor, trade and commerce, public works, and public welfare. (Ibid., p. 24.)

³¹Sufficient signatures were obtained for a referendum proceeding, but the question did not get on the ballot because of the failure of the backers to appeal the Secretary of State's refusal to accept the petitions, upheld by a District Court, to the Supreme Court within the required ten-day period. (Ibid., p. 23.)

³²Olson, op. cit., pp. 284-285; U.S., Works Project Administration, Nebraska Party Platforms (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1940), p. 411.

Constitutional Convention of 1919-20 added four new constitutional boards to the administrative structure.³³

Reorganization Since 1919.—Despite the political controversy surrounding it, the 1919 Code survived and "continued to provide the format for the administration of those functions of state government not otherwise provided for by the constitution."³⁴ Some minor changes were made over the years. In 1931 the functions of the Department of Finance were given to the State Tax Commissioner,³⁵ and in 1933 the existing departments were rearranged though there was no material change in duties.³⁶ A number of departments were added over the years: Aeronautics (1945); Veteran Affairs (1947); Roads and Water Resources (the two in 1957 replaced the former joint Roads and Irrigation

³³Gettys, op. cit., pp. 27-28. For a more detailed look at the functioning of the departments under the Code, see Gettys, op. cit., pp. 30-41.

³⁴Olson, op. cit., p. 285.

³⁵The Office of Tax Commissioner is a constitutional office by virtue of being one of the amendments proposed by the 1919-20 Constitutional Convention. The Commissioner is appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the legislature. (Nebraska, Constitution of the State of Nebraska, Art. IV, sec. 28.) In 1955 the Office of Tax Commissioner was designated as an administrative department. (Nebraska Blue Book 1966, p. 339.)

³⁶The departments were: Agriculture and Inspection; Labor; Health; Roads and Irrigation; Banking; and Insurance. (Olson, op. cit., p. 285.)

Department); Public Institutions (1962); Public Welfare (1962); and Administrative Services (1965).³⁷

The period 1920-1950 also saw the burgeoning of numerous boards and commissions independent of the existing departmental structures and, as such, working against the reorganization begun in 1919 which sought to decrease the board and commission approach.³⁸ The trend has continued and at present there are thirty-six boards and commissions dealing with state matters and five more with interstate problems.³⁹ Many of these are licensing boards for various professional occupations (Nebraska Board of Barber Examiners, Board of Nursing, Board of Examiners for Professional Engineers and Architects), some are of a cultural or historical nature (Nebraska Arts Council, Capitol Mural Commission, Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission), and some are ex-officio or administrative-type boards which for one reason or another have not been integrated into the departmental system: State Athletic Commission; various retirement boards; Board of Equalization

³⁷ Nebraska, Session Laws of 1945, Chap. 5; Session Laws of 1947, Chap. 306; Session Laws of 1957, Chap. 365; Session Laws of 1965, Chap. 538; Nebraska Blue Book 1966, p. 339.

³⁸ John Lux, "Administrative Reorganization of the State Government of Nebraska" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1951), pp. 18 ff.

³⁹ Nebraska Blue Book 1966, pp. 451-493.

and Assessment; Game, Forestation and Parks Commission; Nebraska State Racing Commission.⁴⁰

Thus, at present the Nebraska administrative structure consists of six constitutional officers, six constitutional boards and agencies, fifteen administrative departments, and forty-one statutory boards and commissions in addition to four miscellaneous associations which receive state appropriations.⁴¹

Periodic legislative study committees have made surveys of the administrative structure along with recommendations for change. Some of these have been incorporated, some have not, particularly those requiring constitutional changes.⁴²

The 1950 Committee report concluded that the "administrative organization of the state government of Nebraska does not present any of those horrible examples of administrative confusion which are often used to demonstrate the need for reorganization."⁴³ Yet it did

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²The two most comprehensive studies were made in 1950 and 1960. Nebraska Legislative Council Committee Report No. 28, Report of the Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on the Organization and Functions of the State Government (August, 1950). Hereafter this report is cited as Organization. Nebraska Legislative Council Committee Report No. 104, Report of the Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on State Government Reorganization (November, 1960). This report is cited hereafter as Reorganization.

⁴³Nebraska Legislative Council, Organization, p. 64.

find room for improvement, but few of its recommendations were adopted by the 1951 Legislature, though succeeding Legislatures did adopt many of these recommendations. As with any administrative reorganization, a proper gestation period between recommendation and adoption was seemingly necessary.⁴⁴

The most important aspect of reorganization, or at least the one that has received the most attention in the last decade, revolved around the budgeting and expending procedures of state government. The recommendation for a departmental structure to provide for a centralization and uniformity of these functions dates back to the 1950 legislative study report, but little was done until 1960 when another study committee recommended a central data processing department be incorporated into the administrative structure.⁴⁵ Coupled with increasing concern by the Legislature's Budget Committee over the manner and

⁴⁴The creation of two separate departments-- Resources and Roads--from the then existing Roads and Irrigation Department was adopted in 1957. The recommendation of a code department to deal with administrative matters appeared in 1965 with the creation of the Department of Administrative Services. The 1950 report called for the removal of the fuels and cigarette tax collection functions from the Department of Agriculture; in 1965, the Legislature put these functions under the Tax Commissioner. (Nebraska, Session Laws 1957, Chap. 365; Session Laws 1965, Chap. 538, Chap. 459.)

⁴⁵Nebraska Legislative Council, Reorganization, p. 3.

procedure of budgeting and appropriation, the move for a Department of Administrative Services began.⁴⁶ The department was established in 1965 with responsibilities to develop a modern budgeting, inventory and financial accounting system, to provide for centralized direction of services and service agencies, and to "focus responsibility for execution of the financial policies of this state on the chief executive and provide assistants having the necessary technical skills for the achievement of that end."⁴⁷

Though the vehicle for an executive budget has existed since 1920, the Nebraska executive has not been provided the technical weapons (akin to the President's Bureau of the Budget on the national level) until recently with the creation of the Department of Administrative Services. The impetus for modernizing and strengthening the executive budgetary procedure came not from the Governor, but rather from the Legislature and the influence of the

⁴⁶The Budget Committee in 1959, for instance, felt that many of the difficulties in budgeting could be eliminated if "Nebraska's Central Accounting System were designed to reflect actual operating results, rather than a simple record of cash receipts and disbursements." (Nebraska Legislative Council Committee Report No. 95, Report of the Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on Budget [November, 1960], p. 31.)

⁴⁷Nebraska Blue Book 1966, p. 340.

latter is considerable in the area of state fiscal policy.⁴⁸

Summary

The Governor is slowly emerging as the "master of the administrative house" of Nebraska government. Within the last decade the creation of new departments has resulted in placing many of the vital state functions under the control of the chief executive. With the creation of technical services and modernization of administrative procedures, the Governor now possesses the potential of exercising a great deal of supervision over the administrative structure of the state.

However, a number of gaps remain. As long as the short ballot is absent, the Governor will be saddled with essentially administrative officers independent of his control. The penchant for electing more administrative officials than seem necessary continues strong in Nebraska. The election of educational officials is strongly supported and a move to make these officers appointive would meet substantial resistance. The existence of a number of boards and commissions, many of which logically should

⁴⁸The situation could put the Department of Administrative Services somewhat in the middle with both executive and legislative pressures possible, the former because it is an administrative agency under the Governor, the latter because of legislative sponsorship and a particular budgetary philosophy of legislative leaders centered in the Budget Committee.

function under a department, can be ascribed to a strong desire for assured local representation. The Game, Forestry and Parks Commission could well fall under a departmental set-up, but such an arrangement would deprive geographical areas of insured representation since the Commissioners presently are appointed according to districts. The same applies to the State Board of Education (coordinating body of the elementary and secondary school system) and the University of Nebraska Board of Regents, all elected by geographical districts. The State Railway Commission, elected by districts, also falls into this category.

The fear of centralization is particularly strong in the area of education, but its general application to state government has helped to retard some of the reorganization attempts. It is no doubt quite strong in the resistance to adoption of a short ballot, considered as long ago as 1919 in the Constitutional Convention of that year. But progress has been made toward streamlining the executive structure, and some of the traditional resistance toward such moves has been breaking down. How effective and how quickly this takes place will determine the progress of administrative reorganization in Nebraska.

Formally, at least, it would appear that the Nebraska Governor stands in a relatively strong position.

This is borne out in an index of gubernatorial powers devised by Joseph Schlesinger.⁴⁹ Taking such factors as budget powers, appointive powers, tenure potential, and veto power, the scale permits a comparison of the relative positions of the governors in the fifty states. The Nebraska Governor has a combined index of 12 with the high being 19 (New York) and the low 7 (North Dakota) and with the median score being 13. With the recent change in Nebraska to a four-year term with one reelection permitted, the ranking of the Governor would rise, following Schlesinger's scaling, to 14 leaving only two states in the area, Missouri and Wyoming, higher on the index of gubernatorial powers.⁵⁰

In sum, the present Nebraska Governor's powers rank high in budget powers and tenure potential, moderate in appointive powers, and medium in veto powers.⁵¹ All in all, the Nebraska Governor rates well in formal powers compared to neighboring Governors as well as all the

⁴⁹Joseph A. Schlesinger, "The Politics of the Executive," in Politics in the American States, ed. by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), pp. 207-234. Schlesinger scales each factor from a value of one to four or five, the lower value tending to weaken the governor's power and the higher value strengthening the hand of the governor.

⁵⁰Before the four-year term, Colorado and Oklahoma also rated higher index scores than Nebraska. (Ibid., p. 220.)

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 222-227.

states. But the question remains whether the Nebraska chief executive is as strong a "political" leader as his formal powers would indicate or whether he falls short of this despite the formal powers. An examination of the personal characteristics of the Nebraska Governors, plus the role of Governor as "actor," should reveal some conclusions as to the ranking of the Governor as a "political" leader.

Typology of the Nebraska Governor

Introduction

Only one hundred years old, Nebraska does not possess a long history and its executives have been relatively few in number. Since statehood a total of thirty-two individuals have occupied the office of chief executive, twenty-nine of these elected to the post, the other three filling a vacancy created by death in one case, resignation in another, and impeachment in the third.⁵² It is the twenty-nine elected Governors whose composite characteristics will be examined in drawing the typology of the Nebraska Governor.

⁵²Secretary of State W. H. James became Governor in 1871 following conviction of Nebraska's first statehood Governor, David Butler, in an impeachment proceeding. Lieutenant Governor Ezra Savage completed the term of Governor Dietrich who resigned upon his election to the U.S. Senate by the Legislature in 1901. Lieutenant Governor Dwight Burney served as Governor for four months following the death of Governor Ralph Brooks in 1960.

Personal Characteristics

The average age of the Nebraska Governor is just under 49 years, with the youngest having been 32 and the oldest 66 years of age. Recent Governors (those elected since 1930) have averaged about a year older in age than the total group, though in the 1940's younger men held the office and the present incumbent was 42 upon his election in 1966.

The legal profession has dominated in the occupational background of Nebraska Governors followed by business and farming/ranching associated occupations (Table VIII-1).

TABLE VIII-1
OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND OF
NEBRASKA GOVERNORS

Occupations	Primary (No.)	Secondary (No.)
Lawyer	8	3
Banker	5	5
Business	5	4
Farming/Ranching	4	4
Press	3	1
Education	2	
Politician	1	
Professional (civil engineer)	1	

Source: Nebraska Legislative Council, Nebraska Blue Book 1915-1966; U.S., Works Project Administration, Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska 1854-1941, 4 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1941).

The lawyer-Governor was particularly dominant in the formative period of Nebraska history and was usually associated with another occupation, commonly business and/or banking. Another combination was farming/ranching and banking/business. Well over half of the Governors were associated with an occupation other than their main profession and this was usually agriculture/business oriented. More recent Governors (elected since 1930) have represented a more diverse occupational grouping than the entire sample,⁵³ and no farming/ranching occupations are included as primary occupations.

Because of its relative youth, a majority (18 of the 29) of the state's Governors were born outside Nebraska and came to the state at various periods in their careers. All were native-born Americans, except Nebraska's first Democratic Governor, James E. Boyd (1891-93), who was born in Ireland. As the state grew older, more native-born Nebraskans have served as Governor and only

⁵³ There have been two lawyers, two businessmen, two educators, one publisher, one civil engineer, and one banker as the primary occupational groupings. Secondary interests are less evident (one law, one banking) though this may be due in part to less information on financial interests of individuals still alive or just recently removed from the scene. (Nebraska Legislative Council, Nebraska Blue Book 1915-1966; U.S., Works Project Administration, Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1854-1941 [Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1941]. Hereafter cited as Messages.)

two of the nine elected since 1930 have been non-Nebraskans. The non-Nebraskan Governors emigrated from the northeastern and midwestern states reflecting the general immigration pattern of the state's population.⁵⁴

Though the majority of the Governors came from the eastern third of the state (the plains region), they have come from small towns in this area rather than the metropolitan centers of Omaha and Lincoln.⁵⁵ Omaha has had two Governors, both in the last century; Lincoln has had four, two of whom served in the 1930's and one in the mid-1950's. In the more recent period, the western two-thirds of the state has been well represented in the Governor's office (four of the total nine Governors elected since 1930 have been from this area). The east-west, and particularly Omaha-outstate, cleavage is evidently reflected in the home towns of Nebraska Governors. With increasing urbanization of the state there has been a corresponding shift in the place of residence of Governors in that these men tend to come from cities, but it is the smaller cities as

⁵⁴Of the seventeen native Americans, five were born in Illinois, four in Ohio, two in Indiana, two in Iowa, two in New York, and one apiece in Massachusetts and Colorado. (Ibid.)

⁵⁵The present incumbent illustrates this pattern well as his home town is Wausa, population 724, located in the northeastern corner of the state. The area is sparsely populated farm country and, though in the east, identifies with the rural culture more than the urban.

opposed to the larger metropolitan areas.

Nebraska Governors have been better educated than the population at large. Only five of the twenty-nine have had less than a high school education; all of these served in the last century. Fourteen held college degrees and seven of these had earned advanced degrees as well. Only two of the nine elected since 1930 were not college graduates (both, however, attended college) and four of the seven graduates have gone on and received an advanced degree. The rising educational level of American society as a whole is reflected in the person of the Nebraska Governor, though in Nebraska this has been evident since the early part of this century.

Statistics on religion and ethnicity are incomplete, particularly for the early Governors. Of those elected since 1910, all have been Protestants with Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopalian the leading denominations.⁵⁶ For the same time period Anglo-Saxon ethnic backgrounds are most frequently mentioned of those with an identifiable ethnic ancestry.⁵⁷

⁵⁶There is no record of a non-Protestant Governor in the state's history. James E. Boyd (1891-93), born in Ireland, represents the best possibility for a representative of the Catholic faith, but no evidence can be found of his religious preference, if any.

⁵⁷Scotch background is the most frequently mentioned with English and Irish combinations common. German and Scandinavian backgrounds are the next most

Political Characteristics

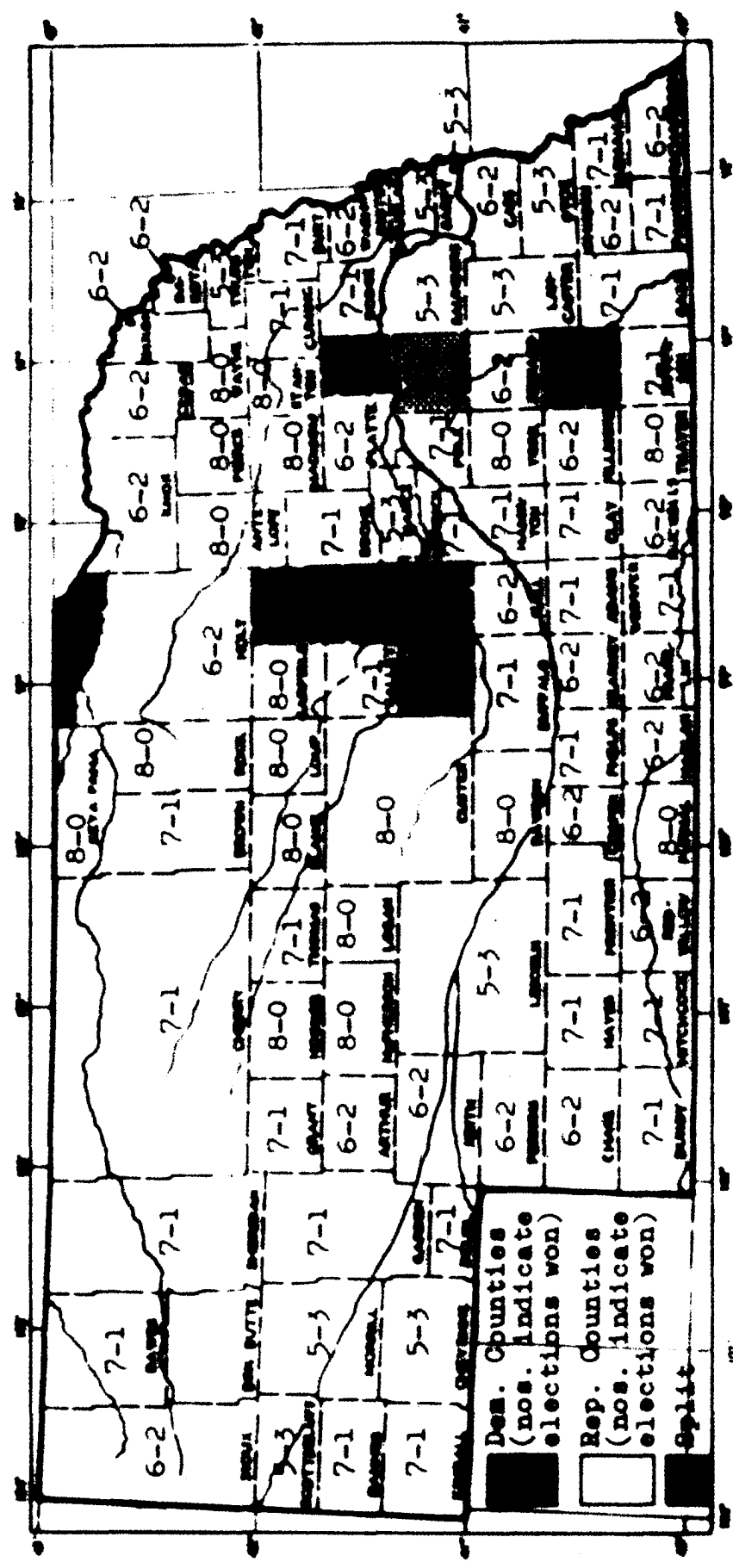
Ten of the twenty-nine elected Governors have been Democrats,⁵⁸ serving in office a total of thirty-six years. Thus, the Nebraska executive has been Republican about two-thirds of the time. In more recent times the Democrats have done better, holding the office twenty-four of the forty years between 1930 and 1970 (the present Republican incumbent's term runs through 1970). Of all the state offices, the Democrats have been most successful in capturing the Governor's chair,⁵⁹ and it is on this basis that some classify the state as a two-party state.⁶⁰ In Chapter VI the general pattern of declining inter-party competition since 1930 was noted, including the gubernatorial races. Figures VIII-1 and VIII-2 portray this decline in looking at the political persuasion of counties

frequently noted. (Nebraska Legislative Council, Nebraska Blue Book, 1915-1966; U.S., Works Project Administration, Messages.)

⁵⁸This includes two Democrat-Populist fusion Governors, 1895-1901.

⁵⁹Of all the elections for statewide offices, Democrats have won a total of 19 percent of the seats contested. By office, this breaks down to Governor, 36 percent; Lieutenant Governor, 12 percent; Secretary of State, 19 percent; Treasurer, 17 percent; Auditor, 15 percent; and, Attorney General, 12 percent. (Supra, Politics in the American States, ed. by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), Austin Ranney, "Parties in State Politics," in Politics in the American States, ed. by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), p. 65.

FIGURE VIII-2
 POLITICAL PERSUASION OF COUNTIES--VOTE FOR GOVERNOR,
 NON-PRESIDENTIAL YEARS, 1938-1966



Source: Nebraska State Canvassing Board, Official Report: General Elections 1938-1966.

NEBRASKA BOOK STORE
 1400 S. GARDNER
 LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

carried by the parties in the gubernatorial contests (non-presidential years) for the two periods 1902-34 and 1938-66. Only two counties--Saline and Butler--have remained strongly Democratic throughout both periods. Other counties which showed varying degrees of Democratic strength in the early period have weakened in the latter period to one degree or another. Of the Republican counties in the early period, the Democrats have made significant inroads in only four, though the Republicans still carried the counties more times than the Democrats.

The political experience of the men who became Governor (Table VIII-2) reveals a pattern of local office coupled with legislative experience on the state level. Over sixty-two percent of the Governors (18 of the 29) served in the state legislature previous to their election. The next most common experience is city or township government, posts which just over a third (34.5 percent) occupied. Thus, the legislative route is the most common path to the Governor's chair. Yet this pattern has not been evident in the recent period, particularly since the adoption of the nonpartisan Unicameral. Of the 21 pre-Unicameral Governors, 15 or 71.4 percent served in the Legislature; however, only three of the eight post-Unicameral Governors (37.5 percent) have had legislative experience of this kind. This would tend to reinforce

previous conclusions concerning the weak role of the Unicameral as a recruitment vehicle to higher political office.

TABLE VIII-2
POLITICAL EXPERIENCE OF NEBRASKA GOVERNORS

Experience	Number
State Legislature	18
City, township government	10
County government	5
State government	3
Judicial positions	3
United States government	3
School board	3
Political party positions	11

Source: Nebraska Legislative Council, Nebraska Blue Book 1915-1966; U.S., Works Project Administration, Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska 1854-1941, 4 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1941).

The Governor's office generally has been the apex of a political career, as few individuals have gone on to higher political office. Two have become U.S. Senator (one elected by the Legislature in 1901, one elected in 1952, six years after leaving the Governor's office following an unsuccessful attempt to be elected U.S. Senator). Two have served in the U.S. House of Representatives, one on the Federal Farm Board and one as U.S. Ambassador to Denmark. A few have held various state and local governmental positions, but the majority have retired from

public life after their tenure as Governor.

Nebraska Governors have not been particularly active in political party affairs; a little over a third (38 percent) held some party post prior to election, and less than a third (27.6 percent) did so after leaving the Governor's office, mostly as delegates to the national conventions. Few Governors have gone to the national conventions as the heads of delegations during their tenure as Governor, unlike the pattern in many other states.

Conclusion

The Nebraska Governor has been a man of mature years, coming to the office with a legal and/or business background. He has come from a small or middle-size town and his past experience includes some service with local governmental organs and, except for recent Governors, some legislative experience. He has not been particularly active in party affairs though he has participated to some degree in political party activities. He is well educated, Protestant, usually Republican and of Anglo-Saxon ethnic origin. The office of Governor represents the height of his political career and he can expect to return to his former occupation following tenure as Governor.

The Governor as Actor

Introduction

To assess the effectiveness of the Nebraska Governor as a political leader, an examination of the major roles played by the officeholder is necessary. The role of chief administrator is the best known and probably the most universally accepted. The roles of legislative leader and head of party are not as sharply delineated in Nebraska as is the case in numerous other political systems. The development of these various roles within the context of the personality of the individual incumbent should provide some basis upon which to assess the political effectiveness of the Nebraska Governor.

The Governor as Chief Administrator

As has been noted constitutional and statutory changes over the past decade have streamlined the executive structure to the degree that the Nebraska Governor has been strengthened in his role as chief administrator.⁶¹

The biggest gaps remain in the area of constitutional officials elected independently of the Governor. In respect to this situation, Governor Frank Morrison stated in 1961:

⁶¹Supra, pp. 394, 400.

. . . it is recommended that the governor be empowered to appoint all officers of the executive department. . . . The governor is elected by the people to manage the state government, in which the other executive officers play significant roles. However, at times stalemates have existed between the governor and one of the four executive officers, which disrupted the establishment of a uniform state policy. No coordination between executive agencies is guaranteed. The appointment of executive officers would centralize responsibility and remove any possible excuse the governor might have for failure to fulfill the responsibility clearly his by virtue of the constitution. The days of popular suspicion of governors have passed.⁶²

The plea for the short ballot did not go completely unheeded though many of the recommendations made in 1961 are no more than that today. Of the over 30,000 full and part-time state government employees at the end of 1967, under one-third of them work in agencies which are directly under the control of the Governor.⁶³ Of the total two-thirds not directly under gubernatorial supervision, over 85 percent of these are supervised by elected officials over whom the Governor has no control, the balance by boards and commissions over whom the Governor has indirect control by virtue of the nomination procedure. Thus, the majority of state governmental employees remain

⁶² Frank B. Morrison, "Streamlining the Executive," 40 Nebraska Law Review 646 (June, 1961).

⁶³ Dick Herman, "State Government Worker List Shows Few Under Governor," Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star, December 17, 1967, p. 1B.

beyond the Governor's supervisory powers. However, it must be added that of the essential state functions, the bulk of the employees, education excepted, are under direct control of the Governor. The abolishment of the constitutional Board of Control and creation of the Departments of Institutions and Welfare in 1962 brought one of the largest groups of persons responsible for state services remaining independent of the Governor up to that time under the gubernatorial wing.

But the existence of independent boards and commissions, as well as the constitutional offices, continues to create problems. A recent controversy concerning the State Board of Education, independently elected, is a case in point. One of the major issues in the 1967 legislative session was a state aid to education bill which finally passed after much give and take between the Legislature, Governor, and various interest groups. The specifics for the distribution of the aid among the schools were to be decided by the State Board of Education in the context of the established legislative guidelines. The Board was unable to formulate a program acceptable to a majority of the membership with the result that the urban districts, notably Omaha, were unable to determine how much money would be available under the aid to culturally deprived and exceptional children provision of the 1967

law. This put a handicap on school administrators as the deadline for issuing teaching contracts passed and they had no indication what financial resources would be available to meet the needs. The program had been authorized by the legislature but apparently temporarily blocked by members of the State Board whose educational philosophy has been demonstrated in the past to be opposite to that of the Governor and many of the legislators.

The merits of the issue aside, the case aptly demonstrates the difficulties which can occur with the independent board or commission approach. The Governor is specifically instructed by the constitution to "see that the laws are faithfully executed," but yet is unable to do so because his power over independently elected officials is limited.⁶⁴

The emergence of administrative problems as a result of independent commissions is not a recent phenomenon. Almost all recent Governors have been faced with similar problems sometime during their tenure. The since-abolished Board of Control was the source of almost constant controversy ranging from charges of politically-inspired appointments to an attempt by the Governor to remove a prison warden even if it were necessary to fire

⁶⁴ Lincoln Evening Journal, March 22, 1968, p. 1; interview with Dr. Clayton Yeutter, Executive Assistant to Governor Tiemann, March 25, 1968.

all the members of the Board.⁶⁵

Governor Crosby commented on the commission device:

The commission method of administering a department is unsatisfactory. The public is likely to be confused as to who is responsible for what.

The better principle is to center responsibility in one full-time administrator responsible to the Governor.⁶⁶

This sentiment is echoed by other recent Governors who have experienced frustration in facing situations where they have been unable to take corrective action.⁶⁷

The streamlining of the executive branch has been a slow process and it has taken a lengthy period of legislative-executive debate to accomplish many of the reorganization moves. This is due in part to legislative

⁶⁵In the Crosby administration charges of political considerations were hurled when the incumbent chairman of the Board failed to be reappointed by the Governor in favor of the sister-in-law of the Republican State Chairman. Though the incumbent was also a Republican, she had sided with former Governor Peterson in his bid to unseat Senator Hugh Butler and this reportedly was the basis for the purge. (Lincoln Star, January 16, 1953, n.p.; Lincoln Evening Journal, January 19, 1953, n.p.)

Governor Brooks sought to fire the warden of the state penitentiary in 1959 but the latter refused to resign. The Governor threatened to fire the entire Board of Control but the matter was resolved when the warden submitted his resignation. (Lincoln Evening Journal, May 9, 1959, n.p.; May 14, 1959, n.p.; May 16, 1959, p. 1.)

⁶⁶Omaha World-Herald, November 20, 1955, n.p.

⁶⁷Interview with Governor Morrison, March 9, 1968; interview with Governor Peterson, April 30, 1968.

reluctance to increase the power of the executive, a reluctance which has not completely disappeared yet.⁶⁸ This is coupled with a general fear of governmental centralization.

The experience of Governor Crosby is perhaps a good illustration of the difficulties of reorganization. Governor Crosby had been a former legislator and Lieutenant Governor and in those capacities had worked closely with the legislative branch. In 1950, a Legislative Council Committee report recommended a number of reforms of the administrative structure.⁶⁹ Thus, it would seem that the circumstances were favorable for reform.

In his inaugural address, Crosby called for a number of administrative changes: the transfer of non-agricultural activities from the Department of Agriculture to other departments; the incorporation of the bureau of irrigation into the Department of Agriculture; the establishment of a division of administration, under the Governor, to include the safety patrol, state purchasing agent, the budget supervisor and personnel supervisor;

⁶⁸During a recent interim legislative committee hearing concerning the feasibility of a constitutional convention, an unnamed lawmaker was quoted as saying that he would agree to such a move only if guarantees were written that the body would increase the powers of the Legislature and decrease those of the Governor. (Lincoln Evening Journal, March 21, 1968, p. 1.)

⁶⁹Supra, fn. 42, p. 400.

the strengthening of the administration of school lands and funds; and the reorganization of the public assistance program.⁷⁰

Five months later the Legislature adjourned and the reorganization proposals enumerated by Crosby in the inaugural address remained nothing but proposals. The reorganization program of the Governor had failed to make any progress in the Legislature.⁷¹

The executive in Nebraska is hampered somewhat by the rather small staff within the office of the Governor. Only two policy-level individuals aid the Governor, and these two must share speech-writing, press, public relations, and legislative liaison duties as well as aiding the Governor in setting government-wide administrative policy.⁷² Coordination of administrative policy is achieved through weekly meetings of departmental heads, akin to a cabinet-type approach, and in the past these heads also have been utilized to relieve some of the burdens which normally would be carried out by individuals in the office of the Governor. The need to do so demonstrates

⁷⁰Nebraska, Legislative Journal of the State of Nebraska, Sixty-fifth session, 1953, pp. 83-85. Hereafter cited as Journal.

⁷¹Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star, October 10, 1954, n.p.

⁷²Interview with Dr. Clayton Yeutter, Executive Assistant to Governor Tiemann, March 25, 1968.

the burdens of the advisory staff presently available to the Governor. It is also a strong argument for reorganizing the office of the Governor, recognizing that increased responsibilities necessitate a staff to adequately cope with the added work load.⁷³

The Governor as
Legislative Leader⁷⁴

In the twentieth century the emergence of the executive as legislative leader has been striking on the national level in the United States. The development of this executive role has been mirrored in many state and local governmental systems as well, though legislative bodies at these levels continue to enjoy a formidable status.

⁷³The Governor is looked to increasingly as a "problem solver" as he is the most readily identifiable governmental figure. In a sparsely populated political system and one like Nebraska where access to governmental officials is open and relatively easy, an added burden to the Governor's responsibilities comes in the form of the "walk-in," the person seeking aid of one sort or another which in most cases can be easily resolved with little more than time expended. These individuals, however, want to see someone higher than a secretary and the two administrative assistants thus devote time to efforts that could be expended more profitably elsewhere. A better approach would seem to be the availability of a public relations-type individual, or ombudsman perhaps, in the office of the Governor who could handle matters of this type, relieving other personnel for more pressing business.

⁷⁴This section draws heavily upon interviews with former Governors, administrative assistants, state Senators, lobbyists, and other knowledgeable individuals, supplemented by personal observations gathered during the 1967 legislative session.

The emergence of the Nebraska Governor as legislative leader has been a slow process and a rather recent phenomenon. In fact, it is so recent that it is too early to determine the extent and permanence of this gubernatorial role in the state's decision-making process. There is no question that the present incumbent was extremely successful in his dealings with the 1967 Legislature but the picture is not clear enough to permit the belief that a new trend has been established in this regard.

The main consideration of legislative-executive relations centers around how a partisan elected Governor works with a nonpartisan elected Legislature. Or in other words, what sources of leverage do each possess in the executive-legislative struggle?

Formal party organization is absent and thus the Governor does not possess the usual legislative chain of command through which to work. Nor does he have access to the weapons which a partisan structure provides. In his favor, however, is the reduction of deadlocked government because of the absence of split party control of the executive and legislative branches. The Governor, regardless of his party affiliation, will find at least theoretically a neutral legislative body with which he must work and his relationship should be based on factors other than political

partisanship.

The options open to a Governor in the realm of legislative-executive relations include working through the leadership structure or key legislators (a rough approximation of the party apparatus in a partisan setting), a general lobby approach or a combination of both. Executive leverage is provided by the veto potential, personal persuasion and the public opinion channels open to gubernatorial manipulation. Patronage is all but unheard of in legislative-executive relations and political devices as electoral influence, financial aid, and campaign assistance are rarely seen in the Nebraska experience. In short, the Nebraska Governor is limited in the weapons through which he can gain leverage over the legislature. His most powerful weapons are the veto and public opinion.

All Governors have worked through legislative individuals to push legislative programs, but the degree to which this approach has been utilized varied from one to another. The ad hoc process of legislative leadership selection is mirrored in the choice of gubernatorial lieutenants in the legislature. It has not always been the holders of formal leadership posts to whom the Governor has turned for assistance. In more cases than not, it has been that select group (ranging from six to a dozen or

so) which most actors within the legislative arena agree are the influential ones to whom the Governor looks for aid. The individual may or may not be of the same party, but he is of the same ideological bent and shares the gubernatorial view of the particular public issue at hand. Thus, a former Democratic Governor found his most rewarding legislative association in the person of a Republican whose influence was far greater than his formal position would lead one to believe. The two were able to work together extremely well and their similar personalities and ideological outlooks provided the basis for their cooperation.⁷⁵

Lobbying has been noted as a vital aspect of the Nebraska legislative process. In the partisan-nonpartisan context of the executive-legislative relationship, this approach can be extremely significant. Again the degree of use has varied from one Governor to another. One former Governor chose not to play an active role in the legislative process by engaging in lobby-type activities either personally or in the form of his administrative assistants. Rather he worked through key legislators, keeping them informed of his desires and allowing them to proceed within the legislative arena as they thought best. Personal appeals were limited to formal messages to the

⁷⁵ Interview with Governor Morrison, March 9, 1968.

legislative body supplemented with occasional informal meetings with the key men.⁷⁶

The 1967 legislative session marked a sharp change in gubernatorial lobbying efforts as the incumbent engaged in vigorous and continuous activity within the legislative arena. The Governor's executive assistants were observed almost daily in the legislative chamber, collaring individuals, pleading and explaining in seeking support from Senator and lobbyist alike. Periodically, the Governor would request individual Senators to attend a meeting in his offices and his persuasiveness was noted by more than one legislator.⁷⁷ In short, the executive became a vigorous and aggressive legislative lobbyist--a sharp departure from past practice.

Persuasion remains the essential approach at the disposal of the Governor. This, coupled with public disclosure and the threat of a veto represent the main weapons in the gubernatorial arsenal in his interactions with the Legislature. Rarely is the Nebraska Governor in a position to wield any political patronage weapons, unlike the situation in many other political systems.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Interviews with numerous state Senators, May-July, 1967; personal observations of author and notes taken during the 1967 session.

Looking at the past record of the veto power in Nebraska, it appears that this may well be one of the Governor's strongest weapons (Table VIII-3). Since the Unicameral was established in 1937 and including fifteen regular and eight special sessions, the Legislature has successfully overridden an executive veto only eighteen times out of a total one hundred vetoes in this period. In other words, the executive can compute the probability of his veto being effective as better than 80 percent.

Partisan considerations do not seem important in the degree to which the gubernatorial veto has been sustained (Table VIII-4). The least successful Governors in this respect include one Republican and one Democrat and both had legislatures whose membership was predominantly Republican. Lest it appear the Republican may just have been an exception, another Democratic Governor was quite successful in sustaining his veto in the face of a predominantly Republican legislature (Governor Brooks, with 84.6 percent of his vetoes sustained).

The veto, thus, has been an effective gubernatorial weapon. Because of its past effectiveness, the threat of a veto can be very potent. Such seemed to be the case during a recent special legislative session called to redistrict the state's Congressional districts following judicial action. The Governor threatened to veto a

TABLE VIII-3
EXECUTIVE VETOS IN NEBRASKA 1937-1966

	Law Without Governor's Signature	Vetoed by Governor	Passed Over Governor's Veto	Bills Which Became Law
1937	1	18	1	214
1939	0	8	1	138
1940 ^a	0	0	0	6
1941	0	7	1	196
1943	0	7	1	240
1944 ^a	0	0	0	6
1945	0	12	0	260
1946 ^a	0	0	0	8
1947	17	6	2	358
1949	0	6	3	318
1951	5	2	0	354
1952 ^a	0	0	0	10
1953	0	8	1	369
1954 ^a	0	0	0	6
1955	0	2	0	354
1957	0	3	0	404
1959	3	13	2	475
1960 ^a	0	0	0	5
1961	2	2	1	465
1963	2	2	2	545
1963 ^a	1	0	0	17
1965	3	4	3	584
1966 ^a	0	0	0	3
Total	32	100	18	5,335

^aSpecial Session.

Source: Nebraska, Journal of the Legislature of State of Nebraska, Fifty-second session through seventy-sixth session, 1937-1966.

particular version which appeared to have strong support among the legislators and this contributed to a modification of the final bill more in line with the Governor's feelings on the matter.⁷⁸

TABLE VIII-4

EXECUTIVE VETOES BY GOVERNOR 1937-1966

Governor	Party of Gov.	Terms	Political Make-up of Leg.	Total Exec. Vetoes	Exec. Vetoes Over-ridden	Percentage Vetoes Sustained
Cochran	Dem.	2	Dem.	26	2	92.3
Griswold	Rep.	3	Rep.	26	2	92.3
Peterson	Rep.	3	Rep.	14	5	64.2
Crosby	Rep.	1	Rep.	8	1	87.5
Anderson	Rep.	2	Rep.	5	0	100.0
Brooks	Dem.	1	Rep.	13	2	84.6
Morrison	Dem.	3	Rep.	8	6	25.0
				100	18	82.0

Source: Nebraska, Journal of the Legislature of the State of Nebraska, Fifty-second session through Seventy-sixth session, 1937-1966.

Manipulation of the channels of public opinion can be another effective device at the Governor's disposal. It is difficult, however, to actually measure the effectiveness of this approach though most of the actors agree

⁷⁸Interview with Dr. Clayton Yeutter, Executive Assistant to Governor Norbert Tiemann, March 25, 1968.

it does carry weight. One former Governor felt that if he were faced with the situation again he would resort to public exposure to a greater degree than he did during his tenure. The use of the press conference to spotlight an issue, perhaps pinpointing key individuals who were obstructing progress or praising those who were wavering, was seen by the former Governor as a tactic that held great promise in aiding the gubernatorial position.⁷⁹ The present Governor has made effective use of the channels of public opinion in highlighting issues as well as castigating individuals and/or groups obstructing the gubernatorial program.

Public exposure by itself, however, rarely would be expected to achieve the final objective. But coupled with other tactics--personal persuasion, threat of a veto, constituent influence--it can be a valuable weapon in the quest for achievement of executive objectives.

In sum, it would appear that in Nebraska, perhaps more than in partisan political systems, executive-legislative relations revolve greatly around what may be called the "executive style," which is tied closely to the personality of the individual. The Governor has few formal, institutional devices at his command (the veto power being perhaps the only important one). Thus, he

⁷⁹Interview with Governor Morrison, March 9, 1968.

must resort to more informal means which might be summed up simply as public relations approaches. The successful executive style involves a skillful public relations approach of cultivating good will, building up mutual confidences, utilizing the public media effectively by knowing when to resort to the carrot (public praise) and when to the stick (public denunciation). This is particularly important in the legislative arena where the executive must deal with 49 individuals. While it is not necessary to convince all 49 in any given case, the nature of the system demands a successful Governor be on good terms with the vast majority of Senators and on especially good terms with about a dozen of the key legislators. Since the mantle of legislative leadership does fluctuate to a degree dependent on issues, the Governor can ill afford to ruffle too many feathers too greatly. This is accentuated by the small number of legislative actors and the generally passive role most Governors have taken in legislative matters, a role which has contributed to strengthening the legislature in a period when executive power and status is generally on the rise.

The Governor
as Party Leader⁸⁰

This role probably has been the most neglected of all the roles of the Nebraska executive. For whatever reason, Nebraska Governors have not devoted much attention to the organization and structure of the party machinery of which they, by virtue of their office, are theoretically the head. The real leaders of the party apparatus have existed elsewhere, in the Congressional delegation in the Republican party and in the National Committeeman in the Democratic party.⁸¹

One can point to a number of factors which might explain the reluctance of Governors to engage actively in party matters. The nature of the state's primary system is hardly conducive to encouraging great reliance on the party apparatus. An aspirant for Governor must build up his own organization since the party as an organization

⁸⁰This section draws heavily upon interviews with former Governors, administrative assistants, state Senators, political party leaders, and other knowledgeable individuals.

⁸¹U.S. Senator Roman Hruska, senior Senator from Nebraska, is reported to be the Republican leader in the state while in the Democratic party such former National Committeemen as James Quigley and Bernard Boyle were recognized as the leaders of the Democratic party during much of their tenure. (Interview with a prominent Democrat who has held public and party offices in the state, March 9, 1968; interview with a Republican who has held public and party posts, April 30, 1968.)

remains largely outside the primary process.⁸² Thus, after victory the candidate would tend to rely upon, and give priority to, the organization which has served him in the past as opposed to molding the party apparatus. Former Governor Morrison relied on his own organization in his first successful attempt and found Democratic party aid then, as in previous unsuccessful electoral races, very sparse, necessitating extra-party organization.

Nevertheless, it would seem that once in office, a Governor would attempt to mold the party machinery so as to strengthen his position for the next electoral campaign. One factor weighing against this was the two-year term which did not provide sufficient time between elections for this rebuilding process. Another was the secure hold on the party by the real party leaders, particularly in the Republican party which was firmly controlled for many years by United States Senator Hugh Butler. The tradition established by Senator Butler continued to a great extent

⁸²As has been noted, the primary in Nebraska tends to be an independent affair. There is an unwritten law, acknowledged by leaders in both parties, that party leaders are not to take sides in the primary. Though there have been instances when leaders have become involved, care was taken to insure that this was done as quietly as possible. In other words, the primary is regarded as independent of party organizational influence and individual leaders are expected not to take sides. (Interview with A. Clifford Anderson, former Lancaster county Democratic Chairman, July 11, 1968; interview with Senator Calista Cooper Hughes, May-July, 1967.)

so that party power still gravitates toward the Congressional delegation rather than the occupants of the Governor's office.

But perhaps the most salient factor is that of the general weakness of the party structure in the state. The general disregard of the party as an influential determinant of the policy-making process would hardly create a situation in which a Governor would seek to expend the time and energy toward building a party apparatus in his image. Once accomplished, the question would arise as to what should be done with this machine. With the public image of parties generally negative in nature, the liabilities would be greater than the assets. With party unnecessary in the legislative arena, ineffective in the primary election process, and little more than a necessary evil in the public eye, it is not surprising that few Governors have been willing to devote the effort and undertake the political risks involved in rebuilding the party apparatus.

The attempt to build up a "statehouse machine" through the use of patronage is not unknown in Nebraska. Nevertheless, the extent and success of such attempts further reinforce the view of the general ineffectiveness of the Governor as a party leader.

In 1956 and 1958, during the Anderson administrations, the Republican Statehouse Club was organized to solicit contributions to the Republican party. Employees who contributed were furnished a small badge which indicated their participation in the campaign. The effort was completely open and both times it was publicly emphasized that contributions were to be voluntary and retention of one's job did not in any way depend upon participation in the campaign.⁸³ Nevertheless, the Lincoln Journal commented editorially:

The critical state employee feels that pressure was implied by the method of distributing the literature and the collection. Undoubtedly in the past there have been pressures on employees. This year's method was merely more open and more all inclusive. . . . Nebraskans do not like power politics and it is unlikely that either party in power will be able to build a real "Statehouse machine." . . . 84

The effort in 1956 netted a total of \$3,500 or about \$1.75 per person.⁸⁵ The result could hardly have been deemed successful for so modest a sum, considering that the political appointees probably accounted for a large percentage of the total.

⁸³Lincoln Evening Journal, October 23, 1956, p. 2; August 18, 1958, n.p.

⁸⁴Ibid., November 14, 1956, p. 4.

⁸⁵Ibid., August 18, 1958, n.p.

Nevertheless, Democratic Governor Brooks in his inaugural address in 1959 noted the activities of the previous few years in calling for a civil service law to protect state employees.

I do not believe that the employees in the State House and in the several institutions under our authority should be subject to political compulsion. . . . In this connection, let me also say that I will not seek or accept any contributions for the purpose of supporting me in any political campaign. If employees wish to contribute to another political party, they should feel free to do so without fear of compromising their employment.⁸⁶

Yet three months later the Democratic State Chairman mailed letters to 2,000 state employees suggesting they attend a \$25-a-plate fund-raising dinner in Omaha and enclosed a card with three types of contributions that could be made, one on an installment basis. The press saw this as the Democratic version of the Republican Statehouse Club.⁸⁷

There is no evidence of any large-scale firings because of refusals to contribute to political campaigns or attend fund-raising dinners. In fact, there is no evidence of small-scale firings. Even these rather modest fund-raising practices have not been noted recently,

⁸⁶ Nebraska, Journal, Sixty-ninth session, 1959, p. 61.

⁸⁷ Lincoln Evening Journal, April 14, 1959, n.p.

indicating that political pressure on state employees is rather small.

There is little evidence that any recent Governors have made use of the appointments available to them to either strengthen the party or build a personal base of power. In the Republican administrations of the 1950's many employees continued in their jobs despite the change of Governors.

The Brooks administration, the first Democratic one in eighteen years, was criticized by some Democrats for not replacing more Republicans than it did and for not making greater use of the patronage available.⁸⁸ Turnover in the Brooks administration was certainly not excessive considering the long Democratic absence from the state-house, though it was greater than in previous administrations. This led some of the press to criticize Brooks as being overly partisan.⁸⁹

The succeeding Morrison administration, though also Democratic, halted any trend that may have been begun by initiating essentially a bipartisan appointment policy. This policy was carried through the six years of Morrison's incumbency. Governor Morrison set the tone shortly after

⁸⁸ Interview with a long-time Democrat who was closely connected with the Brooks administration, July 11, 1968.

⁸⁹ Lincoln Evening Journal, June 27, 1959, p. 4.

his election by declaring that he was not going to become involved in partisan politics.⁹⁰ Morrison consistently disavowed any partisan political actions or desires. Political patronage was looked upon by Morrison as a device sought for purposes of building up a following and "I have never sought a following by that method."⁹¹ Nevertheless, the bipartisan appointment policy did not hurt Morrison among substantial numbers of Republicans whose support was a strong factor in the Governor's reelection victories.

This is not to say that Governor Morrison was not involved in party affairs. The Governor engaged in a struggle with National Committeeman Boyle over control of party policy and organization and in the end was successful in replacing the latter with a man more agreeable to the Governor. The basis for the struggle lay in the factionalism within the Democratic party that dated back many years. With Democrats rarely in state office, party matters gravitated toward the National Committeeman and the strong personality of Judge Quigley in the 1940's reinforced this. Opposition elements within the party used "bossism" as their battle cry and claimed the party

⁹⁰Lincoln Star, November 22, 1960, p. 30.

⁹¹Lincoln Evening Journal, February 10, 1961, n.p.

leadership was committed to Republican victories so as not to upset the power and patronage structure. In any case the election of Morrison brought the dissident Democratic faction into power and Boyle, who had been aligned with Brooks and Conrad, loser to Morrison in the 1960 primary, was purged.⁹²

The transformation of the Democratic party, however, was never complete as Governor Morrison did not rebuild the party from top to bottom. No full-scale attempt to remold the party was undertaken. A number of factors were responsible for this. Governor Morrison sought to minimize his party affiliation as much as possible because of the Republican dominance of the state. Though nonpartisan would be too strong a term to describe his actions, the Governor consciously did attempt to play down partisanship so as not to alienate his base of support which drew heavily from Republican ranks. An aggressive and strong effort in party affairs would have detracted from this stance. In addition, the Governor admits to a somewhat personal distaste for "party politics" and this would mitigate against the moves necessary to

⁹²This picture is drawn from interviews with various Democrats including Governor Morrison and A. Clifford Anderson along with press stories during the period. The interpretation is the author's and does not necessarily represent the views of any specific individual.

remold a party structure. Finally, his prior experiences with the party in previous unsuccessful electoral campaigns, where he received little help and support, would tend to create a less than favorable attitude toward the benefits and effectiveness of a party structure.

Thus, while Governor Morrison was not completely isolated from party matters, he restricted his efforts to what he apparently thought was necessary, and saw little need to engage in any large-scale party organizational effort.

The election of a Republican Governor in 1966 after eight years of Democratic rule was accompanied by a number of changes in the Republican party structure. Largely because Governor Tiemann is young with an aggressive, dynamic personality and because he was a virtual unknown who defeated a party stalwart in the primary, the Governor has not been satisfied to remain aloof from party politics. He has engaged in an active campaign to remold the party apparatus and has been successful in moving people loyal to him into leadership positions within the party. Yet he has moved cautiously in this area, and though privately and publicly there have been rumors of a rift within the party between the Tiemann faction and those loyal to Senator Hruska, the struggle has yet to

come to a head.⁹³ Whether it will or not is problematical at this point, but it does appear evident that the Governor is making one of the most determined efforts of any past executive to pursue actively his role as party leader.

Governor Tiemann's personality perhaps is largely responsible for this atypical behavior of the Nebraska Governor in the area of party affairs. His dynamism and leadership in governmental affairs are carried over into party matters as well. This departure is encouraging to those who feel a strong, effective party structure is conducive to a better functioning political system and hope that this effort is the beginning of a new gubernatorial precedent which will continue long after the present incumbent has left office. A responsible party system, however, demands that both parties undertake to strengthen

⁹³The struggle at present appears to be a standoff with both principals apparently having called a truce. There were indications the Governor sought to elect new faces to the post of National Committeeman and Committeewoman but dropped this effort in return for Senator Hruska's retreat in his drive to head the Nebraska delegation to the 1968 Republican Convention as a favorite son. Whether such was the case or not is not known, but the two incumbents of the national party posts were reelected without opposition and Senator Hruska dropped his favorite son bid. The primary election in May may have changed the picture somewhat as Hruska was elected a delegate to the national convention while Governor Tiemann failed to gain a position on the delegation. (Dick Herman, "Governor's Partisan Involvement, Leadership Causing Friction?," Lincoln Evening Journal, December 21, 1967, p. 5; Mark Acuff, "The State GOP: Feud Lays Much on Line," Omaha Sun, October 12, 1967, p. 8.)

their apparatus so that they may more effectively operate as channels of communication. The revitalization of the Republican party is not being matched by similar efforts in the Democratic party. The latter is hampered by its disastrous defeat of 1966, by the progressive moves of the present Republican Governor who has stolen much of the Democratic "thunder,"⁹⁴ and by the lack of an effective spokesman within the party to give the necessary leadership.

The pattern of a low level of gubernatorial involvement in party affairs has contributed no doubt to the "dead-end" nature of the state's executive office. Few Governors have continued their political careers after leaving the executive post. With the reins of party power resting elsewhere than in the Governor's hands, the holders of national public office have also come from other than the Governor's office. The most elusive

⁹⁴The state chairman of the Democratic party appeared for a time to adopt the stance of a Republican inversely proportional to the degree the Republican Governor acted like a Democrat. The Democratic chairman has denounced the Governor for his wild spending program, a position more befitting a Republican. The emerging conservatism of the Democratic spokesman is no doubt endearing to some segments of the population, but works against the necessary steps which so long have been delayed (a broadened tax base, state aid to education) and erodes party support among many of the traditional bases of Democratic strength (labor, liberal elements). Nevertheless, the party's 1968 platform has expressed support for the broadened tax base and other liberal moves, and this in effect puts it on record in support of the Tiemann administration.

political office for Nebraska Governors has been the United States Senate. Many have been called but few have been chosen.⁹⁵ It is difficult to believe that the pattern of a weak gubernatorial role as party leader is not a salient factor in this career trait of Nebraska Governors.

The Governor as Political Leader

Perhaps the most striking factor which emerges from an examination of the various roles of the Nebraska Governor is that of executive style and personality. The concept of the office has determined the degree to which a Governor has been an effective political leader. This concept, in more cases than not, has been that associated with the image of a chief executive as ceremonial head of state and administrator of the laws. This concept limits the degree to which a Governor can exercise political leadership inasmuch as it imposes a negative character to executive authority.

Governor Crosby is generally regarded as having been a rather strong Governor. Certainly his personality was that of a young, dynamic individual who sought to

⁹⁵Of the last seven Governors (excluding the present incumbent), five sought the United States Senatorship, but only one succeeded, Dwight Griswold, and that was his second attempt to gain the office. (Nebraska State Canvassing Board, Official Report: Primary and General Election, 1936-1955.)

exercise leadership. Yet he was restricted in his efforts by his concept of government aptly summed up in his inaugural address.

. . . During my own little campaigns of last year I felt fright at the number of people in this state who have come to look on government as our main hope for bringing happiness, self respect and material welfare to the people. This is such a sad fallacy . . . For those who want to see this truth, let them finger the pages of history . . . or draw on their personal recollection of the eventual tragedy that has befallen our brothers in some other countries: those who magnified the efficacy of government.

. . . In the light of what I have said, I regard the proper role of state government in 1953 as being one of restraint . . .

By "restraint" I mean this: only the essential services of state government should be maintained, and that must be done with the least outlay of money and man power . . .

. . . Many other state governments have assumed the responsibility for services that we in Nebraska still leave to local units of government. In passing, I should tell you that I like this characteristic of Nebraska's government. In the long run the chief internal threat to freedom in this country lies in the tendency to centralize activities that should remain with local government.

The spending of excessive amounts of money by government employees is of course a burden to the taxpayers. An even greater evil is associated with it. Each new spending activity requires a new bureau; each new bureau causes some new regulations to be issued; each new regulation limits the individual freedom of some persons . . . %

⁹⁶Nebraska, Journal, Sixty-fifth session, 1953, pp. 82-83, 85.

With his concepts, implicit and/or explicit, of limited government, localism, and fear of centralization, Crosby had pledged himself to a status quo administration. Positive leadership would be difficult. It is not surprising, then, that Crosby's initial answer to the tax problem which developed during his administration was not the possibility that the property tax was no longer feasible or even the need for overhauling the administration and enforcement of the existing tax laws, but "Operation Honesty," a moral campaign to urge all persons to report full returns.⁹⁷ Following criticisms for not presenting realistic alternatives and the increasing political ramifications of the tax problem, Crosby initiated moves to strengthen the property tax laws.⁹⁸ This move, however, was to be accomplished by an initiative petition drive rather than through legislative action. In the end Crosby did call a special session and the constitutional changes were proposed by the Legislature.⁹⁹ It may be that the petition move was a means of pressuring the Legislature and if so would appear to have been successful.

⁹⁷Lincoln Evening Journal, November 20, 1953, p. 1.

⁹⁸Ibid., February 9, 1954, p. 16; Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star, January 31, 1954, p. 1.

⁹⁹Lincoln Star, March 23, 1954, n.p.; Lincoln Evening Journal, April 5, 1954, n.p.

Nevertheless, the strategy was unusual in the apparent attempt to bypass the Legislature completely.¹⁰⁰

Crosby's gubernatorial leadership was never tested as he did not seek a second term, trying instead for the United States Senate. Whether he would have been reelected is problematical, but there apparently was strong opposition to him within Republican ranks.¹⁰¹

Pre-election press assessments had speculated that Anderson's administration would be much quieter than Crosby's as the former's political personality was not the flamboyant type.¹⁰² The assessment proved correct as Anderson's "Businessman's administration" brought four years of tight budgets and a general "hold the line" philosophy in all phases of state government.

Governor Anderson, a former member of the Legislature, did not feel it his duty to become involved in legislative matters beyond the level of recommendations. He is quoted as saying, "The governor is an administrator

¹⁰⁰ One reason for the attempt to bypass, or perhaps merely to pressure, the Legislature was the rather poor relations between the two branches during the 1953 session. Crosby failed to get a number of measures passed he proposed, some clashes developed, and general relations were not the best. (Interview with Governor Crosby, April 17, 1968.)

¹⁰¹ Lincoln Star, February 16, 1954, n.p.

¹⁰² Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star, October 10, 1954, n.p.

in Nebraska, not a lawmaker or a legislative leader."¹⁰³
 This policy was followed and Anderson did not attempt to exert any legislative leadership during his tenure, believing this not to be a proper executive role.

Anderson's "hardtack without frosting" budgets were coupled with opposition to any new taxes. In 1957 he was in the unusual position of threatening to veto the budget bill because of appropriations higher than he had recommended.¹⁰⁴ Anderson signed the bill, but did propose that a constitutional amendment be passed giving the Governor authority to cut the budget authorized by the Legislature. This unusual proposal found few adherents.¹⁰⁵

The tax issue became the dominant 1958 campaign issue with Governor Anderson pledged to the status quo. The Democratic candidate, Ralph Brooks, aided by state Senator Terry Carpenter who constituted a one-man legislative committee investigating enforcement of property tax laws, highlighted the inequities of enforcement of

¹⁰³ Lincoln Evening Journal, January 3, 1957, n.p. The quote was reported in the press as part of Anderson's second inaugural address. The Legislative Journal, however, does not include the quotation as part of the Governor's address. Whether he did say it or not, the quotation aptly sums up Anderson's general attitude toward executive-legislative relations.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., June 9, 1957, n.p.; June 19, 1957, n.p.; Omaha World Herald, June 20, 1957, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ Omaha World Herald, July 7, 1957, p. 6B.

existing tax laws.¹⁰⁶ The narrow Democratic victory was credited to the tax issue with the Republicans only belatedly recognizing some problems existed, but failing to convince enough voters they were prepared to do anything about it.¹⁰⁷

Brooks was the first Governor in a long period who at least presented a potential for leadership in his image and concept of the office. During the campaign he called for a stronger executive--"the function of the chief administrative officer (governor) is to present the machinery of his policy (in the absence of effective law) to the Legislature and get legislation passed which will fill the voids of state law."¹⁰⁸

The inaugural address in 1959 pointed up the significant differences between Brooks and previous Governors. The Lincoln Evening Journal noted:

This difference is the basic philosophy of leadership, . . .

Nebraska has enjoyed a succession of Governors who have given the state exemplary administration. The running of the state's government was honest, economical, efficient and the taxpayers got good mileage on their tax dollars while one or two new problems were met by budget increases.

But administration and leadership are different although one does not necessarily

¹⁰⁶ Lincoln Evening Journal, February 7, 1958, n.p.; February 8, 1958, n.p.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., November 6, 1958, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Lincoln Star, August 5, 1958, n.p.

exclude the other. Both are essential to the welfare of good government and of the body politic.

Although the property tax assessment and enforcement problem has plagued every recent Governor, Brooks is the first Governor to positively state he "will enforce the tax laws at any level and at any time with dispatch and impartiality."

Where other governors have said that increases in the state government's budget should be avoided or kept at a minimum, Brooks offers this spending test:

"Any increase must be accompanied by a definite showing of the additional service to be rendered and a distinctly demonstrated demand for that service."

And this Governor interprets the election results as an authority which imposes an attendant responsibility of a leadership program in identifying the state's problem's [sic] and addressing the state's attention to their solution.¹⁰⁹

As the first Democratic Governor in eighteen years, Brooks' tenure was marked by heightened partisan political activity reaching even into the nonpartisan Legislature.¹¹⁰ This, coupled with Brooks' opposition to a broadened tax structure, limited his achievements though many of his proposals were enacted into law.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹Lincoln Evening Journal, January 8, 1959, p. 4.

¹¹⁰The Lincoln Journal's statehouse reporter remarked: "Politics has been more evident in the Legislature composed of members elected on non-partisan tickets, than in any recent session." (Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star, March 15, 1959, n.p.)

¹¹¹Lincoln Evening Journal, June 24, 1959, p. 2.

Brooks, like Crosby, never faced the test of reelection, since he sought the United States Senatorship, but even this latter test was denied as he passed away two months before the 1960 election.¹¹²

Morrison's pre-inaugural pledge of not becoming involved in partisan politics, of no new taxes, but instead a long-term study of the tax situation, and of bipartisan appointments set the tone for the low-key administration to come. His study approach to the tax problem prompted the Lincoln Journal to comment:

If any Nebraska governor is to provide true leadership, this quality must first of all be applied to the state's tax problems--not through continued study but through the firm backing of a definite commitment to correct existing deterrents to the state's progress.¹¹³

Four months after taking office, this assessment of Governor Morrison appeared:

They [political experts] say that the man-on-the-street opinion has not crystallized either vigorously for or against Morrison, and conceded that part of this is explained by the fact that Morrison has not been a dramatic, controversial governor so far.¹¹⁴

Man-on-the-street opinion did crystallize in favor of Morrison as he won two more terms as Governor though he

¹¹²Ibid., September 10, 1960, p. 1.

¹¹³Lincoln Evening Journal, December 20, 1960, p. 4.

¹¹⁴Ibid., May 10, 1961, n.p.

remained undramatic and largely uncontroversial throughout his tenure.

Criticism of Morrison's legislative leadership was also evident early: ". . . but his efforts in the legislative field have left a lot to be desired. He has not dealt enough with specifics and, if anything, has made too great an effort toward political impartiality" ¹¹⁵ This pattern remained throughout as Morrison's style did not include an aggressive legislative leadership or personal involvement in legislative affairs beyond a few exceptions.

As has been noted, the present incumbent, Norbert Tiemann, has demonstrated a high degree of political leadership. He has consistently sought to involve himself in legislative and party affairs and to exert leadership in both areas in furthering his policy and program. In all fairness, Governor Tiemann is the first chief executive to enjoy the advantages of a four-year term and a more streamlined administrative structure, though Morrison enjoyed most of the latter. Nevertheless, the Tiemann personality--dynamic and young--has been a significant factor along with a philosophy of government which is less suspicious of positive leadership. ¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Lincoln Star, May 24, 1961, p. 4.

¹¹⁶ The Governor's inaugural address recognized the challenge facing state government today with a new

Conclusion

It is only within the last decade that the Nebraska Governor has begun to come of age and assume some of the characteristics of the mid-twentieth century executive. In the late 1950's and early 1960's he began to emerge as a strengthened administrative head, overseeing a more streamlined and efficient bureaucratic structure. In the same period there were faint indications of the emerging roles of legislative leader and party chieftain. Certain constitutional and statutory developments, particularly the four-year term, aided these emerging roles as well as fortuitous circumstances. The sixties were a period of political activism and dynamism and this carried over into all levels of government, though the image of the young, dynamic leader was not apparent in Nebraska until the 1966 election.

The long-standing political problem of a broadened tax base came to a head necessitating gubernatorial leadership to a degree never before demanded. A combination of

impetus for solving local problems on a local basis. This new move toward strengthening state government was seen by the Governor as "a challenge to compete with the federal government for the responsibility of managing the resources of government and, ultimately, for the confidence and reliance of our people." A decrease in the powers and activities of the federal government is not probable, but "I do see the development of more responsive and more responsible state government as the only alternative to even greater federal management of state and local functions." (Nebraska, Journal, Seventy-seventh session, 1967, p. 70.)

circumstances presented the incoming Governor in 1967 with no ties to past tax programs, permitting him to push an across-the-board new tax structure.¹¹⁷ The opportunity for legislative leadership was greater than at perhaps any other time, certainly in recent state history. The opportunity, plus the personality of the Governor, resulted in a full blooming of the executive role of legislative leadership under Tiemann.

The eight-year Republican absence from the Governor's office presented the Republican victor in 1966 with an opportunity to break new ground in the area of party matters. This was aided by the greater stability of the new four-year term and the Governor has made strides in developing the executive role of party leader, a sharp departure from past practice in the state.

The permanence of these developing roles of the executive is by no means certain. In the area of administration there is little doubt that the strengthened position of the Governor will continue and any further changes will be in the direction of centralization and efficiency.

¹¹⁷This was possible since the people in the 1966 election negated through referendum the state income tax passed by the previous legislature as well as repealing through initiative the state property tax. This left the state with virtually no tax sources, giving the new Governor a free hand in molding the new tax structure unencumbered by existing programs.

That the Governor will continue to grow as chief administrator of the state is fairly well delineated.

The future is less certain, however, in the area of executive leadership roles in the legislative and political party fields, both of which are extremely significant in the development of the Governor as a political leader. Custom and usage of the political system and the personalities of most of the Governors have dictated a less than aggressive pursuit of the legislative and party roles. Consequently, Nebraska Governors have been more often "weak" Governors, content to remain ceremonial heads and administrators. Hence, they rank low on the scale of political leadership.

The Governor's political leadership potential is heavily dependent on the executive style as there are few institutionalized factors working to strengthen and solidify the strides made in this direction. Perhaps the greatest obstacle remains the party structure--its overall weakness, its absence from the legislative arena, and its poor public image.

The weak party structure leaves a serious gap in the political system by denying institutional devices which can supplement and complement the decision-making structure. The devices also provide continuity to the outputs over time by legitimizing them during the feedback

process with the result that outputs become institutionalized and thus less dependent upon the whims of the ever-changing actors within the decision-making process. More permanence is possible and a certain degree of legislative leadership by the executive, for instance, is probable even in the absence of a dynamic, aggressive personality.

CHAPTER IX

OUTPUTS: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

The authoritative allocation of values for a society, or the determination of the rewards and deprivations, constitutes the outputs of the system. In short, the outputs consist of policy decisions, be they far-reaching determinations as to who pays taxes, or seemingly inconsequential ones such as whether automobile license plates should be inscribed with "Cornhusker State" or "Beef State."

Outputs can be classified as taxation patterns, expenditure patterns, and regulatory activities.¹ This designation encompasses the core of policy decisions and thus these decisions can be termed the substantive outputs. How a state raises money, what services it provides, and what programs it supports are all fairly readily discernible. These policy decisions lend themselves to quantification and thus comparison and analysis with decisions of other political systems are possible.

¹Herbert Jacob, "Dimensions of State Politics," in State Legislatures in American Politics, ed. by Alexander Heard (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 9.

The outputs, however, are not produced in a vacuum, but in the context of environmental factors and the distinctive elements of a particular political system. Thus, the outputs which emerge may be tinged with characteristics or traits which reflect the particularist elements of that political system. These traits may be designated attributive outputs. These generally are not readily discernible and do not lend themselves to quantification; thus, comparison and analysis are more difficult and less certain. Nevertheless, attributive outputs cannot be overlooked because they may affect the nature of the substantive outputs as well as play an important role in the feedback process. In the Nebraska system, the most salient attributive outputs concern leadership, partisanship, and majority government.

Decisional Outputs: Substantive Aspects

Introduction

For purposes of comparison, the states of the Great Plains area will be utilized in examining the taxation and expenditure patterns.² This will put the

²The figures are based on a publication by the Cooperative Extension Service of South Dakota compiled by a committee with representatives from each of the Great Plains states. (Cooperative Extension Service, University of South Dakota, Providing and Paying for Public Services, Extension Circular 645 [Brookings: By the Author, 1966]. Hereafter cited as Public Services.)

Nebraska pattern into perspective and permit some assessments of the state's relative position. Nebraska has recently broadened its tax base to include general sales and income taxes. This discussion will examine the situation as it existed up to 1968, and the changes expected under the new tax structure.

Taxation Patterns

In 1963, Nebraska ranked fifth from the top in total revenue collected by state and local sources among the ten plains states (Table IX-1). Of all the states Nebraska relied most heavily on the property tax for state and local revenue, 47 percent of the total revenue coming from this source. With taxes constituting 66 percent of the total revenue (16 percent coming from the federal government and 18 percent from charges and miscellaneous), the property tax amounted to 71.2 percent of the revenue raised through taxes by the state and its local subdivisions. The comparable ten-state average was 49.1 percent and the national average, 45.7 percent.

Nebraska, of all the ten states, had the highest percentage of revenue originating from local sources and the lowest from state sources in both 1957 and 1963 (Table IX-2). It was also one of the lowest (along with Kansas and Texas) in percentage of total revenue sources coming from the federal government.

TABLE IX-1

**GENERAL REVENUE OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS,
BY SOURCE, TEN PLAINS STATES AND U.S., 1963**

State	Total General Revenue	From Fed. Govt.	State and Local Sources				
			Total	Taxes			Charges & Misc.
				Total	Prop- erty	Other	
(in millions of dollars)							
Colorado	\$ 753	\$128	\$ 626	\$ 498	\$247	\$ 251	\$128
Kansas	755	86	670	553	315	238	117
Montana	277	63	214	169	96	73	44
Nebraska	443	72	371	290	209	82	80
New Mex.	395	98	297	204	54	150	93
No. Dak.	242	45	198	140	71	68	58
Okla.	804	182	622	480	151	328	143
So. Dak.	249	48	201	159	88	71	42
Texas	2,924	435	2,489	1,951	880	1,072	538
Wyo.	182	64	119	86	47	39	33
Percentage Distribution							
Colorado		17	83	66	33	33	17
Kansas		11	89	73	42	31	16
Montana		23	77	61	35	26	16
Nebraska		16	84	66	47	19	18
New Mex.		25	75	52	14	38	23
No. Dak.		18	82	58	30	28	24
Okla.		23	77	60	19	41	17
So. Dak.		19	81	64	35	29	17
Texas		15	85	67	30	37	18
Wyo.		35	65	47	26	21	18
10-State average		20	80	61	31	30	19
U.S. avg.		14	86	70	32	38	16

Source: Cooperative Extension Service, University of South Dakota, Providing and Paying for Public Services, Extension Circular 645 (Brookings: By the Author, 1966), p. 9.

TABLE IX-2

**ORIGIN OF GENERAL REVENUE OF STATE AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS, TEN PLAINS STATES AND THE
UNITED STATES, 1957 AND 1963
(PERCENTAGE)**

State	1957			1963		
	Local	State	Federal	Local	State	Federal
Colorado	44.4	40.9	14.7	44.3	38.8	18.9
Kansas	51.0	37.3	11.7	51.5	37.1	11.3
Montana	46.3	36.0	17.7	42.5	34.6	22.9
Nebraska	55.6	32.2	12.1	55.5	28.3	16.2
New Mexico	20.4	57.1	22.5	22.9	52.3	24.8
North Dakota	40.2	47.5	12.3	37.0	44.6	18.4
Oklahoma	28.7	53.8	17.5	28.7	48.7	22.6
South Dakota	48.0	35.5	16.6	43.5	37.2	19.2
Texas	44.4	42.7	12.8	42.6	42.6	14.9
Wyoming	34.3	40.8	24.9	31.5	33.6	34.9
10-State Avg.	41.3	42.4	16.3	40.0	39.8	20.2
U.S. Avg.	46.8	43.1	10.1	45.4	40.8	13.9

Source: Cooperative Extension Service, University of South Dakota, Providing and Paying for Public Services, Extension Circular 645 (Brookings: By the Author, 1966), p. 10.

In the breakdown of state taxes, Nebraska was the heaviest user of property taxes, 50.9 percent of total state taxes in 1963 coming from this source. Wyoming with 17.6 percent was the next heaviest user of the property tax for state purposes. In the remaining eight states, the property tax represented less than nine percent of the state tax source (Table IX-3).

Of the group, Nebraska and Montana were the only states without a general sales tax and Texas and Wyoming joined Nebraska as non-income tax states. Although

TABLE II-3
 PERCENTAGE OF STATE TAXES BY SOURCE,
 TEN PLAINS STATES AND U.S., 1963

State	Sales and Gross Receipts Taxes					Income Tax	Property Tax	Licenses	Other Taxes
	Total	General Sales	Motor Fuels	Other Select Sales	Ind. Corp.				
Colorado	50.4	25.0	18.1	7.5	20.1	9.1	3.0	13.2	4.3
Kansas	63.4	35.3	18.5	9.5	11.8	4.6	3.9	14.4	1.9
Montana	46.1	.	26.6	19.5	18.9	6.4	8.4	13.1	7.1
Nebraska	55.2	.	41.5	13.7	.	.	30.9	11.8	2.1
New Mexico	56.1	28.8	18.5	8.8	(9.5)	.	8.1	11.3	15.0
North Dakota	59.7	25.7	19.7	14.3	9.0	2.6	4.0	19.1	5.6
Oklahoma	57.9	19.5	20.3	18.1	5.9	6.4	.	16.5	13.3
South Dakota	74.1	28.0	26.0	20.0	.	0.8	.	22.5	2.6
Texas	59.4	17.2	19.6	22.6	.	.	4.0	16.9	19.7
Wyoming	54.9	27.6	19.6	7.8	.	.	17.6	26.2	1.3
10-State Avg.	57.5	20.7	23.8	14.2	9.2	3.3	8.0	16.5	7.3
U.S. Avg.	58.2	25.0	17.4	17.4	13.4	6.8	3.1	12.8	5.7

Source: Cooperative Extension Service, University of South Dakota, Providing and Paying for Public Services, Extension Circular 645 (Brookings: By the Author, 1966), p. 11.

Nebraska ranked about average in its dependence upon sales and gross receipts taxes, the lack of a general sales tax resulted in a heavy burden borne by motor fuels and other select taxes. Motor fuels taxes amounted to 41.5 percent of total state tax sources, significantly higher than the next state in this category, Montana with 26.6 percent.

In sum, it is apparent that Nebraska was taxing less than other neighboring states, providing less aid to local governmental units which resulted in the latter's representing a larger percentage of the total revenue sources than in other states, and relying heavily on property and motor fuels taxes for state tax sources (72.4 percent of state taxes came from these two sources).

The big question remains as to whether Nebraska was taxing according to its ability. Aside from the factor of equity in reference to selective sales and property taxes, it is apparent that the tax rate in Nebraska fell below the ability of the state to support governmental programs. Table IX-4 shows the personal income and state taxes per person for Nebraska and adjoining states in 1967 (prior to the broadened tax structure).

Of the seven states, Nebraska ranked third from the top in the personal income per capita figure, just slightly below the national average (\$2,905 to \$2,959 for the country). Yet Nebraska was the lowest in per capita

taxes paid (\$95) and in state taxes as percent of personal income (3.3 percent compared to the national average of 5.5 percent and the next lowest state in the area, South Dakota with 5.1 percent). Thus, it is difficult to conclude Nebraskans were being overtaxed, but rather it seems safe to say they were undertaxed in comparison to their neighbors. Whether the state was doing as much as it could or should is tied to the expenditure patterns to which we now turn.

TABLE IX-4

PERSONAL INCOME AND STATE TAXES PER PERSON,
NEBRASKA AND SELECTED STATES, 1967

State	Personal Income	State Taxes	State Taxes As Percentage of Personal Income
Nebraska	\$2,905	\$ 95	3.3
Colorado	2,916	170	5.8
Iowa	2,992	164	5.5
Kansas	2,862	156	5.5
Missouri	2,817	134	4.8
South Dakota	2,420	124	5.1
Wyoming	2,739	183	6.7
United States	2,959	162	5.5

Source: U.S., Bureau of the Census, State Tax Collections 1967 (compiled by Jack Timmons, University of Nebraska Extension Service).

Expenditure Patterns

In the ten-state Great Plains area, Nebraska in 1963 ranked average or below in all categories of per

capita expenditures of state and local government (Table IX-5). Nebraska was ninth in total expenditures, eighth in education, fifth in roads and highways, tenth in welfare, fifth in health and hospitals, and tied for tenth in other (police and fire protection, sanitation, parks, administration, interest, and minor items).

TABLE IX-5
PER CAPITA EXPENDITURES OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, TOTAL AND SELECTED FUNCTIONS, 1963

State	Total	Educa- tion	Roads & Highways	Welfare	Health & Hospitals	All Other ^a
Colorado	\$401	\$179	\$ 56	\$51	\$27	\$ 90
Kansas	346	148	72	26	23	77
Montana	400	154	113	23	16	94
Nebraska	313	124	84	17	18	70
New Mex.	381	173	75	30	17	86
No. Dak.	383	148	91	25	13	106
Okla.	345	121	68	62	19	75
So. Dak.	349	144	101	23	11	70
Texas	282	111	58	23	16	74
Wyo.	507	180	172	20	36	99
10-State Avg.	371	148	89	30	20	84
U.S. Avg.	344	127	59	29	25	104

^aIncludes police and fire protection, sanitation, parks, administration, interest, and minor items.

Source: Cooperative Extension Service, University of South Dakota, Providing and Paying for Public Services, Extension Circular 645 (Brookings: By the Author, 1966), p. 4.

Perhaps a more meaningful indicator than per capita expenditures, because the ability to pay enters, is

expenditures per \$1,000 of personal income (Table IX-6). In 1963, Nebraska was tied for last among the plains states in total expenditures, tied for last in education expenditures, sixth in roads and highways, last in public welfare, and tied for sixth in health and hospitals.

TABLE IX-6
STATE AND LOCAL GENERAL EXPENDITURES PER
\$1,000 OF PERSONAL INCOME, TOTAL
AND SELECTED ITEMS, 1963

State	Total	Educa- tion	Roads & Highways	Welfare	Health & Hospitals
Colorado	\$165	\$72	\$23	\$21	\$11
Kansas	154	66	32	12	10
Montana	177	68	50	10	7
Nebraska	137	54	37	7	8
New Mex.	196	89	39	16	9
No. Dak.	192	75	46	13	6
Okla.	174	61	34	31	10
So. Dak.	173	72	50	12	5
Texas	137	54	28	11	8
Wyo.	210	75	71	8	15
10-State Avg.	172	69	41	14	9
U.S. Avg.	141	52	24	12	10

Source: Cooperative Extension Service, University of South Dakota, Providing and Paying for Public Services, Extension Circular 645 (Brookings: By the Author, 1966), p. 8.

It has been noted that Nebraska had the largest percentage of total revenue of state and local government originating from local government sources (Table IX-2). In educational expenditures, this meant that in 1962-63, for instance, 89.7 percent of total public school revenues

came from local sources (6.0 percent from the state and 4.3 percent from the federal government). It is not surprising, then, that the state ranked so low in expenditures for education (Tables IX-5 and IX-6). One might expect that with no state aid to local governments, support of higher education would be greater than in states engaged in across-the-board state aid. This, however, was not the case. In 1963, Nebraska ranked ninth of the ten plains states in per capita expenditures for higher education (\$29 compared to \$36 for the ten-state average).³

The expenditure pattern in Nebraska has been lower compared to other plains states and for most functions, has been near the bottom of the ten-state rankings. This is not surprising considering the taxing pattern. The overall picture, up to 1968, was one of low taxes based on a structure favoring inflexibility and inequity which yielded limited funds resulting in low-level support of governmental programs and services.

New Tax Structure: Implications for the Future

The broadening of the tax base in 1968 by substituting a general sales and graduated income tax for the state property tax has had a number of significant results.

p. 5. ³Cooperative Extension Service, Public Services,

For the first time in more than sixty years, Nebraska will provide state aid to local governments, chiefly in the area of education. This leaves education with the largest slice of state appropriations for the 1967-69 biennium, replacing highways (Table IX-7).

TABLE IX-7

STATE GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS, NEBRASKA

Function	1965-67		1967-69	
	Million	Percentage	Million	Percentage
Education	\$123.0	27.7	\$238.1	38.9
Highways	147.3	33.1	147.3	24.0
Health & Welfare	62.7	14.1	90.6	14.7
Public				
Institutions	47.6	10.7	58.6	9.6
General				
Government	48.8	11.0	58.1	9.5
Protection to				
person and				
property	15.1	3.4	20.4	3.3
	<u>\$444.5</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>\$613.1^a</u>	<u>100.0</u>

^aDoes not include \$10 million city-county aid.

Source: Everett E. Peterson and Jack D. Timmons, Financing Public Services in Nebraska--1968 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska College of Agriculture and Home Economics, Extension Service, 1968), p. 5.

The state aid to local governments could relieve some of the local tax burdens, but the existing tax revenues may well be shifted to meet other increasing demands, particularly in the area of health and hospitals, improved sanitation, better police and fire protection, and

expanded recreational facilities.⁴

The new tax structure is expected to produce revenue sources for 1967-69 as follows: selective sales and gross receipts taxes, 16.1 percent; general sales tax, 16.5 percent; income tax, 6.8 percent; federal government, 34.5 percent; and other, 25.6 percent.⁵

The net effect of the new tax system is to provide a slightly progressive tax system. Beginning with the \$2,000 net income level, each higher group pays a somewhat greater proportion of income in taxes than the preceding one. "However, the combined effect, even on the \$20,000 level, is less than 2.5 percent of net income for a family of four."⁶

Sales and income taxes form a basic part of Nebraska's state-local tax system. Each tax helps offset some of the defects of the other. The sales tax provides widespread participation in government financing and a sound, stable base for obtaining revenue. Its regressive effect partially offsets the highly progressive structure of the federally-based income tax.⁷

Conclusion

Nebraska has finally emerged with a sound tax system after being saddled with an inflexible, difficult

⁴Everett E. Peterson and Jack D. Timmons, Financing Public Services in Nebraska--1968 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska College of Agriculture and Home Economics, Extension Service, 1968), p. 7.

⁵Ibid., p. 8.

⁶Ibid., p. 20.

⁷Ibid.

to administer, and highly inequitable structure for so many years. The pre-1968 taxing pattern resulted in an expenditure program that was below average compared to neighboring states. Measured against ability to pay, the taxation/expenditure pattern again was below that of other plains states, indicating that the state's citizens could afford to support governmental programs at a higher level. The tax burden, however, was favorable, though programs suffered as they were supported at a minimal level.

Decisional Outputs: Attributive
Aspects

Introduction

Because of the environment, and the various elements of the political system being affected thereby, the outputs possess certain qualities or traits. Though not as readily discernible as taxes and expenditures, they are part and parcel of the substantive aspects because these qualities pattern the latter. These attributive outputs flow into the feedback channels and reinforce existing environmental or political system elements. In the Nebraska system, the main attributive outputs revolve around the nature of leadership, the level of partisanship, and the manner of majoritarian government.

Crisis of Leadership

The leadership problem has been noted in discussing some of the elements of the state's political system. The lack of institutionalized leadership devices has contributed to a serious leadership gap in the operation of the political system, a gap which can be called a "crisis in leadership."

The state's tax structure and the long fight to alter that structure is a good case in point. The strong reliance upon the property tax and refusal to broaden the tax base to include sales and/or income taxes resulted in a situation which appeared to be one of limited resources. Given the framework of a tax system largely restricted to the property tax, the resources of Nebraska state government were indeed limited. The priorities of governmental services necessitated by this resulted in many programs being inadequately supported, certainly in comparison to neighboring states. But was this actually a case of limited resources? It was apparent that it was not a situation of lack of resources, but this claim became a rationalization for retarding governmental growth and increased governmental expenditures. This rationalization became a positive good in the form of the "white spot" myth, in which the state of Nebraska showed up in maps as the state unviolated by an income or sales tax and with a low per capita tax burden--the "white spot" of the national tax picture.

But what did this "white spot" virtue entail? It included almost no state aid to education, leaving local communities completely on their own in acquiring the necessary financial support. The results were less than satisfactory viewed from the standpoint of building a quality educational system as well as the nature of the local tax burden. The "white spot" meant state support of higher education was less than complete, resulting in growth at a decreasing rate compared to other states. The low tax fiction resulted in support of penal and welfare programs at a minimal level, creating problems which continue to the present day. And the "white spot" left the tax burden unequally spread among the state's population, with the small property owner the hardest hit since all levels of government--city, county, and state--depended heavily upon the property tax for their support.

The popular acceptance of the restrictions imposed by the narrow tax base was not unjustified, however. The Depression period made a powerful impact upon those who experienced it and drastically altered the demographic character of the population. For those who stayed and fought out the Depression, economy was more than just a slogan. It had been a way of life, a necessary way of life for survival. Thus, it is not unnatural that the bulk of the population in the 1940's and 1950's should

place a high regard on restricted spending, on limited governmental expenditures, and on holding the tax line.

If the Depression had imposed one set of attitudes, governmental action in the economic field beginning in the mid-1930's, plus changed conditions and economic advances, imposed a different set of attitudes. The latter could work to break down the former and consequently to overcome the ill-effects of the Depression. But the process required an educational program, and above all strong direction and leadership. The Nebraska political system failed to provide this leadership and thus the period of the last thirty years might well be summed up as the "crisis of leadership." A broadened tax base was essential for expansion of governmental programs and services. Without it, these programs and services could be supported at a minimal level or, if higher, at the cost of an increasingly heavy tax burden at the expense of property owners.

The year 1966 was an eventful one in that it provided the opportunity for the long-overdue reform of the tax structure. Fortuitous circumstances, as much as the candidates and party platforms, provided this opportunity. Both gubernatorial candidates were young and aggressive, both subscribed to a broadened tax program and pledged to work for its passage. At the same time, the voters were faced with a referendum and initiative

measure, the former to repeal a legislative income tax and the latter to repeal the state property tax. The initiative was launched in response to the referendum move to counter the anti-income tax people. Both passed and the state was faced with drastically reduced tax sources. Thus, the new Governor and Legislature were free to tailor a tax system largely unencumbered by any existing program. A complete new step forward was possible.

The broadened tax base adopted in 1967, then, was due perhaps as much to the circumstances as to leadership. There is no question that a great deal of leadership and direction was exercised by the Governor and the Legislature. But there is also no question that something had to be done or else the state would face bankruptcy. What the situation would be today in the absence of the foregoing circumstances is a tantalizing question. At the very least, the struggle to broaden the tax base would have been far more difficult for the executive and legislative branches than was the case.

In sum, the broadened tax base struggle demonstrates the "crisis of leadership" in the Nebraska political system. The decision-makers were unable to respond to the needs, to mold, to educate, to pattern public opinion to accept what was necessary and perhaps even inevitable. Rather than lead, the decision-makers

could only follow. The reason for this leadership gap provides what is perhaps the key to the weakness of the state's political system.

Apartisan Politics

What appears to come to the fore again and again in examining the political system is the absence of institutionalized mechanisms to aid the leadership process. There are few built-in devices to give impetus to, to stimulate, to activate leadership within the system. What leadership does emerge seems to do so in spite of, rather than because of, the system.

The lack of institutionalized leadership devices can be traced largely to the nature of the state's party system. Political parties do not function effectively within the system--they do not serve as an effective channel of communication, they do not command much authority within the decision-making process, and consequently they do not engender much respect from the individuals within the system. The institutionalized leadership devices which a sound and effective party system provides are absent and these have not been replaced to any great degree by any alternative means.

The candidate recruitment process, the grooming of leaders, lacks the programmatical and organizational cohesiveness which a party structure provides. The party role

in recruitment is minimal and thus candidate commitment to party program is likewise minimal.

In the legislative arena this results in campaigns largely devoid of issues and the election of 49 individuals uncommitted to any program or any philosophy. These individuals are seemingly responsible to no person or party. Though it may appear they are free agents, by the nature of the situation, they respond to the more narrow interests patterning individual motivation--prejudice, specialized interest groups, or self-interest. The character of human behavior dictates that these more narrow interest can never be completely eradicated; the best that can be hoped is that they be recognized and/or mitigated in some way. The individual who can recognize these narrow interests and rise above them is rare, a statesman in the true sense. For most of us it is necessary that outside forces operate to mitigate the effects of our individual narrow interests. The unifying and moderating effect of the political party structure is one way in which the larger interests, the general welfare if one prefers, can rise above the competing individual narrow interests.

The recruitment process on the executive level likewise suffers because of weak party influence. The "independent" Nebraska primary system, almost completely devoid of party influence, is not conducive to providing,

on a regular basis over time, the caliber of leadership that is demanded. The Nebraska primary system has provided some highly competent leaders just as a more party-oriented primary system in other political environments has provided poor leaders. But because of the stakes involved, the party-oriented system can be expected to provide, in more cases than not, a high caliber of leaders. To do otherwise would involve political suicide. In the Nebraska context there is no such demand to provide leaders since there are few risks in not doing so. The "ins" are rarely punished because the diffusion of power and responsibility is such that it is difficult to pinpoint which of the "ins" are at fault. The Governor can point to a nonpartisan Legislature over which he has no control, and from which there is no program commitment; or an independent board or commission, where his influence is minimal at best. The Legislature can likewise point to a partisan Governor who has placed "party considerations above those of the general welfare" as expressed by the nonpartisan Legislature. The Governor can be faulted with many shortcomings by a Legislature elected on, and committed to, no organized program or commitment for action.

In some political systems, the constitutionally elected executive officials constitute a team or slate and thus, theoretically at least, are committed to similar

programs and policies. Even if the team or slate approach is lacking, the party can still suffer, in a system where party influence is felt, from an incompetent official wearing the party label and attempts will be made to shed this liability. In Nebraska, everyone is on his own, there is little guarantee of competence, and little motivation for party effort to remove incompetence if such occurs. With little influence in the primary process, the party is unable and consequently unwilling to take the necessary steps to ensure competent officials on the one hand, and to purge incompetents on the other. Thus, individuals need only win a few elections so their names are familiar to the electorate, refrain from personal or political scandal and incumbency is all but guaranteed for as long as desired. The party, in any case, will not interfere in the primary process and on the Republican side this is in many cases tantamount to election.

In the operation of the decision-making structures, party influence is weak as well. The Legislature operates all but devoid of any party influence. The legislative body organizes, awards leadership posts, and carries out its legislative duties with little regard for partisan considerations. Partisanship is not completely absent, of course, but other factors emerge as more significant in the legislative process than partisanship. This has

resulted in a situation where the parties have withdrawn from the legislative arena and make little effort, as organizations, to influence the direction of the Legislature.

On the executive level, constitutionally elected officials do not always feel obligated to accept and follow the leadership and program of the Governor even when all are of the same party and have run on the same platform. Even further, the party platform does not always reflect the wishes of the standard bearer whose influence on its content is not always complete. The highly independent position of each of the officeholders can, and at times does, prevent a coordinated executive policy. Independent boards and commissions contribute to this decentralization of executive authority and direction. An appeal to party loyalty is probably the weakest weapon that can be used in a situation of intra-executive disagreements as this would raise cries of "politics" and "partisanship" which evoke a negative public response to the detriment of the person using this appeal.

The result of this is an electoral and decisional process that is largely devoid of partisanship. Party loyalty is highly elusive and fluid. Party labels, where used, are little more than historically important and do not represent meaningful ideological or programmatical

cleavages, even less so than in most other political systems. That Republicans win more often than Democrats should not necessarily be accepted as an indication of the organizational strength of Republicanism, but in many cases merely a reflection of historical and habitual patterns. That a Democrat like Frank Morrison can win three terms as Governor indicates the fleeting nature of the Republican commitment of Nebraska voters.

This is not to deny that there is a built-in Republican bias in the state's political system. To do so would be to overlook the obvious. But this Republicanism does not penetrate below the surface. It is not reflected in the organizational viability of the party, in the pervasiveness of its program, in the depth of its electoral influence--in short, in all those things which distinguish a strong, effective and viable party structure. Its successes can be likened to cotton candy, expansive but lacking a great deal of substance. These successes are quantitative, but not qualitative, in the degree to which they contribute to making the Republican party an influential and continuing organizational entity within the functioning of the state's political system.

Thus, while partisanship is present and operative within the political system, it is elusive in nature, weak in content, and limited in extent. Consequently the party

structure as well is weak and the role of parties is highly limited. Party influence is such that some of the state's political processes are in effect nonpartisan and many are conducted within the framework of limited partisanship. Therefore, politics in the state might be characterized as apartisan, denoting a rather neutral condition where partisanship may or may not play a role, but the outcome in most cases would not differ radically whatever the case.

The environmental factors have contributed to building up this apartisanship and to legitimizing it. The anti-party tradition of the political culture and tradition aided the acceptance of institutional devices which eroded party strength and influence. The demographic, economic, and social factors, rather than counter the previous forces, work to reinforce the erosion process by not providing the cleavages, divisions, and differences which are conducive toward building an effective party structure. The pluralistic nature of the environment was not, and still is not, great enough to permit parties to overcome the institutional and cultural disadvantages. The almost constant assaults on the party structure--at times by institutional changes, sometimes by ideological thrusts of organized movements or influential individuals, occasionally by both together--have so battered the

parties that they are weak and largely ineffective.

The support input of the system, then, includes a strong anti-party element which is reinforced and perpetuated through the feedback process both within the environment and within the political system itself. The result is the legitimization of the apartisanship structure of political behavior.

Consensus Government

In the context of a weak party structure and the consequences of this condition--diffused power and responsibility, halting leadership--the process of decision-making is a gradual, evolutionary one. Quick decisions are rare; instead a long gestation period is necessary while the various influences within the decision-making process interact--the legislators, interest groups, constituent influence, the executive, the administrators. An accommodation of influences is necessary before action can be taken, and the interaction toward reaching this needed accommodation of interests can be a long and slow process. It is only when there is better than majority support will action be taken. This process is necessary because there are few opportunities to impose a decision which cannot be overturned by the participating elements if they so choose. The absence of a party structure denies the system a device which can impose a decision

if necessary and generally insure this will be accepted by the participants. A strong and aggressive Governor or Legislature in Nebraska can impose a decision but there are no guarantees this will not be negated by dissatisfied groups, as was the case of the 1965 income tax bill.

The process might be termed decision-making through consensus of the participants, something more than majority government, but yet less than unanimous agreement. The procedure of achieving consensus is lengthy, but does enjoy the advantages of widespread acceptance of decisions and avoidance of post-decisional opposition and controversy. The process also provides for the element of moderation since it produces the common denominator which is most acceptable to the largest number of participants. In a sense this replaces the moderating effects which a party structure infuses into a political system.

Thus, the system is not without its advantages, of which moderation is perhaps the most salient. But a price must be paid for this moderation and this is time. New departures, initiatives, and programs, be it tax revision, governmental reorganization, or a retirement system for state employees, are undertaken only after the issues have been debated extensively and repeatedly in the legislative chambers, have been emphasized and reemphasized by the Governor, have received support from, and been

propagandized by, interest groups, have been spotlighted in the press. The result is that many times action comes long after the need has been demonstrated and in some cases may be too little too late. In certain situations, particularly in the context of the twentieth century, swift action is necessary. The Nebraska political system would find it extremely difficult to respond satisfactorily to a situation demanding prompt action.

Improving Decisional Outputs

Introduction

One assumption that is central to this study is the acceptance of an effective and viable political party structure as a positive good. The correct approach, then, is to look toward those factors, devices, institutions, and attitudes which strengthen a party system rather than those which impede, stultify, or weaken it. The question that should be asked is how can we improve the party structure so that it will operate as an effective channel of communication in translating the needs of the political system's members into decisional outputs.

The acceptance of parties is not based on a belief that this necessarily makes for more efficient government, or eases problems of governance. This acceptance is based on the belief that political parties are an integral part of the democratic process and when one strengthens the

party structure he is contributing to the development of democratic government. Thus, tolerance of parties does not constitute a full appreciation of parties' role in the democratic process any more than tolerance of dissent constitutes the complete ideal of freedom of speech. What is necessary is a full commitment to, a positive attitude toward, a sympathetic appreciation of parties as part and parcel of the democratic process.

Political parties constitute a basic element of democratic institutional apparatus. They perform an essential function in the management of succession to power, as well as in the process of obtaining popular consent to the course of public policy. They amass sufficient support to buttress the authority of governments; or, on the contrary, they attract or organize discontent and dissatisfaction sufficient to oust the government.⁸

Thus, it would seem that one of the main efforts toward improving the outputs of the Nebraska system should center around strengthening the party structure.

Structural Changes

The key change in this regard would seem to be modifying the legislative structure by making the Unicameral a partisan body. This would accomplish a number of things. The political parties would be thrust into the legislative arena as an important policy-making and

⁸V. O. Key, Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups, (5th ed.; New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1958), p. 12.

policy-implementing organ. Institutionalized leadership devices would be created, the parties would have a forum from which to speak, and a more politicized body could be expected as the minority party exercised its role as the loyal opposition. The over-all legislative product might well be improved with the built-in watchdog apparatus of an organized opposition.

A partisan legislature would lead one to expect a decreased role for interest groups, both in the election and in the actual legislative process. The over-all lobbying process would not be affected greatly, however, except that the resolution of problems within the legislative arena could take on a more general, statewide cast. It would at least add another dimension to the legislative process and provide a foil to the interest group pressures. The character of the legislator might well change also; at the minimum, more young individuals would be expected to serve in the Legislature. Perhaps the Legislature would again emerge as an important recruitment vehicle for higher political office and thus contribute to an upgrading of the caliber of officeholders.

Executive-legislative relations could well suffer, however, if both were partisan bodies. Under the present system deadlocked government due to opposing parties controlling the two branches of government is impossible.

Regardless of the Governor's party affiliation, the executive program has a chance in the Legislature. Certainly a Republican Governor has a built-in advantage, but a Democratic Governor is probably better off with a nonpartisan Legislature than with a partisan one given the Republican dominance of the legislative body.

Nevertheless, deadlocked government does present one advantage which is not possible under the present set-up--pinpointing of responsibility. There is a much clearer focus of responsibility under a partisan set-up, a better accounting to the electorate is possible, and though deadlock is possible, it is a short-run phenomenon and one that is generally resolved at the next election, if not before, through mutual concessions.

A partisan legislature would contribute toward building a more viable party apparatus. More electoral contests would be fought along partisan lines, this itself stimulating increased party organization, activity, and effort. Local party involvement would be accentuated, contributing toward a grass-roots strengthening of the party apparatus. Many Democratic party leaders seem to feel that a partisan legislature would decrease the Democratic influence in the legislature. Under the present set-up, a Democrat can be influential even though the body is largely Republican. Under a partisan system this would

not be the case. While this is true, it is also true that presently a good Democratic election year is not reflected in the legislative contests. There is also much to support the contention that nonpartisan elections favor candidates from a socio-economic background that traditionally identifies with the Republican party. Thus, one can argue that the present system gives more influence to the Republicans than the actual political division in the state might warrant. This is substantiated to some degree by the current registration figures which show a 52-46 Republican-Democratic division, but yet the Democrats have never held, except for the first two sessions, more than a third of the legislative seats since the Unicameral was adopted.

A nonpartisan legislature has resulted in a stability of Democratic representation and influence at a low but not insignificant level regardless of political ups and downs. This would be sacrificed in a partisan system for the possibility of complete control occasionally and little more than a public forum at other times. The registration figures suggest, however, that the occasions of control may not be as infrequent as many might believe. The base of Democratic strength (46 percent) is sufficient to expect that with organizational effort and leadership the legislative contests would result in a good share of

Democratic victories.

Along with a partisan legislature, some changes in the primary process seem warranted. The party is noticeably weak in influencing the selection of candidates at the primary stage. The complete "independence" of the system works against party organizational influence in candidate selection. The pre-primary endorsement law was too short-lived to gauge its effectiveness and the possibility of reviving it should be considered. The 1963 law permitting some party participation in selection of delegates to the party national convention seemed to be a step in the direction of increasing party influence. It is unfortunate that events of 1964 and individual motivation contributed to its demise before it had a chance to operate.

The adoption of the short ballot would aid in developing party cohesion by eliminating competing and independent centers of power. Party responsibility would be sharply focused in the Governor and thus electorate accountability could be most directly exercised. Attention could be focused on the essential gubernatorial contest, and with a partisan legislature, more emphasis would be placed on coordinating the executive-legislative platform and program for action during the electoral phase.

Alterations in the initiative and referendum procedures, perhaps even outright abandonment, also seem warranted. If representative government is to be effective it would seem illogical to perpetuate devices which weaken and dilute the authority of the decision-making representatives. The initiative and referendum can be used by decision-makers to "pass the buck" or postpone controversial decisions, by specialized interests to frustrate majority government for their own benefit, and by both to saddle the people with questions which they are not equipped to handle. If direct democracy is desired then there is no need for the initiative and referendum. If representative democracy is to be used, then initiative and referendum would seem merely to retard the process. In a well-functioning representative system, the party structure operates satisfactorily, precluding the need for the initiative and referendum. If the party system is not operating satisfactorily, the initiative and referendum may be justified, but this appears to treat the symptom rather than attack the disease. A more satisfactory solution would seem to be to undertake to make the party system work satisfactorily rather than bypass the party structure through the initiative and referendum.

As far as the Nebraska experience has shown, the initiative and referendum have not accomplished a great

deal of positive value. It is possible that the mere presence of these devices has worked to preclude legislative misdirection, the so-called "gun behind the door" advantage.⁹ But it is also possible that specialized interest groups have utilized the availability of these devices to thwart legislative action for their own benefit. Thus, the initiative and referendum can act as a check on majority government as well as ensure legislative adherence to majority desires.

Nonstructural Changes

In the final analysis, it must be admitted that a partisan legislature per se probably would not result in any drastic change in the state's political system. Because the low level of partisanship goes beyond institutional factors, because it is deeply rooted in, and perpetuated by, the environment as a whole, the mere changing of the legislature from a nonpartisan to a partisan body would not transform Nebraska's apartisan politics to one of partisanship.

The anti-party spirit runs deep in Nebraska, as has been noted, and the process of eroding the apartisan character of politics and building a more partisan one cannot be accomplished overnight. The long process which

⁹Charles R. Adrian, State and Local Governments (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1957), p. 169.

is responsible for the present situation can itself be reversed only by a similar long process toward building partisanship.

Probably the biggest need is a vast educational program to "sell" the party system. The image of political parties is extremely poor in Nebraska and thus it is necessary first to change popular conceptions and misconceptions. This is, of course, easier said than done. It would seem, however, that in this day and age of the increasing role of public relations in politics, and of image building, it would not be an impossible task to devise an approach for selling the party system.

Certain changes in the environment would help to alter the apartisan picture. A more heterogeneous society--economically and socially as well as demographically--would aid the process. There are indications that changes in this direction are taking place. How extensive these changes will be must await the passage of time. In any case, it appears that some favorable factors are operative and these can be utilized to erode the homogeneity of the state's environmental structure.

One of the largest stumbling blocks to building the party system has been the weakened Democratic party. The absence of a competitive party structure has aided the apartisan picture. The results of the new voter

registration law indicate that the Democrats have a stronger base of power than many thought. Claiming just under 46 percent of the registrants compared to 52 percent identified with the Republicans, the party has a strong potential base of power from which seriously to challenge the so-called Republican dominance of the state. With some organizational effort and more elective offices to contest (possible with a partisan legislature), one can envision a strengthened Democratic party. The party apparently suffers from an inferiority complex, as one prominent Democrat has noted, and this psychological handicap must be overcome if the party is to be strengthened. Perhaps the registration figures will demonstrate that the party is not as weak as many have accepted and conversely, that the Republican dominance is not as strong and extensive as popularly believed.

Thus, attitudinal changes are necessary if the apartisan character of Nebraska politics is to be altered. The popular image of parties must be made to be more positive in nature, the Democrats need to adopt an air of self-confidence, and there must be a more widespread acceptance of the party system as a whole as a positive good, not merely a tolerable evil.

But just as institutional changes do not operate in a vacuum, these attitudinal changes need to be

accompanied by more concrete steps if the alterations are to have any permanent effect. Thus, a partisan legislature would provide some of the bases from which attempts could be launched to modify popular attitudes. A partisan legislature could demonstrate the advantages of party government, it would help perhaps to overcome the Democratic inferiority complex, it would provide, hopefully, the leadership which would build a new party image, it would aid in strengthening the organizational aspects of the two parties, drawing more people into the party orbit to a more direct and continuous degree than is now possible. In short, attitudes could change in the context of institutional modifications as both act and interact upon each other.

Conclusion

Neither institutional nor nonstructural modifications alone can hope to alter the apartisan political picture. What is necessary is a series of steps, some involving structural changes, other just attitudinal reorientations, which together can operate on the political system over time infusing beliefs, practices, and patterns which encourage a more partisan character in the political processes. A partisan legislature would seem an appropriate first step because of the numerous advantages this holds for building the party structure. This is by

no means a panacea nor should it be expected to solve all of the problems, but it is at least a step forward toward providing a viable party structure for the state's political system.

Epilogue: Nebraska As A Political Laboratory

Introduction

As was noted in the introduction to the study, the possibility of applying to other political systems the insights and knowledge gathered from analyzing the Nebraska political system patterned the value of this study. If little is applicable to the non-Nebraskan political system, then the study is of little value except to those intimately connected with Nebraska. If some insights have relevance in other political systems, then the study takes on a new perspective.

Unicameralism

As a legislative institution, the one-house body has proven to be an effective organ. If few of the extravagant claims of unicameralism's proponents have failed to materialize, so too have the fears of its opponents. If no better than bicameralism, the thirty-year Nebraska experiment shows unicameralism certainly to be no worse. It has been shown that unicameralism can work.

The biggest obstacle to the extension of the unicameral principle, in the author's opinion, is its association with nonpartisanship as seen in the Nebraska pattern. If it can be demonstrated that unicameralism can be effective when tied to partisanship, then a great impetus would be provided for the extension of the unicameral idea. The persistent belief that a partisan unicameral legislative body is unworkable, perpetuated by the Nebraska experience and accepted by those outside of Nebraska, has been responsible, in the author's opinion, for the less than enthusiastic acceptance of unicameralism. At least this belief has given a strong rationalization to those who oppose unicameralism because it would upset the status quo or lessen their power and influence.

With a unicameral legislature already in existence, Nebraska presents the best "laboratory" for proving whether, in reality, a partisan unicameral is unworkable. If this belief is shown to be untenable, then a strong argument against unicameralism will fall and with it some of the opposition to this institution. There will be even less reason than now, in the context of "one man, one vote," to retain the bicameral principle on the state legislative level. Since county lines are even more artificial than state boundaries, and the former do not enjoy any independent relationship vis-à-vis the states,

unlike the state-national government relationship, there would seem to be little justification, other than tradition, for retaining the bicameral principle for state legislatures.

Nebraska has shown that a nonpartisan unicameral legislative system can work. This has limited applicability to other political systems because of the radical steps this requires, particularly the rejection of party as a legislative determinant. But a partisan unicameral legislative system would appear more attractive and be more readily acceptable to other political systems. It is here that Nebraska would seem to present the best possibility for serving as a "laboratory for democracy" by marketing a highly saleable governmental innovation.

Partisanship

A recent study on South Dakota reveals many of the same apartisan qualities in that political system that have been evident in the study of Nebraska.¹⁰ A number of similarities exist between the two states--relatively small population, still agriculturally oriented, situated within the prairie-plains environment, highly homogeneous, heavily Republican, settled and matured during generally the same time span and subject to similar political

¹⁰Alan L. Clem, Prairie State Politics (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1967).

movements, to name but a few. But there are differences too, as South Dakota has a partisan bicameral legislature, a stronger Republican bias, a less industrialized base, a more isolated geographical position than Nebraska.

Yet both display essentially a weak partisan framework and a strong dose of popular control of decision-makers. Parties play a minimal role in the decision-making processes of both states. This would seem to present the basis for further study into these two political systems, and perhaps other neighboring states as well, looking to the nature of this apartisan politics from a comparative viewpoint. Why, despite noticeable differences, do these two systems display strong apartisan traits? Or conversely, what are some of the determinants of partisanship whose absence is responsible for the lack of partisan characteristics in these two states? A comparative study of these two, plus others not necessarily limited to the U.S. political environment, might reveal some valuable insights toward hypothesizing on the determinants of partisanship in various political systems.

A few speculative hypotheses present themselves as possible foci for future testing.

1. In a relatively sparsely populated environment, a more personalized political process is possible, precluding the need for the organizational and unifying aspects

of a party structure. Political processes, being more highly personalized, tend also to become apartisan with less need for a "middle-man" as a channel of communication.

2. In a largely homogeneous society meaningful cleavages are lacking, thus denying parties the raw material of organization and an important raison d'être. An apartisan political system or a one-party system may be the result.

3. In an underdeveloped society (low level of industrialization and urbanization) a multiplicity of demands are lacking, decreasing the need for an effective and articulate channel of communication such as a political party. The low level of industrialization and urbanization reduces the number of conflicting demands competing for recognition, lessening the impact of parties as a goal achievement vehicle.

4. In a society with strong emphasis on direct participation expressed through institutional devices and the political culture and tradition, parties are ill-equipped to compete effectively against the individualism inherent in the "popular democracy" concept. Where the emphasis is on representative democracy, parties are better suited to act out their role as communicator.

Other hypotheses can be advanced in theorizing on the determinants of partisanship. The Nebraska political system would seem to offer fertile ground as a starting point in looking further into partisanship and/or the lack of it.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, the only real test of the legitimacy of a political system is its acceptance by the membership. Regardless of weaknesses or failures, of criticisms or shortcomings, if the political system finds widespread acceptance, then it can be judged as satisfactory. There is little apparent opposition to the manner in which the system operates and dissatisfaction is likewise not extensive. The Nebraska political system, then, must be judged as fairly high on the acceptance scale.

To say that a political system is satisfactory, however, is not necessarily to accept the proposition that nothing need be done to alter the status quo. Satisfaction is a matter of degree and can always be increased. But perhaps more importantly, there are signs that alterations in the environment might bring changes which the present political system is ill-equipped to handle. The erosion of the state's homogeneity shows signs of progressing along with increasing industrialization and urbanization within

the state (already over half of the population live in areas classified by the Census Bureau as urban). Though the state is still largely agriculturally and rurally oriented, the trend in the direction of industrialization and urbanization is established.

As these environmental changes progress and accelerate, one can foresee the increase of competing demands, each more complex and diverse. Apartisanship seems well adapted to a sparsely populated, homogeneous society, but serious reservations emerge in gauging its applicability to a populous, heterogeneous society. Weaknesses which can be tolerated in the former environment may well prove destructive in the latter. The fact that leadership has been slow in emerging, and at times nonexistent, in the Nebraska past has not been fatal for the continued operation of the political system. That this will continue to be the case in the future is not so certain, particularly in the context of the changing environmental factors. If leadership was once a dispensable quality, the increasing complexity of the twentieth century is rapidly making it an indispensable quality.

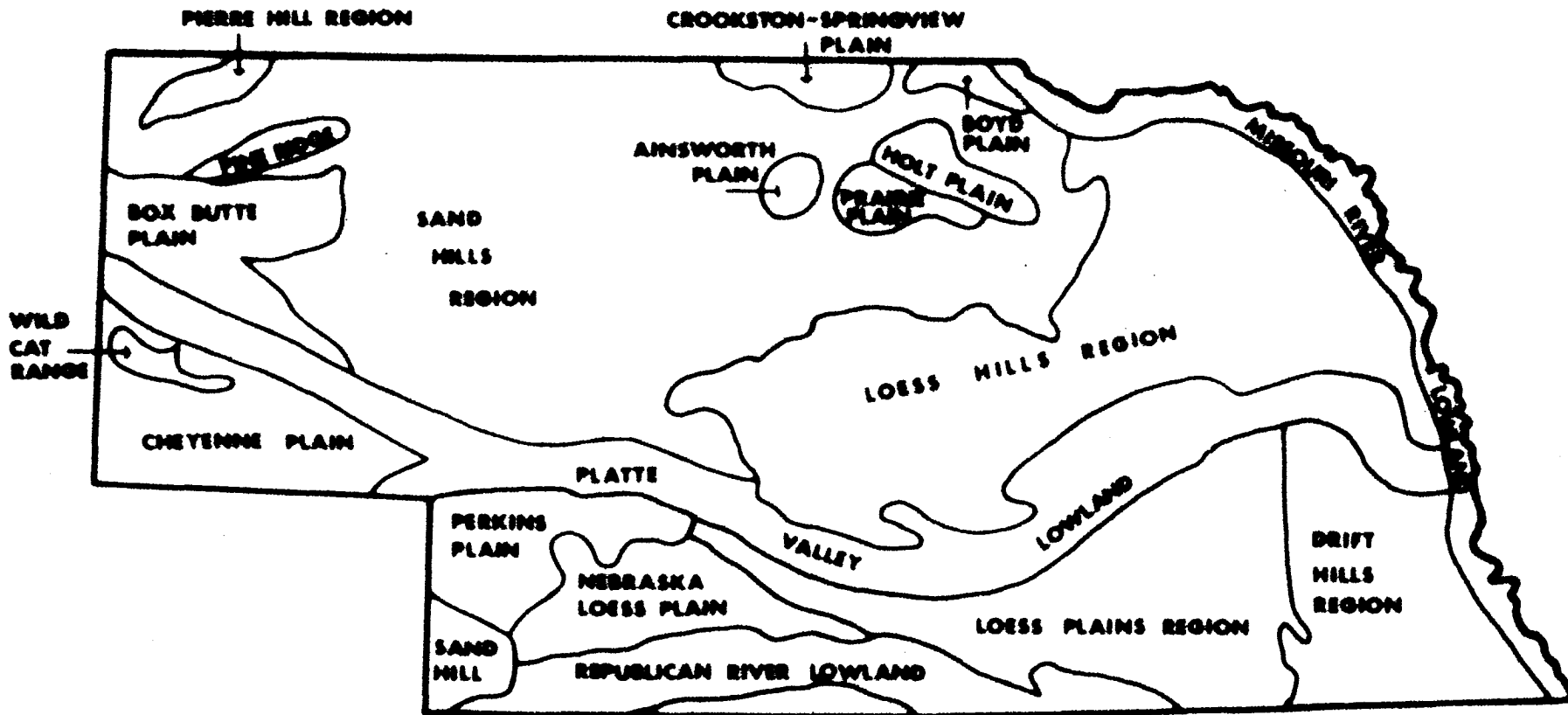
Finally, even though the industrialization and urbanization trend is established, the pace of its development is not inevitable, but open to manipulation. The pace can be accelerated, or slowed, by the operation of

the political system. Again apartisanship would seem to slow, rather than accelerate, the trend, largely because of the leadership factor. Thus, it would appear that the need for changes within the political system is tied to the future progress of the state. Whether Nebraska will ride the wave of industrialization and urbanization or merely be swept along with it will determine where the state will be in fifty or one hundred years. Though a realistic assessment indicates the state can never hope to be in the class of New York or California, there is reason to hope it can emerge a leader of its class, rather than being near the bottom as has been the case so often in so many ways. Changes in the political system will not guarantee the state's progress, but neither has the present system. The status quo establishes mediocrity as a goal; change permits an attempt to strive for excellence. The former is safe, the latter fraught with dangers, but change holds out the promise of greater rewards.

APPENDIX A

PHYSICAL FACTORS: SUPPORTING DATA

FIGURE A-1
TOPOGRAPHIC REGIONS OF NEBRASKA



Source: George E. Condra, James Olson, and Royce Knapp, The Nebraska Story (Lincoln: University Publishing Co., 1951), p. 28.

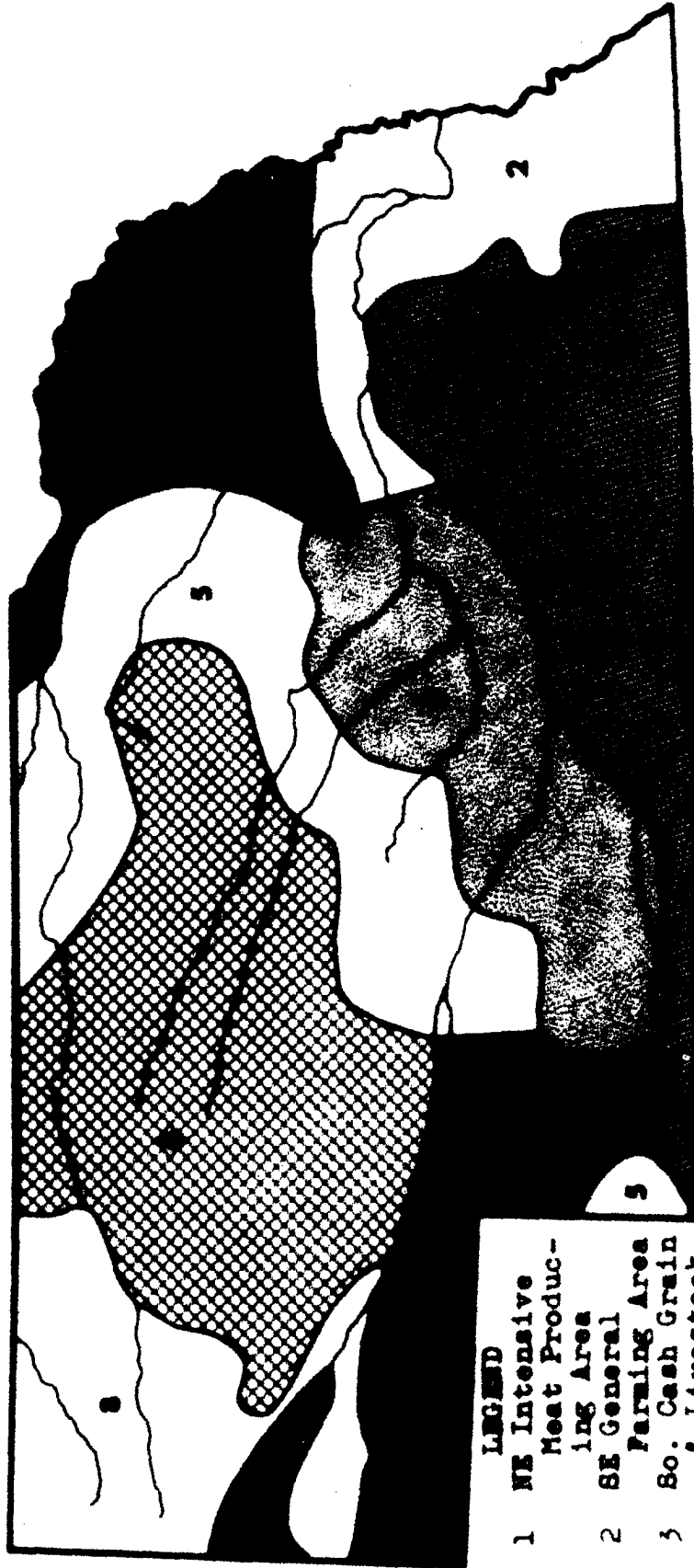
FIGURE A-2
GREAT SOIL GROUPS IN NEBRASKA



PRAIRIE
 CHEROKEE
 CHESTNUT
 SANDHILLS
 ALLUVIAL

Source: N. D. Searcy and A. R. Longwell, Nebraska Atlas (Kearney, Nebr.: Nebraska Atlas Publishing Co., 1964), p. 5.

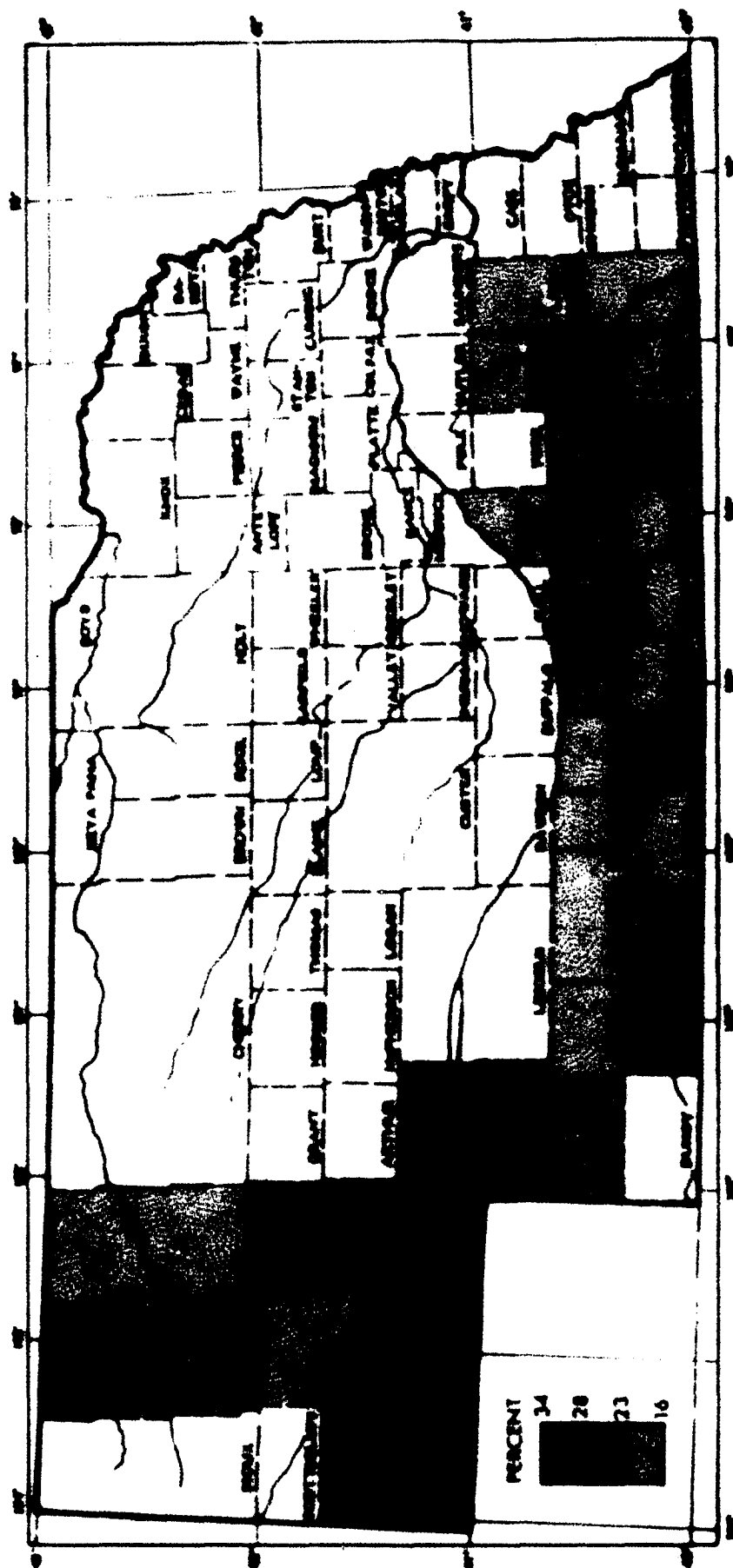
FIGURE A-3
 AGRICULTURAL UTILIZATION OF LAND IN NEBRASKA



- LEGEND**
- 1 NE Intensive Meat Producing Area
 - 2 SE General Farming Area
 - 3 So. Cash Grain & Livestock Area
 - 4 Cen. Corn & Livestock
 - 5 Cen. Hay & Livestock
 - 6 Sand Hill Cattle Ranching
 - 7 SW Wheat
 - 8 High Plains, Small Grain & Grazing Area
 - 9 Irrigated Area

Source: Harry Bradford and George Spidel, Nebraska, Its Geography and Agriculture (New York: Macmillan Co., 1951), pp. 122-123.

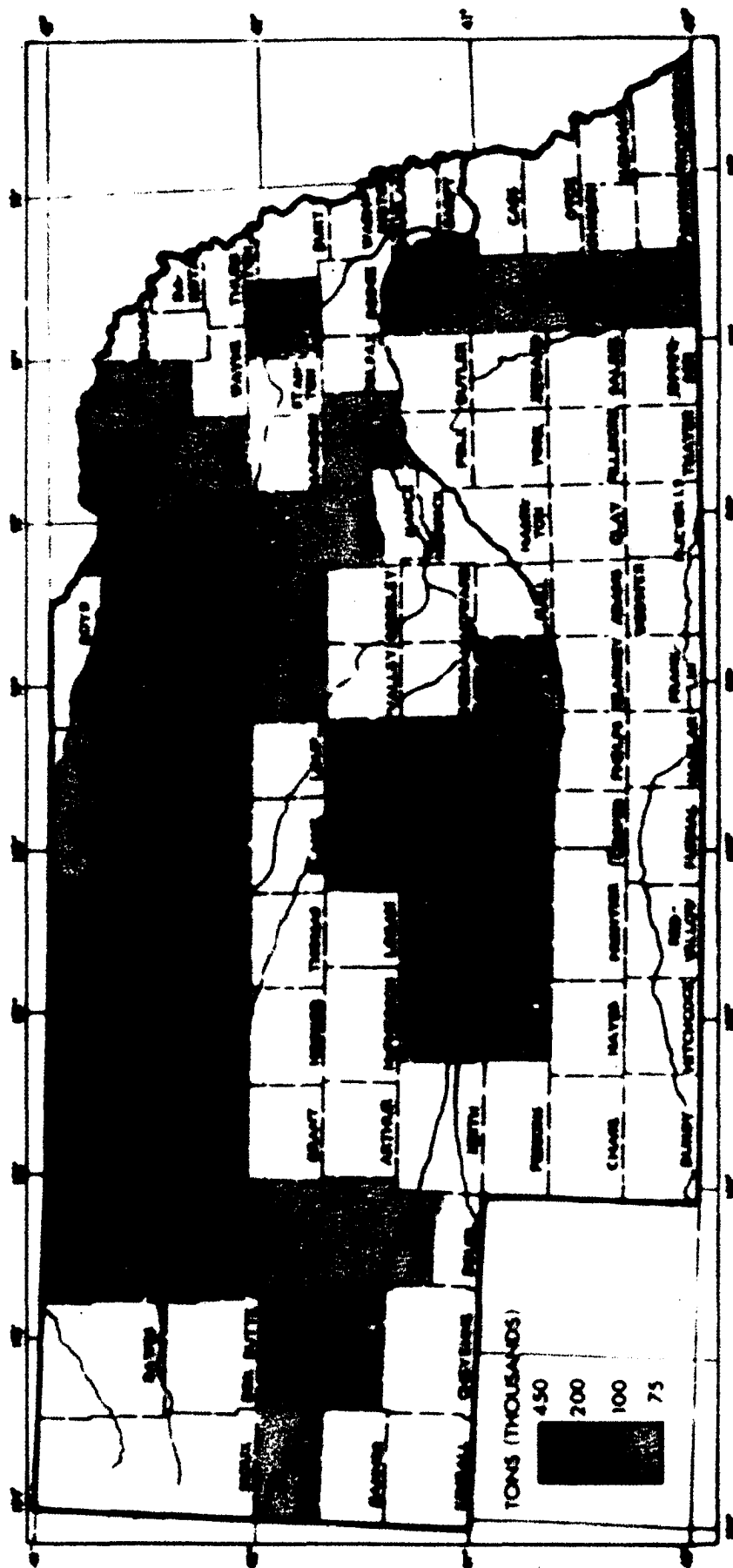
FIGURE A-5
LEADING COUNTIES WITH CROPLAND IN WHEAT--1962



Source: M. D. Searcy and A. R. Longwell, *Nebraska Atlas* (Kearney, Nebr.: Nebraska Atlas Publishing Co., 1964), p. 52.

NEBRASKA BOOK STORE
Kearney, Nebraska

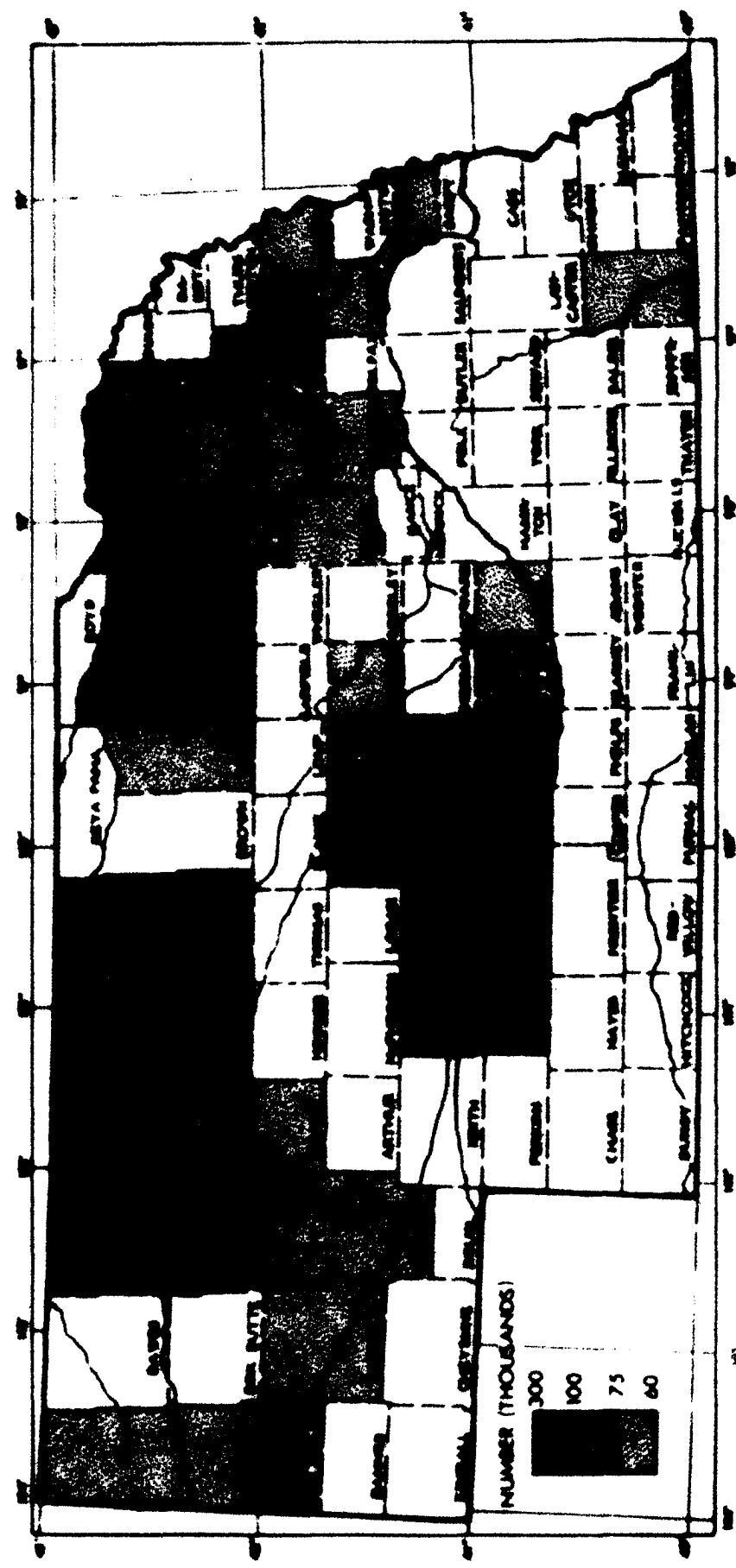
FIGURE A-8
LEADING COUNTIES IN HAY PRODUCTION--1960-1962



Source: N. D. Searcy and A. R. Longwell, Nebraska Atlas
(Kearney, Nebr.: Nebraska Atlas Publishing Co.,
1964), p. 62.

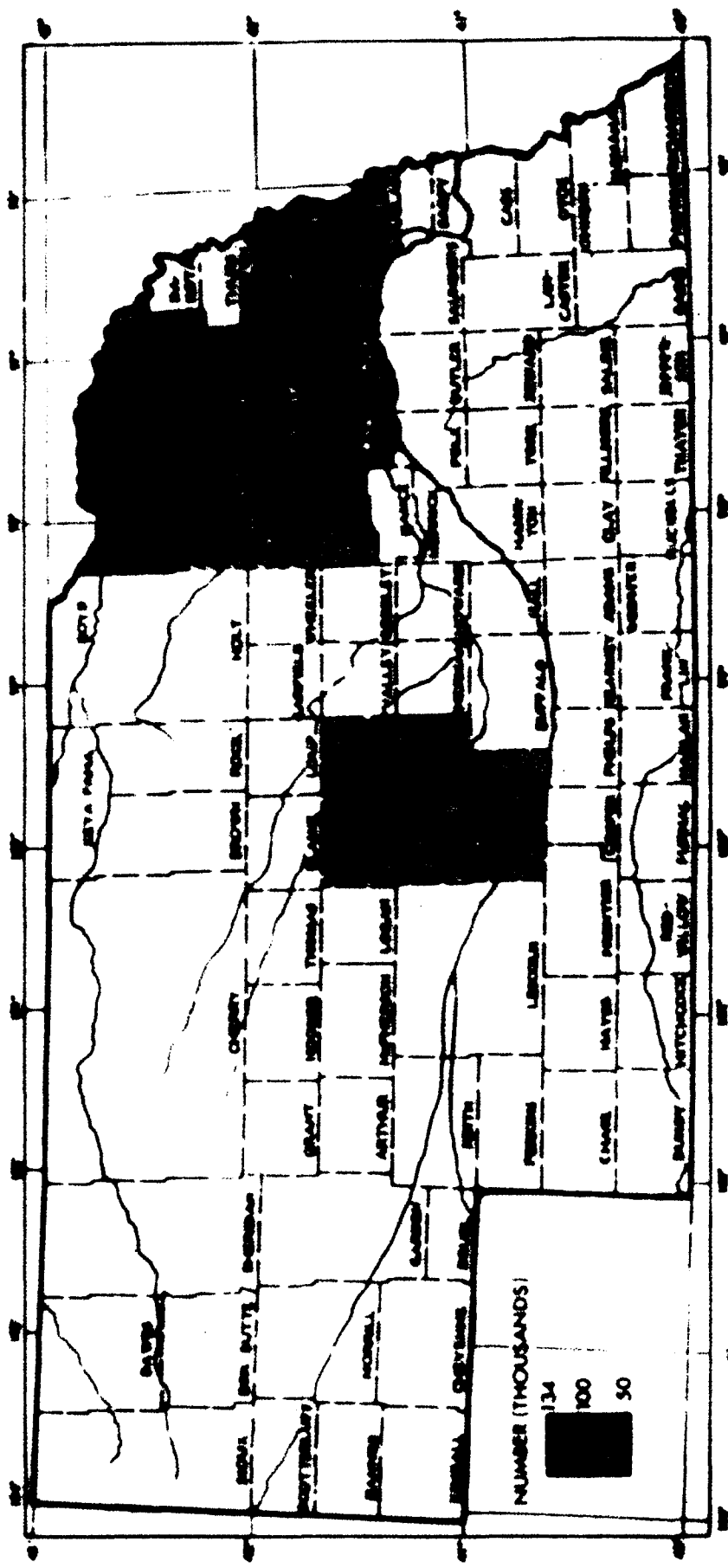
NEBRASKA BOOK STORE
1200 S. 10th St.
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

FIGURE A-9
LEADING COUNTIES IN CATTLE--1962



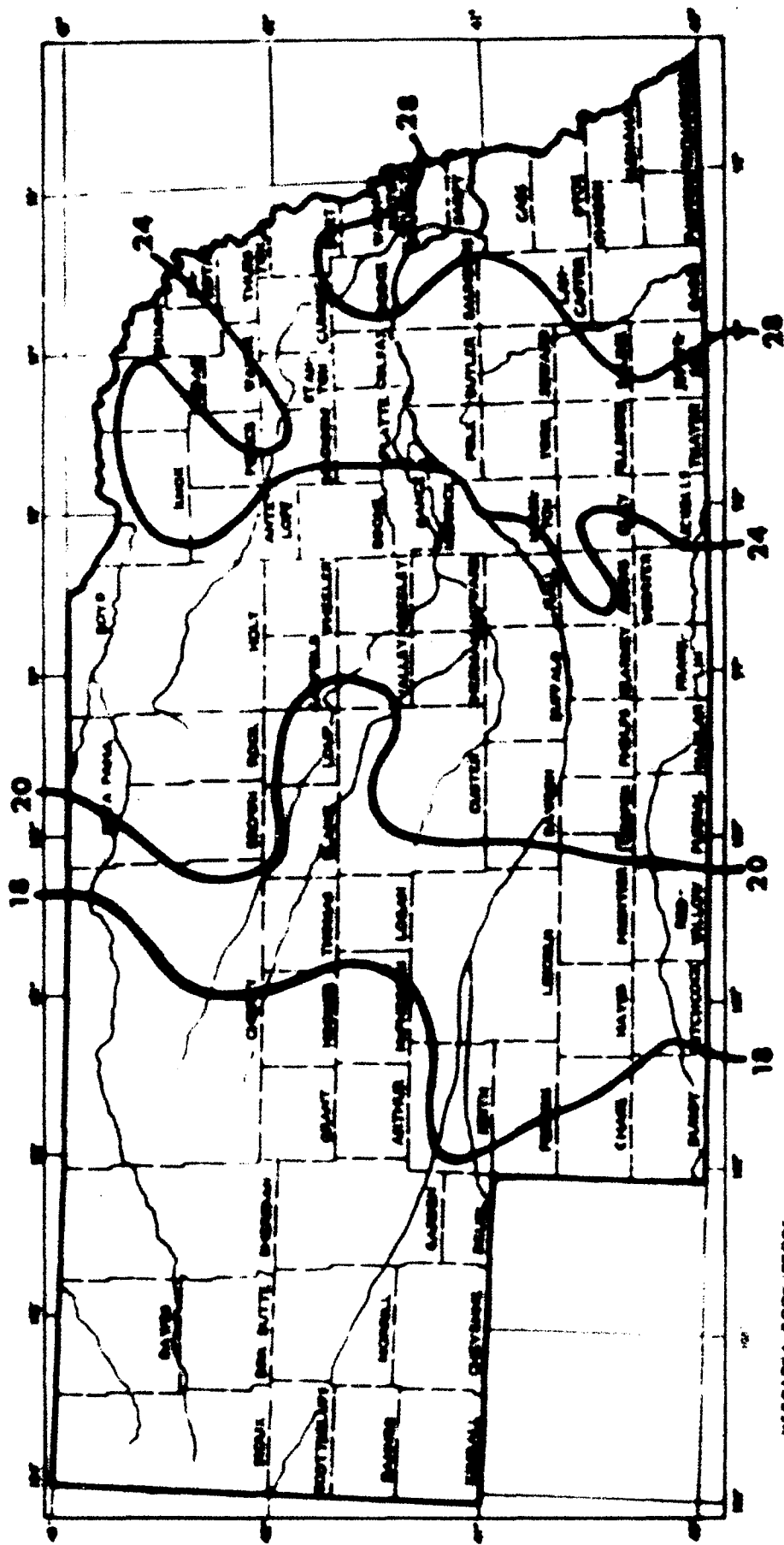
Source: N. D. Searcy and A. R. Longwell, Nebraska Atlas
(Kearney, Nebr.: Nebraska Atlas Publishing Co.,
1964), p. 70.

FIGURE A-10
LEADING COUNTIES IN HOGS AND PIGS--1962



Source: N. D. Searcy and A. R. Longwell, Nebraska Atlas
(Kearney, Nebr.: Nebraska Atlas Publishing Co.,
1964), p. 71.

FIGURE A-11
ANNUAL AVERAGE PRECIPITATION (1939-1960)



NEBRASKA BOOK STORE
 PACIFIC BOOKS
 LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

Source: N. D. Searcy and A. R. Longwell, Nebraska Atlas (Kearney, Nebr.: Nebraska Atlas Publishing Co., 1964), p. 11.

FIGURE A-1.2---OVERLAY A

SOIL GROUPS



LEGEND

— Limit of Prairie
Soil Group

⊃ Isolated Non-Prairie
Soil Group



**FIGURE A-12--OVERLAY B
RAINFALL AND IRRIGATION**

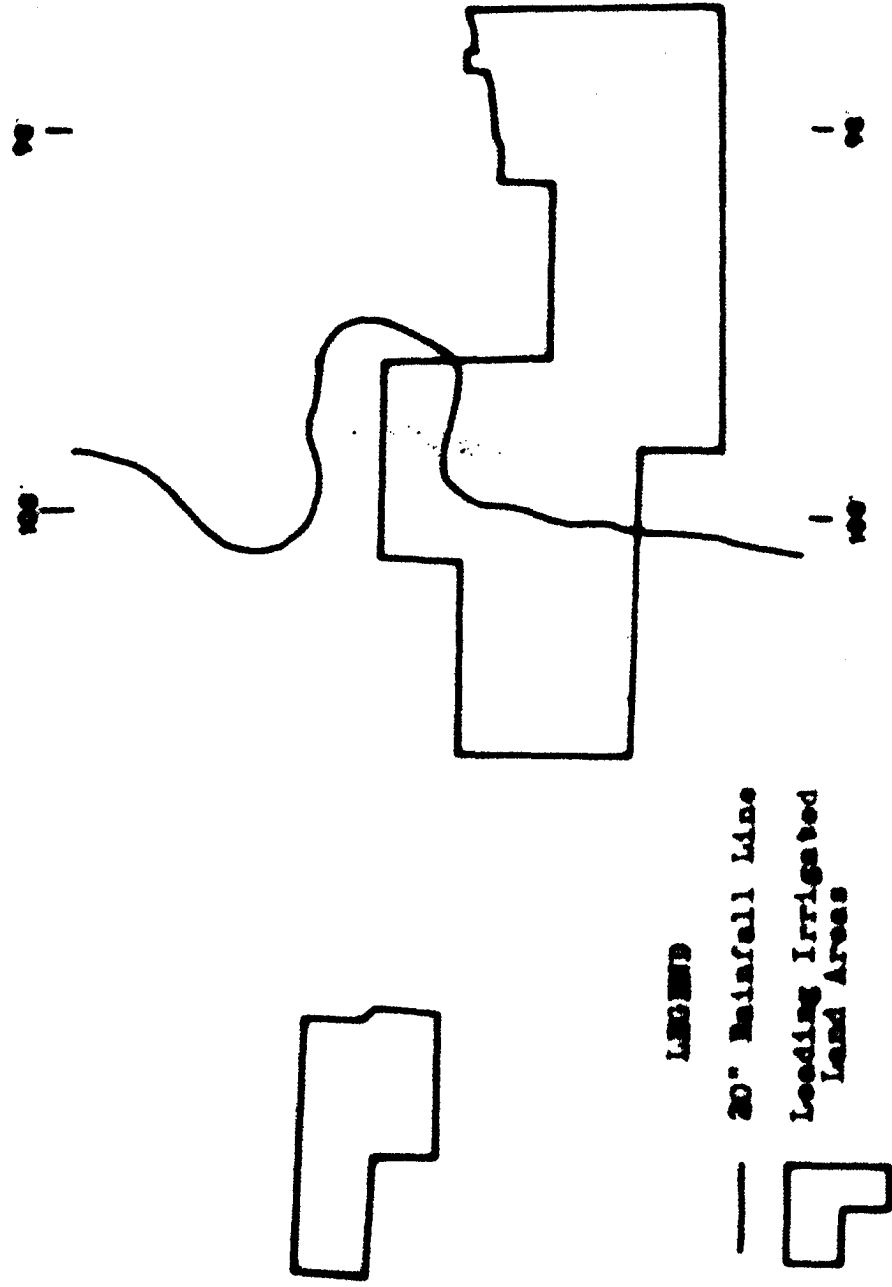
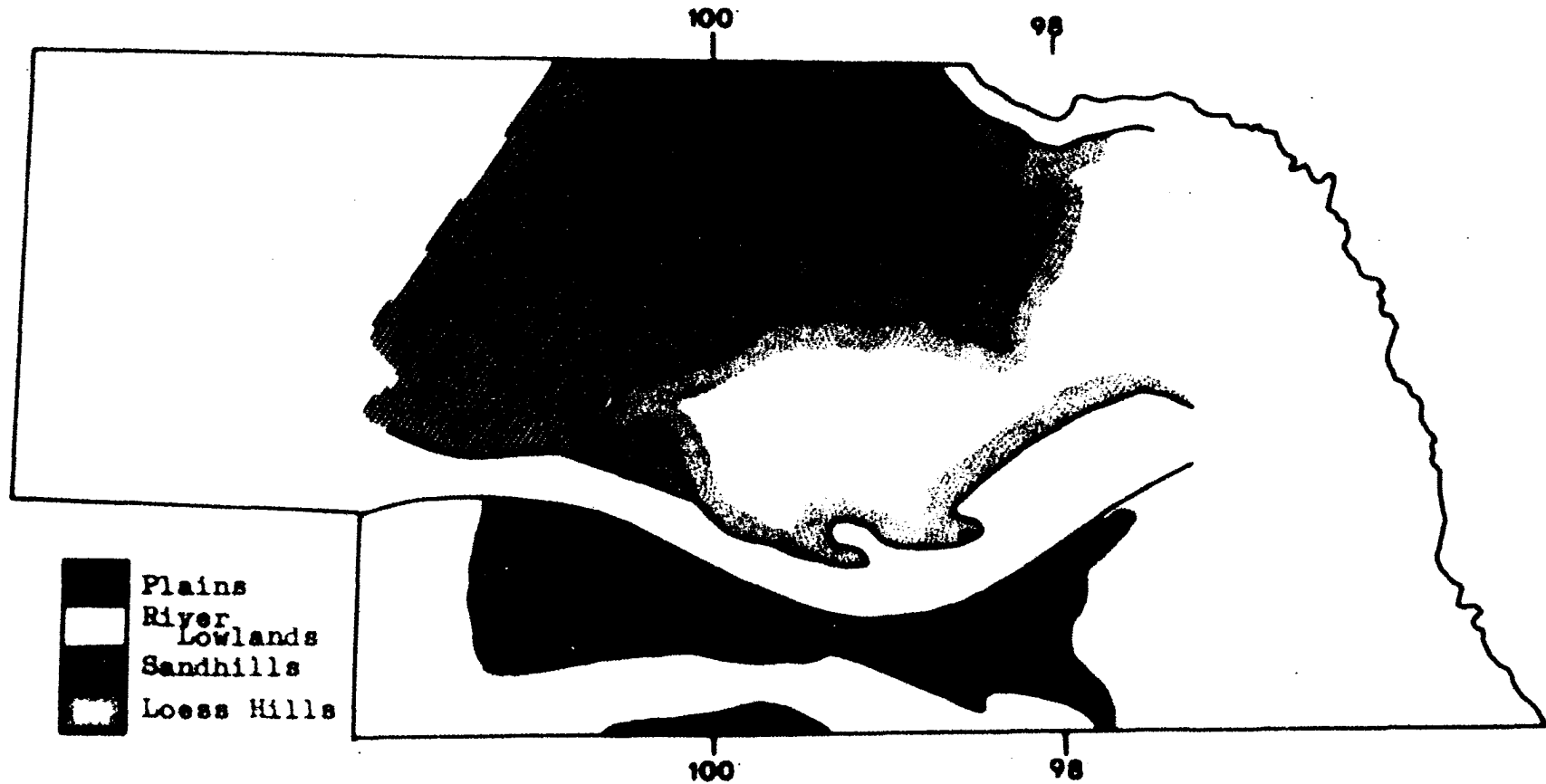
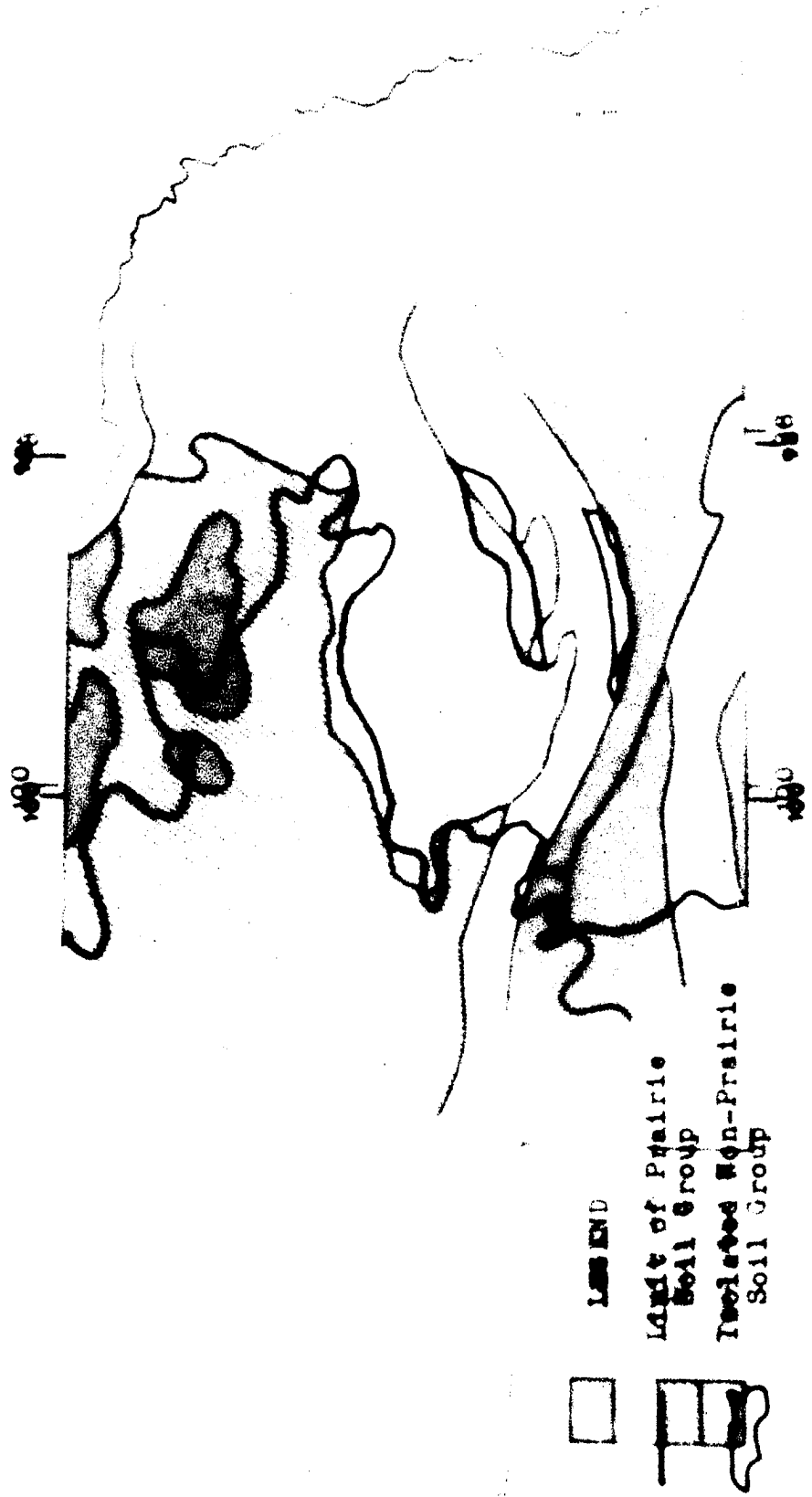


FIGURE A-12
TOPOGRAPHY OF CENTRAL NEBRASKA



Source: George E. Condra, James Olson, and Royce Knapp, The Nebraska Story (Lincoln: University Publishing Co., 1951), p. 28; N. D. Searcy and A. R. Longwell, Nebraska Atlas (Kearney, Nebr.: Nebraska Atlas Publishing Co., 1964), p. 5.

FIGURE A-12--OVERLAY A
SOIL GROUPS



LEGEND
 Prairie Soil Group
 Isolated Non-Prairie Soil Group



FIGURE A-17--OVERLAP IN
RAINFALL AND IRRIGATION

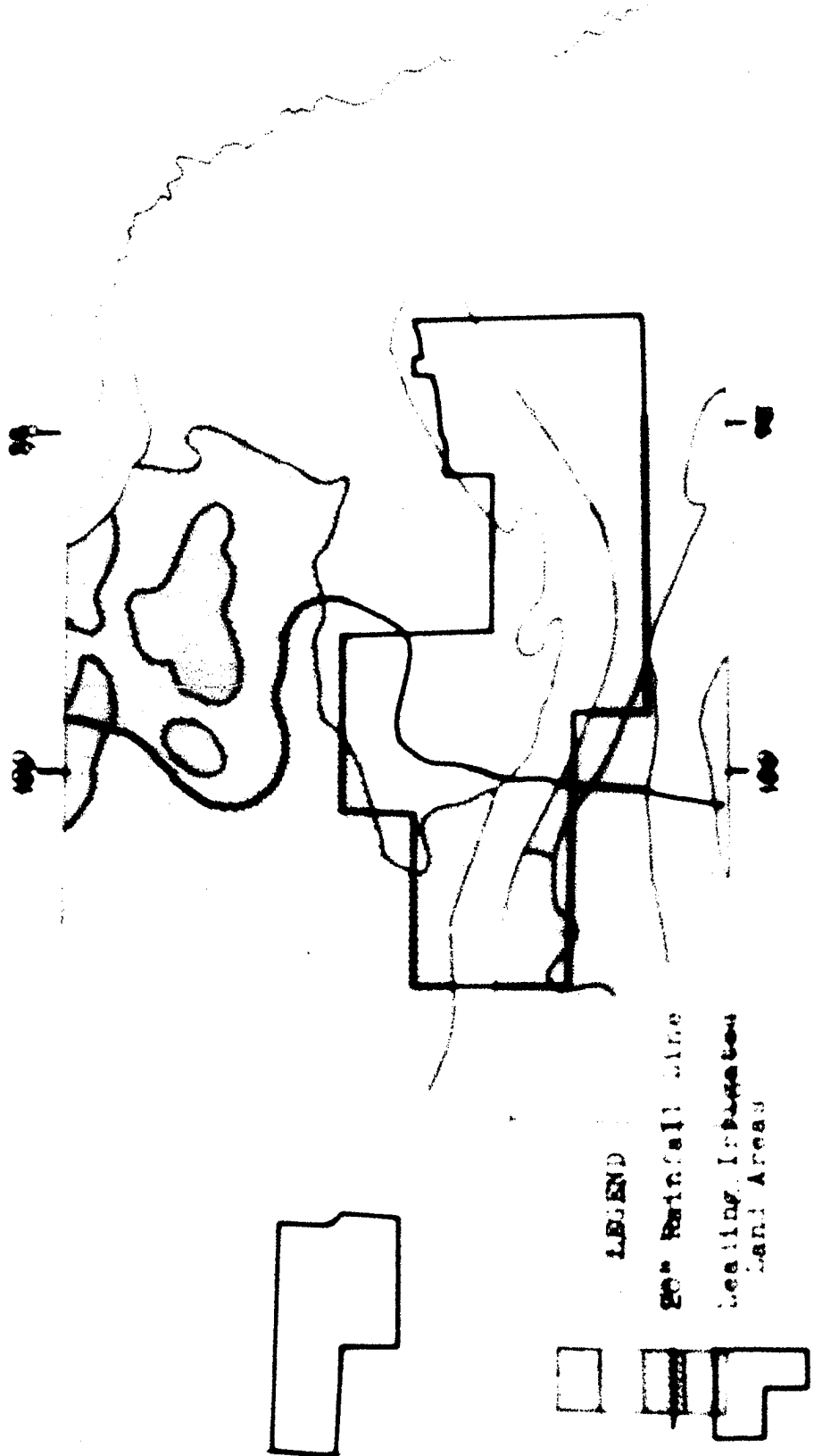
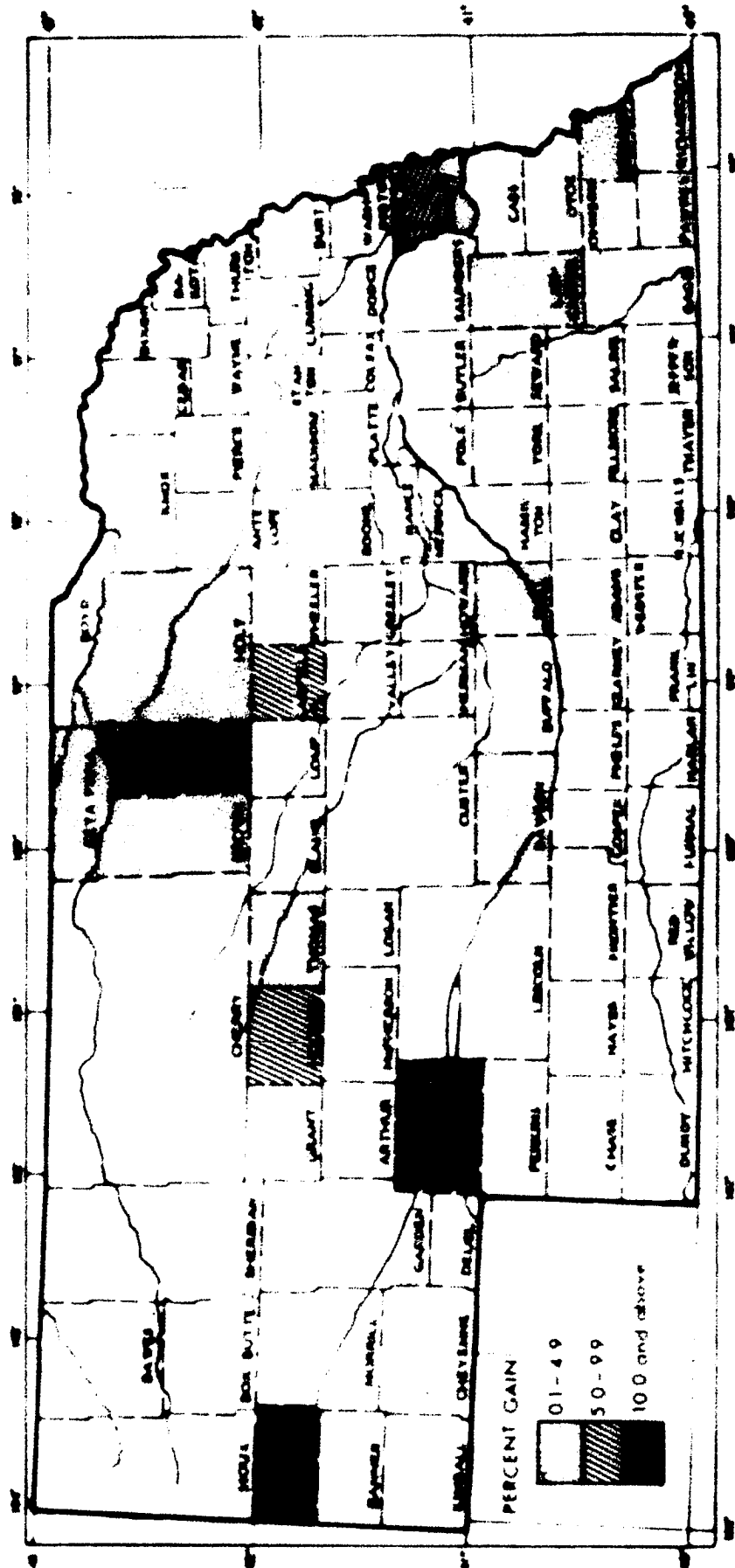


FIGURE A-14
NEBRASKA POPULATION GAIN 1930-1940

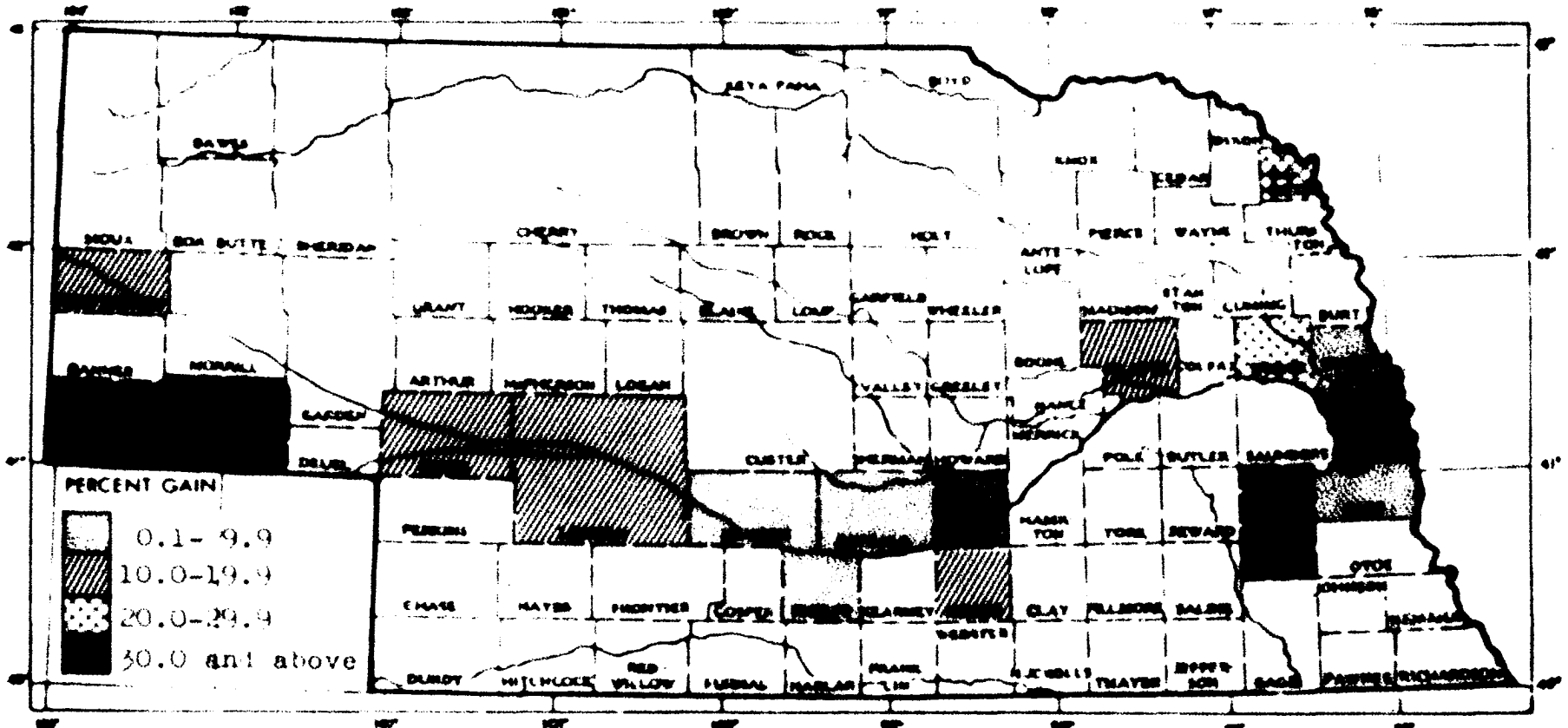


Source: Edmund D. Hinkle, "Changing Patterns of Population Distribution in Nebraska 1930-1960" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1964), pp. 95-98.

NEBRASKA SOURCE FROM
U.S. BUREAU OF CENSUS

FIGURE A-16

NEBRASKA POPULATION GAIN 1950-1960

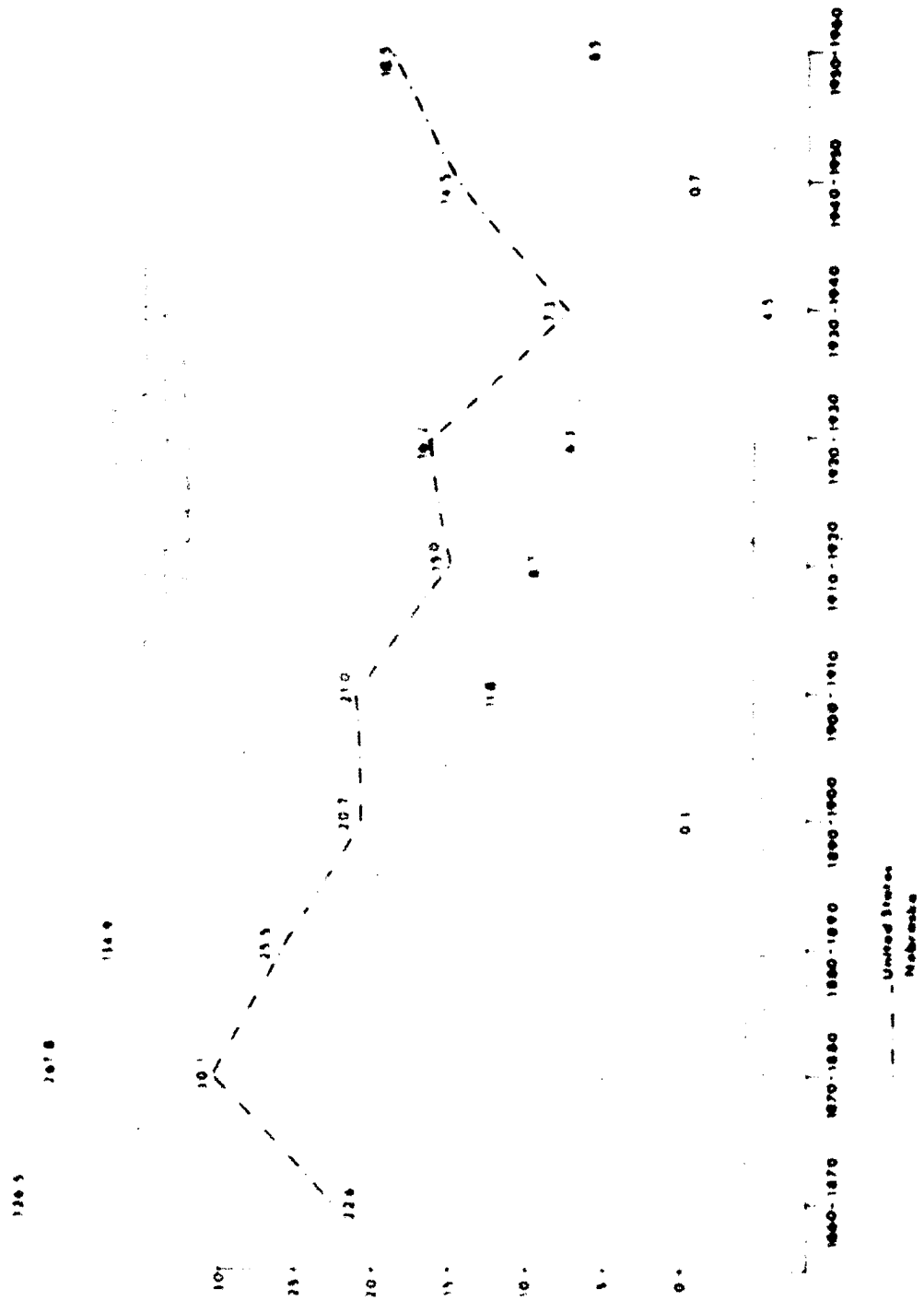


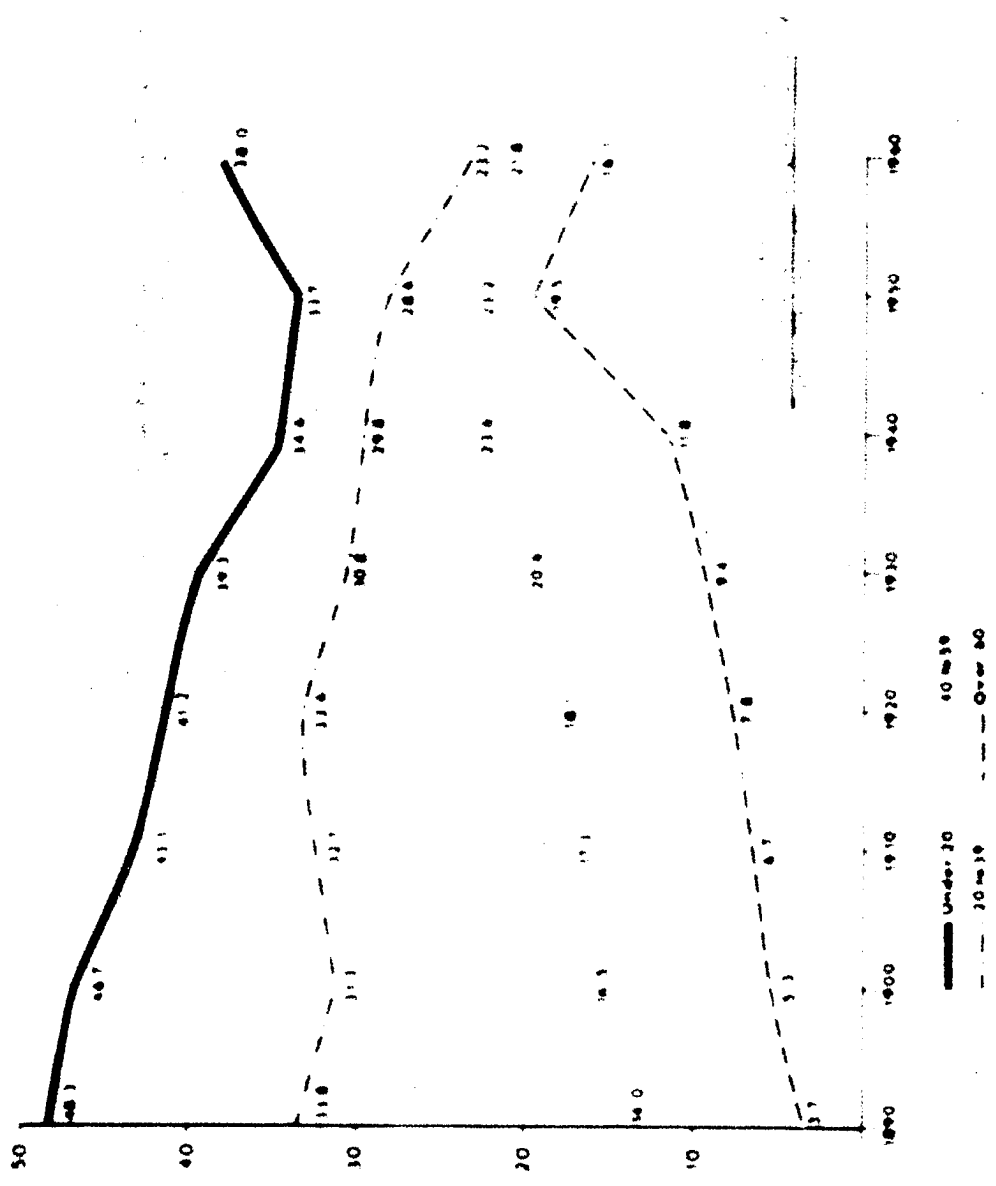
Source: Edmund D. Hinkle, "Changing Patterns of Population Distribution in Nebraska, 1950-1960" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1964), pp. 95-98.

NEBRASKA BOOK STORE
LAWRENCE, KANSAS

APPENDIX B

**DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL
FACTORS: SUPPORTING DATA**





177

[REDACTED]	205
[REDACTED]	64
[REDACTED]	73
[REDACTED]	51
[REDACTED]	41
[REDACTED]	50
[REDACTED]	28
[REDACTED]	42
[REDACTED]	27
[REDACTED]	40
[REDACTED]	40
[REDACTED]	14
[REDACTED]	11
[REDACTED]	21
[REDACTED]	23
[REDACTED]	24
[REDACTED]	20
[REDACTED]	23
[REDACTED]	16
[REDACTED]	14
[REDACTED]	7
[REDACTED]	12
[REDACTED]	8
[REDACTED]	7
[REDACTED]	7
[REDACTED]	4
[REDACTED]	5
[REDACTED]	1
[REDACTED]	1

TABLE B-1
POPULATION GROWTH OF NEBRASKA

Year	Population	Ranking
1860	28,841	.
1870	122,993	36
1880	452,402	30
1890	1,062,656	26
1900	1,066,300	27
1910	1,192,214	29
1920	1,296,372	31
1930	1,377,963	32
1940	1,315,834	32
1950	1,325,510	33
1960	1,411,330	34

Source: U.S., Bureau of the Census, 1960 Census of Population, Vol. I, Part 29 (Nebraska).

TABLE B-2
NEBRASKA URBAN/RURAL POPULATION CLASSIFICATION

Year	Total	Rural	Percentage Rural	Urban	Percentage Urban
1860	28,841	28,841	100.0	.	.
1870	122,993	100,860	82.0	22,133	18.0
1880	452,402	391,730	86.6	60,672	13.4
1890	1,062,656	771,015	72.6	291,641	27.4
1900	1,066,300	813,598	76.3	252,702	23.7
1910	1,192,214	881,362	73.9	310,852	26.1
1920	1,296,372	891,066	68.7	405,306	31.3
1930	1,377,963	891,856	64.7	486,107	35.3
1940	1,315,834	801,686	60.2	514,148	39.8
1950	1,325,510	718,980	54.2	606,530	45.8
		703,605 ^a	53.1 ^a	621,905 ^a	46.9 ^a
1960	1,411,330	677,735	48.0	733,595	52.0
		645,227 ^a	45.7 ^a	766,053 ^a	54.3 ^a

^aPopulation figures according to the current urban definition. Other figures are according to previous urban definitions.

Source: John F. Wenstrand, "A History of Population Trends in Nebraska as Shown by the United States Decennial Census Reports 1860-1940" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1945), p. 9; Edmund D. Hinkle, "Changing Patterns of Population Distribution in Nebraska 1930-1960" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1963), p. 2.

TABLE B-3
NEBRASKA'S URBAN POPULATION BY CLASSIFICATION
ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF INHABITANTS
1890-1960

Year	Percentage Total Urban Pop.	100,000 or more			
		No.	Pop.	Percentage Total Pop.	Percentage Urban Pop.
1890	27.4	1	140,452	13.2	48.1
1900	23.7	1	102,555	9.6	40.5
1910	26.1	1	124,096	10.4	39.9
1920	31.3	1	191,601	14.8	47.3
1930	35.3	1	214,066	15.6	44.0
1940	39.8	1	223,844	17.8	43.5
1950	45.8	2	368,216 ^a	26.4	59.2
1960	52.0	2	472,754 ^a	30.5	61.7

Year	Percentage Total Urban Pop.	25,000 - 100,000			
		No.	Pop.	Percentage Total Pop.	Percentage Urban Pop.
1890	27.4	1	55,154	5.2	18.9
1900	23.7	2	66,170	6.2	26.1
1910	26.1	2	70,232	5.9	22.6
1920	31.3	1	54,948	4.2	13.5
1930	35.3	1	75,933	5.5	15.8
1940	39.8	1	81,984	6.2	16.0
1950	45.8	.	.	.	.
1960	52.0	1	25,742	1.8	3.4

TABLE B-3--Continued

Year	Percentage Total Urban Pop.	10,000 - 25,000			
		No.	Pop.	Percentage Total Pop.	Percentage Urban Pop.
1890	27.4	3	39,361	3.7	13.5
1900	23.7	.	.	.	.
1910	26.1	1	10,326	0.9	3.3
1920	31.3	3	36,060	2.8	8.9
1930	35.3	6	78,013	5.7	16.0
1940	39.8	7	91,996	7.0	17.9
1950	45.8	8	121,209	9.1	19.5
1960	52.0	8	123,600	8.8	16.1

Year	Percentage Total Urban Pop.	5,000 - 10,000			
		No.	Pop.	Percentage Total Pop.	Percentage Urban Pop.
1890	27.4	5	38,811	3.7	13.3
1900	23.7	7	48,004	4.5	19.0
1910	26.1	9	61,670	5.2	19.8
1920	31.3	9	65,048	5.0	16.0
1930	35.3	9	62,216	4.4	12.8
1940	39.8	8	54,912	4.2	10.6
1950	45.8	8	55,169	4.2	8.9
1960	52.0	12	79,697	5.6	10.4

TABLE B-3--Continued

Year	Percentage Total Urban Pop.	2,500 - 5,000			
		No.	Pop.	Percentage Total Pop.	Percentage Urban Pop.
1890	27.4	6	17,863	1.7	6.1
1900	23.7	11	35,973	3.4	14.2
1910	26.1	14	44,528	3.7	14.3
1920	31.3	17	57,649	4.4	14.2
1930	35.3	18	55,939	4.1	11.4
1940	39.8	19	61,412	4.6	11.9
1950	45.8	22	77,311	5.8	12.4
1960	52.0	18	64,260	4.6	8.4

^aincludes population in "urban fringes."

Source: John F. Wenstrand, "A History of Population Trends in Nebraska as Shown by the United States Decennial Census Reports 1860-1940" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1945), p. 10; U.S., Bureau of the Census, Census of the Population 1960.

TABLE B-4
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION 1930-1960

Year	Total Population	Percentage Rural-Farm	Percentage Rural-Nonfarm	Percentage Urban
1930	1,377,963	42.3	22.4	35.3
1940	1,315,834	37.6	23.2	39.1
1950	1,325,510	29.5	23.5	46.9
1960	1,411,330	21.8	23.8	54.3

Source: Percentages computed by author from figures in Appendix of Edmund D. Hinkle, "Changing Patterns of Population Distribution in Nebraska 1930-1960" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1963).

TABLE B-5
SUMMARY OF POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS IN NEBRASKA 1870-1960

	1870	1880	1890	1900
Total Pop.	122,993	452,402	1,062,656	1,066,300
Native	92,245	354,988	860,114	888,953
Percent native	75.00	78.47	80.87	83.40
Foreign born	30,748	97,414	202,542	177,347
Percent foreign born	25.00	21.53	19.13	16.60
Percent white	99.29	99.42	98.50	99.10
Percent Negro	00.64	00.53	01.50	00.90
Males per 100 females	. . .	122.70	117.80	112.50
	1910	1920	1930	
Total Pop.	1,192,214	1,296,372	1,377,963	
Native	1,004,428	1,129,567	1,241,266	
Percent native	84.20	87.10	90.10	
Foreign born	175,865	149,652	118,757	
Percent foreign born	14.80	11.50	08.60	
Percent white	99.00	97.60	98.70	
Percent Negro	00.60	01.00	01.00	
Males per 100 females	111.20	107.90	105.20	

TABLE B-5--Continued

	1940	1950	1960
Total Pop.	1,315,834	1,325,510	1,411,330
Native	1,215,771	1,244,055	1,371,092
Percent native	92.40	93.90	97.10
Foreign born	81,853	57,273	40,238
Percent foreign born	06.20	04.30	02.90
Percent white	98.60	98.20	97.40
Percent Negro	01.10	01.50	02.10
Males per 100 females	102.40	101.40	98.40

Source: Kieve Stubenhaus, "Origins and Growth of the Nebraska Population 1870-1900" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1935); U.S., Bureau of the Census, Census of Population 1950, Vol. II, Part 27, p. 29.

TABLE B-6
FOREIGN BORN IN NEBRASKA BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN 1870-1960

Rank ^a	Country	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910
	All Countries	30,748	97,414	202,542	177,347	175,865
1	Germany	10,954	31,125	72,618	65,506	57,301
2	Sweden	2,352	10,164	28,364	24,693	23,219
3	Czechoslovakia	1,770	8,858	16,803	16,138	.
4	Denmark	1,129	4,511	14,345	12,531	13,673
5	Russia	27	3,281	5,454	8,053	13,020
6	England	3,823	8,831	15,654	10,679	8,006
7	Ireland	4,999	10,133	15,963	11,127	8,124
8	Canada	2,635	8,678	12,105	8,010	7,271
9	Austria	299	2,346	4,032	3,893	24,361
10	Poland	57	1,128	2,332	3,194	.
11	Italy	.	.	.	.	3,799
12	Norway	506	2,010	3,632	2,883	2,750

TABLE B-6--Continued

Rank ^a	Country	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910
13	Scotland	792	2,230	3,839	2,773	2,241
14	Switzerland	593	1,579	2,542	2,340	2,150
15	Greece	.	.	.	.	3,459
16	France	340	749	1,256	876	639
17	Mexico	.	.	.	.	289
18	Hungary	.	.	.	.	1,453
19	Holland	.	.	.	.	.

Rank ^a	Country	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960 ^b
1	All Countries	147,345	115,346	81,853	57,273	40,238
2	Germany	40,969	32,544	21,657	13,276	10,870
3	Sweden	18,821	14,335	9,435	5,449	2,455
4	Czechoslovakia	15,818	14,313	9,880	6,455	3,221
5	Denmark	12,338	10,229	7,030	4,555	2,499
6	Russia	15,718	11,234	9,181	7,019	941
7	England	6,000	4,213	2,538	2,147	3,599
8	Ireland	5,422	3,303	1,851	1,058	.
9	Canada	5,758	4,378	3,024	2,226	.
10	Austria	4,551	1,863	1,647	1,159	.
11	Poland	4,615	4,445	3,130	2,393	1,565
12	Italy	3,547	3,642	3,201	2,622	1,870
	Norway	2,165	1,691	1,060	635	298

TABLE B-6--Continued

Rank ^a	Country	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960 ^b
13	Scotland	1,695	1,223	754	488	. . ^c
14	Switzerland	1,808	1,364	912	587	. .
15	Greece	1,504	822	718	555	401
16	France	858	558	316	271	303
17	Mexico	145	212	1,773	1,673	1,464
18	Hungary	810	372	418	353	236
19	Holland	846	620	468	319	231

^aThis was computed by ranking the total number of foreign born by country for the entire period.

^bThe Census reports only mother tongue of foreign born.

^cPresumably included in total number under England for English speaking

^dPresumably included in total number under Germany for German speaking

Source: Kieve Stubenhaus, "Origins and Growth of the Nebraska Population 1870-1900" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1935); John F. Wenstrand, "A History of Population Trends in Nebraska as Shown by the United States Decennial Census Reports 1860-1940" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1945); U.S., Bureau of the Census, Census of Population 1950, 1960.

TABLE B-7
AGE OF NEBRASKA POPULATION COMPARED TO
NATIONAL AVERAGE (PERCENT)

	1890		1930		1960	
	Nebr.	U.S.	Nebr.	U.S.	Nebr.	U.S.
Below 20 years	48.3	46.0	39.3	38.8	38.0	38.5
20 to 39 years	33.8	31.7	30.8	31.8	24.2	25.8
40 to 59 years	14.0	15.9	20.6	20.9	20.9	22.8
over 60 years	3.7	6.0	9.4	8.5	16.1	13.1

Source: U.S., Bureau of the Census, 1960 Census of Population, Vol. I, Part 29, Table 17, p. 36; Census of the Population 1930.

TABLE B-8
MALE-FEMALE RATIO
(MALES PER 100 FEMALES)

Year	Nebraska	United States
1890	117.8	105.0
1900	112.5	104.4
1910	111.2	106.0
1920	107.9	104.0
1930	105.2	102.5
1940	102.4	100.7
1950	101.4	98.6
1960	98.4	97.0

Source: U.S., Bureau of the Census, 1960 Census of Population, Vol. I, Part 29, p. 30.

TABLE B-9
 FARMS, ACREAGE, VALUE, TENURE OF OPERATOR:
 NEBRASKA 1930 to 1964

	1964	1959	1954	1950
Number of farms	80,163	90,475	100,846	107,183
Proportion of land area in farms (percent)	97.5	97.4	96.8	96.7
Average size of farm (acres)	596.2	527.8	470.9	442.9
Value-land, bldgs.				
Average/farm (\$)	65,268	46,796	33,713	25,517
Average/acre (\$)	109.39	88.66	71.60	57.62
Irrigated land in farms	18,833	18,936	12,500	9,680
Farm Operators				
Full owners	28,629	31,181	35,141	37,939
Part owners	26,663	27,436	26,342	27,164
Managers	398	325	327	333
Tenants	24,473	31,281	38,923	41,747
Proportion of tenancy (percent)	30.5	34.7	38.6	38.9

TABLE B-9--Continued

	1945	1940	1935	1930
Number of farms	111,756	121,062	133,616	129,458
Proportion of land area in farms (percent)	97.3	96.5	94.8	91.0
Average size of farm (acres)	427.3	391.1	348.9	345.4
Value-land, bldgs.				
Average/farm (\$)	15,205	9,399	11,696	19,274
Average/acre (\$)	35.58	24.03	33.53	55.81
Irrigated land in farms	7,156	6,913	5,140	4,602
Farm Operators				
Full owners	33,622	35,064	42,861	43,301
Part owners	24,603	21,497	24,152	24,117
Managers	432	554	795	1,020
Tenants	53,099	63,947	65,808	61,020
Proportion of tenancy (percent)	47.5	52.8	49.3	47.1

Source: U.S., Bureau of the Census, 1964 U.S. Census of Agriculture, Vol. 1, Part 20, pp. 7, 10.

TABLE B-10
 NUMBER AND TENURE BY YEAR OPERATOR BEGAN
 OPERATING FARM, 1964

Tenure of Operator	Total 1964	Year Operator Began Operating Farm			
		Total 60-64	Percentage 60-64	Total 50-59	Percentage 50-59
All Farm Operators	80,163	13,703	17.0	23,691	29.5
Full Owners	28,629	3,420	11.9	6,086	21.3
Part Owners	26,663	2,607	9.9	7,784	28.9
Tenants	24,473	7,561	30.6	9,688	39.6

Tenure of Operator	Total 1964	Year Operator Began Operating Farm			
		Total 40-49	Percentage 40-49	Total Pre-1940	Percentage Pre-1940
All Farm Operators	80,163	23,366	29.1	15,571	19.5
Full Owners	28,629	8,395	29.3	8,949	31.1
Part Owners	26,663	9,892	37.2	5,422	20.3
Tenants	24,473	5,007	20.4	1,337	5.3

Source: U.S., Bureau of the Census, 1964 U.S. Census of Agriculture, Vol. I, Part 20, p. 207. Percentages computed by author.

TABLE B-11
AGE OF FARM OPERATOR BY TENURE, 1964

Age	All Operators		Full Owners		Part Owners		Tenants	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Under 25	1,864	2.4	157	0.7	136	0.5	1,385	5.9
25 to 34	10,578	13.2	1,038	4.7	2,563	9.9	6,215	26.9
35 to 44	18,162	22.7	2,719	12.4	7,209	27.8	6,982	30.3
45 to 54	20,765	25.9	5,748	26.2	8,672	33.4	5,062	22.0
55 to 64	17,876	22.3	8,309	37.9	5,846	22.5	2,764	11.9
65 and over	10,918	13.5	3,970	18.1	1,542	5.9	660	3.0

Source: U.S., Bureau of the Census, 1964 Census of Agriculture, Vol. I, Part 20, pp. 52-3. Percentages computed by author.

TABLE B-12
FARM CHARACTERISTICS BY ECONOMIC CLASS, 1964

	Total Farms	Percentage Farms	Total Persons	Total Full Owners	Total Part Owners	Total Tenants	Percentage Tenancy
All Classes	80,163	100.0	286,918	84,876	106,067	95,975	30.5
Commercial farms	71,344	89.0	261,508	66,706	103,487	91,315	34.9
Class I	4,904	6.1	22,061	3,950	12,734	5,377	24.4
Class II	10,766	13.4	46,350	7,148	23,774	15,428	33.3
Class III	20,993	26.2	80,672	14,872	35,729	30,071	37.3
Class IV	20,130	25.1	71,332	20,317	23,670	27,335	38.0
Class V	11,322	14.1	32,480	15,395	6,585	10,500	32.3
Class VI	3,229	4.0	8,623	5,024	995	2,604	30.2
Part-time farms	4,076	5.1	16,058	10,321	1,768	3,969	24.7
Part-retirement	4,724	5.9	9,284	7,849	744	691	7.4

All farms with a value of sales of \$2,500 or more were classed as commercial. Farms with value of sales of \$50 to \$2,499 were classed commercial if the operator was under 65 years of age and did not work off the farm 100 or more days during the year. The classes of commercial farms were divided according to the total value of all farm products sold: Class I, \$40,000 or more; Class II, \$20,000 to 39,999; Class III, \$10,000 to 19,999; Class IV, \$5,000 to 9,999; Class V, \$2,500 to 4,999; Class VI, \$50 to 2,499. Farms with a value of sales under \$2,500 were classed "part-time" if the operator was under 65 and worked off the farm 100 or more days. If the operator was over 65 and value of sales was under \$2,500, the farm was classed as "part-retirement." (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1964 U.S. Census of Agriculture, Vol. I, Part 20, p. 367; p. A13.)

TABLE B-13
INDUSTRY GROUP OF EMPLOYED PERSONS, 1960 (OVER 10,000)

Industry Group	State Total Percentage		Urban Total Percentage		Rural Nonfarm Total Percentage		Rural Farm Total Percentage	
Total Employed	525,938		299,947		113,360		112,631	
Agriculture	111,301	21.2	4,899	1.6	13,897	12.3	92,505	82.1
Construction	31,722	6.0	20,342	6.8	9,718	8.6	1,662	1.5
Manufacturing	64,137	12.2	51,084	17.0	10,703	9.4	2,350	2.1
Food products	26,624	5.1	21,779	7.3	3,931	3.5	914	0.8
Transportation	27,284	5.2	20,560	6.9	5,798	5.0	926	0.8
Wholesale trade	19,323	3.7	13,787	4.6	4,566	4.0	970	0.9
Food & Dairy								
Products Stores	12,453	2.4	7,985	2.7	3,987	3.5	481	0.4
Eating/Drinking								
Places	16,063	3.1	10,359	3.5	5,081	4.5	623	0.6
Other Retail trade	54,698	10.4	37,394	12.5	15,016	13.2	2,288	2.0

TABLE B-13--Continued

Industry Group	State		Urban		Rural Nonfarm		Rural Farm	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Finance, Real Estate, Ins.	22,188	4.2	17,967	6.0	3,488	3.1	663	0.6
Private Household	13,065	2.5	8,253	2.8	3,697	3.3	1,115	1.0
Other personal services	15,170	2.9	11,545	3.8	3,279	2.9	346	0.3
Educational services	30,398	5.8	18,632	6.2	8,820	7.8	2,906	2.6
Hospitals	14,870	2.8	11,950	4.0	2,190	1.9	730	0.6
Other professional and related services	11,840	2.3	9,002	3.0	2,372	2.1	466	0.4
Public Administration	23,832	4.5	15,540	5.2	6,903	6.1	1,389	1.2

Source: U.S., Bureau of the Census, 1960 Census of Population, Vol. I, Part 29, p. 161.

TABLE B-14
 NUMBER AND PERCENT OF EMPLOYEES IN DIFFERENT
 TYPES OF MANUFACTURING 1958-1963

Industry	1958		1963	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
All Industries, total	58,627	100.0	64,882	100.0
Food & Kindred Products	27,680	47.2	26,698	41.1
Printing and Publishing	5,058	8.6	5,483	8.4
Fabricated Metal	3,583	6.1	3,845	5.9
Electrical Machinery	3,349	5.7	5,348	8.2
Machinery, except electrical	3,252	5.5	3,354	5.2
Transportation Equipment	2,064	3.5	3,401	5.2
Stone, Clay, Glass Products	1,813	3.1	2,228	3.4
Chemicals and Allied Products	1,750	2.9	2,085	3.2
Apparel and Related Products	1,533	2.6	1,652	2.5
Instruments and Related	(a)	.	1,340	2.1
Rubber and Plastics	1,146	1.9	1,450	2.2
Primary Metal	1,108	1.9	1,840	2.8
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	1,058	1.8	1,570	2.4
Furniture and Fixtures	1,033	1.8	1,256	1.9
Lumber and Wood	810	1.4	903	1.4
Ordinance and Accessories	733	1.2	119	0.2
Petroleum and Coal	(a)	.	178	0.3
Other	2,657	4.5	2,232	3.4

(a)--withheld to avoid disclosure.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1963 Census of Manufactures, Vol. III, Part 28, pp. 8-9.

TABLE B-16
STATES OF ORIGIN OF NATIVE-BORN NEBRASKANS 1870-1940

1870 Ranking	1880 Ranking	1890 Ranking	1900 Ranking	1910 Ranking
1. Ohio	1. Illinois	1. Illinois	1. Illinois	1. Iowa
2. Illinois	2. Iowa	2. Iowa	2. Iowa	2. Illinois
3. New York	3. Ohio	3. Ohio	3. Ohio	3. Missouri
4. Iowa	4. New York	4. New York	4. Indiana	4. Ohio
5. Penna.	5. Penna.	5. Penna.	5. Penna.	5. Indiana
6. Indiana	6. Indiana	6. Indiana	6. New York	6. Penna.
	7. Missouri	7. Missouri	7. Missouri	7. Kansas
	8. Michigan	8. Michigan	8. Wisconsin	8. New York
		9. Kansas	9. Kansas	9. Wisconsin

TABLE B-16--Continued

1920 Ranking		1930 Ranking		1940 Ranking		Overall Ranking ^a	
1.	Iowa	1.	Iowa	1.	Iowa	1.	Illinois
2.	Illinois	2.	Illinois	2.	Illinois	2.	Iowa
3.	Missouri	3.	Missouri	3.	Kansas	3.	Ohio
4.	Kansas	4.	Kansas	4.	Missouri	4.	Missouri
5.	Ohio	5.	Ohio	5.	So. Dakota	5.	Indiana
6.	Indiana	6.	Indiana	6.	Colorado	6.	Penna.
7.	Penna.	7.	Wisconsin	7.	Indiana	7.	New York
8.	Wisconsin	8.	Penna.	8.	Wisconsin	8.	Kansas
9.	New York	9.	So. Dakota	9.	Ohio	9.	Wisconsin
						10.	So. Dakota
						11.	Michigan
						12.	Colorado

^aComputed by adding positions on scale over the period (1 to 10, the last assigned to states not appearing in a given decade) and ranking lowest to highest values.

Source: Kieve Stubenhaus, "Origins and Growth of the Nebraska Population 1870-1900" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1935), pp. 10, 37, 55-6, 76; John F. Wenstrand, "A History of Population Trends in Nebraska as Shown by the United States Decennial Census Reports 1860-1940" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1945), p. 25.

TABLE B-17
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN NEBRASKA 1870-1952

Denomination	1870		1890		1906	
	No. of Churches	Percentage of total	No. of Members	Percentage of total	No. of Members	Percentage of total
All Denominations	165	100.0	194,266	100.0	345,240	100.0
Roman Catholic ^a	17	10.3	51,503	26.5	100,763	29.1
Jewish	..	..	..	..	435	0.1
Methodists	50	30.3	42,941	22.1	64,352	18.6
Lutheran	14	8.5	27,297	14.0	58,485	17.2
Presbyterian	24	14.5	15,065	7.7	23,862	6.9
Congregational	10	6.1	10,045	5.2	16,629	4.8
Disciples of Christ	9	5.5	7,715	4.0	19,613	5.7
Baptist	26	15.7	13,481	6.9	17,939	5.2
Episcopal	15	9.1	4,036	2.1	6,903	2.0
United Brethren	..	..	6,031	3.1	6,086	1.8
Other bodies	..	..	16,152	8.3	30,173	8.7

TABLE B-17--Continued

Denomination	1926		1936		1952	
	No. of Members	Percentage of total	No. of Members	Percentage of total	No. of Members	Percentage of total
All Denominations	561,553	100.0	566,806	100.0	707,954	100.0
Roman Catholic ^a	154,889	27.6	154,136	27.2	206,907	29.2
Jewish	12,271	2.2	12,922	2.3	7,450	1.1
Methodists	95,113	16.9	85,124	15.0	114,707	16.2
Lutheran	130,816	23.3	138,665	24.5	178,398	25.2
Presbyterian	35,963	6.4	32,350	5.7	47,399	6.7
Congregational	20,977	3.7	21,378	3.8	24,224	3.4
Disciples of Christ	26,182	4.7	23,359	4.1	29,882	4.2
Baptist	21,813	3.9	19,119	3.4	16,816	2.4
Episcopal	12,726	2.2	10,256	1.8	15,286	2.2
United Brethren	7,787	1.4	7,846	1.4	13,742	1.9
Other bodies	43,016	7.7	61,651	10.9	54,143	7.6

^aCatholics consider all baptized persons as members whereas Protestants enumerate only adult members; thus, the Catholic figures somewhat exaggerate the strength of the church compared to Protestant denominations.

Source: U.S., Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies 1926, Vol. I, Table 29; U.S., Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies 1936, Vol. II, Part I, p. 759; James C. Olson, History of Nebraska (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), p. 349; Kieve Stubenhaus, "Origin and Growth of the Nebraska Population 1870-1900" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1935); National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States, Churches and Church Membership in the United States (New York: By the Author, 1956).

TABLE B-18
 MEDIAN SCHOOL YEARS COMPLETED, 1960

Category	United States	Nebraska
Total (25 and over)	10.8	11.6
White male	10.7	10.9
White female	11.2	12.1
Urban white	11.5	12.1
Rural white	9.6	10.4
Rural Nonfarm white	9.9	10.4

Source: U.S., Bureau of the Census, 1960 Census of Population, p. 207.

APPENDIX C

**POLITICAL PARTIES AND INTEREST GROUPS
IN NEBRASKA: SUPPORTING DATA**

Introduction

This appendix contains a copy of the questionnaire sent to party leaders and lobbyists in Nebraska, upon which much of the material in this study on the role of political parties and interest groups is based. In addition, an explanation of the methodological steps undertaken and the basis for arriving at the various tests devised in connection with the questionnaire is provided.

Political Parties--The Questionnaire

Distribution and Return

The questionnaire was sent in the summer of 1967 to members of the state executive committee, state central committee and county chairman in both parties from lists supplied by the respective state party headquarters. A letter of explanation on the study was included with the questionnaire and a follow-up letter (with another copy of the questionnaire enclosed) was sent a month after the initial mailing. The distribution and return of the questionnaire is summarized in the following tables.

TABLE C-1
DISTRIBUTION AND RETURN BY RESPONDENT

Position(s) of Respondent	REPUBLICANS			DEMOCRATS			TOTAL		
	No. Sent	No. Retd	Percentage	No. Sent	No. Retd	Percentage	No. Sent	No. Retd	Percentage
Executive Comm. Executive & Central Comm. Executive., Central & Co. Chairman	14	8	57.1	10	5	50.0	24	13	54.1
Executive Comm. & Co. Chairman Central Comm. Central Comm. & Co. Chairman County Chairman	6	3	50.0	14	7	50.0	20	10	50.0
Executive Comm. & Co. Chairman Central Comm. & Co. Chairman County Chairman	4	3	75.0	1	1	100.0	5	4	80.0
Executive Comm. & Co. Chairman Central Comm. & Co. Chairman County Chairman	0	0	.	5	4	80.0	5	4	80.0
Executive Comm. & Co. Chairman County Chairman	80	48	60.0	70	42	60.0	150	90	60.0
Executive Comm. & Co. Chairman County Chairman	8	6	75.0	11	8	72.7	19	14	73.7
Executive Comm. & Co. Chairman County Chairman	83	51	61.4	69	37	53.6	152	88	57.9
Total	195	119	61.0	180	104	57.8	375	223	59.4

TABLE C-2
DISTRIBUTION AND RETURN BY LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

Legislative District	REPS		DEMS		TOTAL		Percentage Retd
	No. Sent	No. Retd	No. Sent	No. Retd	No. Sent	No. Retd	
00	5	3	4	3	9	6	66.7
01	4	3	6	5	10	8	80.0
02	4	4	3	3	7	7	100.0
03	3	0	3	2	6	2	33.3
04	2	0	2	2	4	2	50.0
05	2	0	2	0	4	0	0.0
06	2	1	2	2	4	3	75.0
07	2	2	2	0	4	2	50.0
08	2	2	2	2	4	4	100.0
09	2	0	2	0	4	0	0.0
10	2	2	2	2	4	4	100.0
11	2	0	2	0	4	0	0.0
12	2	1	2	2	4	3	75.0
13	2	0	0	0	2	0	0.0
14	2	0	2	0	4	0	0.0
15	3	2	3	3	6	5	83.3
16	5	1	4	3	9	4	44.4
17	5	3	5	3	10	6	60.0
18	5	5	4	1	9	6	66.7
19	3	2	4	1	7	3	42.8
20	2	0	2	0	4	0	0.0
21	4	4	4	1	8	5	62.7
22	4	2	4	3	8	5	62.7
23	4	3	4	4	8	7	87.5
24	3	2	2	1	5	3	60.0
25	2	1	2	1	4	2	50.0
26	2	2	2	1	4	3	75.0
27	4	3	3	2	7	5	71.4
28	2	2	3	2	5	4	80.0
29	3	1	2	0	5	1	20.0
30	4	2	3	1	7	3	42.8
31	4	3	4	3	8	6	75.0
32	4	3	6	3	10	6	60.0
33	3	2	4	3	7	5	71.4
34	5	4	3	2	8	6	75.0
35	3	2	3	1	6	3	50.0
36	4	4	5	2	9	6	66.7
37	5	4	6	4	11	8	72.7
38	6	4	6	3	12	7	58.3
39	4	3	4	2	8	5	62.7

TABLE C-2--Continued

Legislative District	REPS		DEMS		TOTAL		Percentage Retd
	No. Sent	No. Retd	No. Sent	No. Retd	No. Sent	No. Retd	
40	6	4	5	2	11	6	54.5
41	7	3	7	4	14	7	50.0
42	12	6	9	5	21	11	52.3
43	9	6	7	4	16	10	62.5
44	9	5	7	4	16	9	56.2
45	3	2	3	3	6	5	83.3
46	3	2	3	1	6	3	50.0
47	6	4	3	3	9	7	77.7
48	3	3	3	3	6	6	100.0
49	7	2	5	2	12	4	33.3
Total	195	119	180	104	375	223	59.4

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire in Eugene Lee, The Politics of Nonpartisanship (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960) was used as a guide for developing the questionnaire for the present study with such modifications as seemed pertinent to the Nebraska political system.

1. In any election for the state legislature in your district that you can remember has there been any public or openly visible activity on the part of either political party organization--county committee, local political clubs, party officials, etc.

YES () NO ()

If YES,

- a. Was such activity in reference to the: primary (); general election (); both ().
- b. Is such activity present in your district: always (); most of the time (); sometimes (); rarely ().
- c. What sorts of activities have been involved?
(Please check as many activities for each party as needed to describe the situation)

	By Reps	By Dems
Public endorsement of candidates	()	()
Use of party machinery	()	()
Use of funds and/or fund raising	()	()
Use of party offices as head- quarters	()	()
Other activities (please indicate the nature of these and which party)	_____	

2. In contrast with political party organizations, are individual party leaders in your area also active in elections for the state legislature, either as partisans or nonpartisans (Please check appropriate answers for each party)

	Leading Reps	Leading Dems
Many are active	()	()
Some are active	()	()
Few are active	()	()
None are active	()	()

3. Have you ever undertaken to encourage fellow party members to run for the state legislature?
YES () NO ()

IF YES,

- a. Have you done so: regularly (); frequently (); sometimes (); once in awhile ().
- b. Have these people consented? always (); frequently (); sometimes (); never ().
- c. Have those who consented been successful? most of the time (); half of the time (); some of the time (); never ().
4. Based on your observations, do you feel that the people in your district are generally aware of the political affiliations of candidates running for the legislature?
YES () NO ()

IF YES, is this the result of: (check as many as necessary)

- () The candidates' past activity
 () Political party activity
 () Candidates' actions during the campaign
 () Private persons and/or groups' activities
 () Other (please specify) _____
-

5. If the political parties, either collectively or

through its individual members, play little or no part in the selection of candidates for the state legislature, who in your opinion in your district is instrumental in encouraging people to run? (Check as many as necessary, but please indicate the three most important factors by numbering them 1, 2, 3.)

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|-----|--------------------------------------|
| () | Businessmen | () | Chamber of Commerce |
| () | Lawyers | () | Fraternal organizations |
| () | Doctors | () | Religious organizations |
| () | Farmers | () | Candidates' personal desire to serve |
| () | Ranchers | () | Other (please specify) _____ |
| () | Contractors | | _____ |
| () | Realtors | | _____ |
| () | Bankers | | _____ |
| () | Farm organizations | | _____ |
| () | Service organizations | | _____ |

6. Do you favor a partisan legislature? YES () NO ()

7. Kindly state why or why not you favor a partisan legislature _____

Methodology--Political Parties Questionnaire

Measure of Party Activity in Legislative Elections (MPA)

Each possible answer in questions one and two of the party leaders' questionnaire was assigned a numerical value, the highest representing complete party activity, the lowest, the absence of activity. To determine the district measure the total values for all respondents in the district were summed and divided by the number of respondents. The values assigned were as follows:

- la. primary (1); general election (2); both (3).
 lb. always (4); most of the time (3); sometimes (2); rarely (1).
 lc. public endorsement of candidates 5
 party funds or fund raising 4 Formal
 party machinery 3 Activities
 party offices 3
 informal action 2
 appearance in parades 1 Informal
 appearance at party meetings 1 Activities
 election to party office 1

If the respondent indicated that both parties engage in these activities, the value was doubled; thus, if both parties engaged in fund raising, a value of 8 was assigned that respondent.

2. Many leaders active	3
Some leaders active	2
Few leaders active	1
None active	0

Again, if the respondent indicated leaders in both parties are active in the same category, the value was doubled; if different categories, the appropriate values were merely summed.

For example, a respondent indicating there was party activity in the primary (1), that occurred sometimes (2), that one party engaged in informal endorsement action (2), and that many leaders from both parties were active (6), would receive a total value of eleven. This would be averaged with the scores of the other respondents from the district, thus arriving at the measure of party activity (MPA) for the district.

To evaluate and compare the various district MPA's, six categories of party activity were devised, measuring the various possible levels of activity. It was decided that the criteria for the lowest level of activity, designated minimal one-party activity, would include activity in at least one election (either primary or general election), that the activity occur at least sometimes, that one activity be involved, and that at least some leaders in one party be active. Translating this into a numerical designation, the score 8.00 was established as the lowest base for acceptable party activity. The level of activity was gradually increased for the succeeding five categories to the high, designated active two-party, where activity is present in both elections most of the time, with at least one formal and informal activity by both parties, and many leaders of both parties active. The complete six categories are summarized:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Description</u>
I. Minimal One-Party	8.00	one election (1.5), occurs sometimes (2.0), one activity involved (2.5), some leaders in one party active (2.0).

<u>Category</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Description</u>
II. Moderate One-Party	11.00	near two elections (2.5), occurs near most of the time (2.5), one formal activity (4.0), some leaders in one party active (2.0).
III. Active One-Party	13.50	near two elections (2.5), occurs most of the time (3.0), one formal and informal activity (5.0), many leaders in one party active (3.0).
IV. Minimal Two-Party	13.50	one election (1.5), most of the time (3.0), one activity for both parties (5.0), some leaders in both parties active (4.0).
V. Moderate Two-Party	17.00	near two elections (2.5), occurs near most of the time (2.5), one formal activity for both parties (8.0), some leaders in both parties active (4.0).
VI. Active Two-Party	21.50	near two elections (2.5), occurs most of the time (3.0), one formal and informal activity for both parties (10.0), many leaders in both parties active (6.0).

Categories III and IV have identical numerical values; that is, it was accepted that the level of activity is similar in an active one-party situation and a minimal two-party one. These two categories represent the midpoint of the various possible levels of activity devised.

Measure of Individual Party Activity (IPA)

In this measure the same values as assigned for the MPA were used except that questions 1(a) and 1(b) were not included. Each respondent within each district received a score based on his perception of the type of activity or number of leaders active and the party or parties engaging in the activity.

For example, a Republican respondent assesses activity in his district to include informal action by Republicans (2), use of party machinery by Democrats (3) and some leaders in both parties active (2). Thus, this Republican assesses his party's activity as 4 and the Democratic activity as 5. Summing each respondents score by party and dividing by the number of respondents reveals the individual party activity score (IPA).

Reasons for Favoring a Partisan Legislature

After reading the respondents' replies to this open-ended question, ten general categories were devised which included all the possible answers given. A respondent's answer was then tabulated according to the various reasons provided; if a variety of reasons were given, each of these were recorded in the appropriate category. The ten categories included:

1. Structural improvements.--General reasons that the legislative process would be improved. "Better legislation would result." "Provide research facilities and organization in the Unicameral." "Efficiency in the handling of bills." "Cut down on the number of bills."

2. Develop two-party system.--General thinking that a two-party system would develop which would create legislative responsibility and accountability through the party program and party discipline. "Party affiliation would restore responsibility of the legislature to the people and their parties." "There should be statewide leadership and responsibility to Party goals." "You can then pinpoint responsibility." "At present we have 49 Senators going in practically 49 different directions, no group leadership, no platform or common goals." "I'd like to see the 'credit' and 'blame' put in the right places."

3. Strengthen the party.--Idea expressed that the party would be a stronger more viable entity in the mainstream of political life. "Better and more active political organizations." "Strengthen parties' responsibilities,

authority, and organization." "Would encourage party participation where none exists."

4. Develop political leadership.--A partisan legislature would provide a proving ground for the training of future leaders and groom men for higher political office. "Stepping stone for developing political leadership." "With party affiliation the legislature could help serve as a training ground for higher office." "Would force Senators to be more like statesmen than merely followers."

5. Better candidate recruitment.--Idea that a partisan legislature would result in a better quality of legislator because the parties would have a stake in ensuring that more competent people would seek office, would aid them and permit a larger variety of individuals to seek office than is now the case. "It probably would result in better candidates." "Party officials would in many cases be in a better position to urge candidates to run and thus get, in many instances, better candidates." "It would upgrade the caliber of candidates running for office."

6. Lessen interest group influence.--With a partisan legislature, the influence of interest groups would be less and the party would absorb some of these pressures. "Eliminate the strength of private interest groups or individuals to use the legislature for profit by one means or another." "Legislature at present is operating for the benefit of pressure groups." "To make a state senator responsible to a more diversified group rather than to realtors or bankers or any special interest group."

7. Coordinated legislative-executive program.--General thinking that a partisan legislature would permit a more coordinated state program than is now possible. "To tie legislative and administrative candidates to issues and platform." "To create an effective, formalized relationship between the Governor and the Governor's party in the legislature."

8. Voter guide.--Partisan ballot would provide some sort of a guide for the voter as the outlook and thinking of the candidates, a guide which at present is not available. "Only by means of political identification of the results of the efforts of the legislature can the voters have a means of expressing their approval or disapproval." "To help establish an individual candidate's thoughts and beliefs more accurately." "Voters would have a better idea of what their candidates believe."

9. Formalize existing situation.--We have a partisan legislature in fact so why not admit it? "We have it now so bring it in the open." "Our nonpartisan legislature is a joke--everyone knows the Republicans are an overwhelming majority."

10. Apple pie.--"Keep our nation a democracy." "To preserve whatever is left of the greatest political experiment in history--the U.S.A." "If it is desirable for the nation it is good for a State." "Our national and state governments (except in Nebraska) have brought our nation to its present high place in the world and it was done within the boundaries of the two-party system."

Reasons for Opposing a Partisan Legislature

The same procedure as for the reasons for favoring a partisan legislature was utilized and six categories were developed.

1. Result in a one-party state.--Since Nebraska is a Republican state, the Democrats would have an even smaller voice in a partisan legislature than they have at present. "Nebraska has too many Republicans." "Fear that a partisan legislature would too easily become a one-party legislature." "Democrats are much in the minority in this district, therefore a democrat would never be elected to the state legislature in competition with a Republican."

2. Hinder recruitment process.--The caliber of legislators would drop because many good men would be unable or unwilling to come forth in a partisan environment. "I don't think people should be voted for just because they belong to a certain party." "Our best men do not want to get mixed up in partisan politics." "The party label defeats some good men when the voters (who are not always necessarily wise in their voting) want the party in power out."

3. Lessen constituent influence.--A partisan legislature would result in a legislature paying more attention to the party and less to the desires of his district. "The present set-up keeps the legislator obligated to all the people rather than just mainly the party." "Legislators now respond to the will of the people of their district, without excess influence and pressure from political parties." "I feel the legislator should be responsible to the people in his district for his action and not to a certain political party."

4. Structural changes.--A partisan legislature would bring about undesirable structural changes in the legislative process. "Not practical." "Slower to act." "Political parties have their place only when you have a two-house legislature."

5. Merits of issues confused--Bills would tend to be decided not on their merits but on what the party thought was good or bad from a political standpoint. "I feel that the important issues are generally decided on the basis of the merits of the legislation and not on party politics." "I prefer to see legislation determined on its own merits rather than along party lines."

6. Status quo.--Why change? "On balance, Nebraska legislation is excellent. I fail to notice that partisan legislatures, state or national, accomplish results claimed for them by proponents." "I feel the legislature has been doing a good job the way it is." "Don't think it would add to our one House." "I like it as it is." "I think the Unicameral has done a remarkably good job."

Relative Measure of Non-party Group Influence

Each respondent was asked to check as many categories as he thought applicable, but to indicate the three most important by numbering them 1, 2, and 3. In computing the measure of non-group influence as perceived by the party leaders, a value of 4 was assigned each first choice, 3 for each second, 2 for each third, and a value of 1 was assigned to those which were merely checked. The total values for each category were totaled and the sum represents the relative measure of non-party leaders.

Interest Groups--The Questionnaire

Distribution and Return

The questionnaire was sent in the summer of 1967 to all those who registered as lobbyists for the 1967 session of the Unicameral. Interviews with various Senators, lobbyists and political observers indicate that the registration procedure is adhered to by lobbyists and thus the vast majority of lobbyists appear on the lists. Thus, it can be assumed that the registration lists reveal, for all practical purposes, the lobbyists active before the Unicameral. A letter of explanation of the study and a

letter of introduction from a state Senator was included with the questionnaire and a follow-up letter (with another copy of the questionnaire) was sent a month after the initial mailing. The distribution and return of the questionnaire is summarized in the following table.

TABLE C-3
LOBBYIST QUESTIONNAIRE:
DISTRIBUTION AND RETURN

	Number	Percentage
Total sent	182	100.0
Returned completed questionnaire	118	64.2
Returned uncompleted questionnaire but agreed to interview	7	3.8
Returned uncompleted questionnaire because of limited activity (one or two appearances)	9	4.9
Total number responses (all categories)	134	73.6
No response	48	26.4

The Questionnaire

1. Do you feel that many senators use interest group representatives as a source of information or research tool?

YES () NO ()

If YES,

- a. Does this occur: often (); sometimes (); once in a while (); rarely ().
- b. Is the information requested supplied? always (); most of the time (); sometimes (); once in a while ().
- c. Do you generally provide only the facts which strengthen the position of the interest you represent? always (); most of the time (); sometimes (); rarely ().
- d. Do you ever provide information which might be damaging to the interest you represent? always ();

- sometimes (); once in a while (); rarely ().
- e. How often are you asked to provide information outside your particular area of knowledge or interest? most of the time (); half of the time (); part of the time (); once in a while ().
2. Do you feel that the senators look upon your efforts as a positive and useful aid?
YES () NO ()

If YES,

- a. Does this apply to the senators you know are opposed to your interest(s)? always (); most of the time (); some of the time (); never ().
- b. Does this change (become greater or lesser) dependent upon the particular issue involved? always (); most of the time (); some of the time (); never ().
3. Do you feel you are generally successful in influencing the senators beyond merely being able to present your side of the issue?
YES () NO ()

If YES,

- a. Does this influence involve a "softening" of the senator's position in regard to your case? always (); most of the time (); some of the time (); once in a while ().
- b. Does this influence involve an actual change of position on the part of the senator? most of the time (); some of the time (); once in a while (); never ().
- c. Does this influence extend to determining how the senator will vote on the issue? most of the time (); some of the time (); once in a while (); never ().
4. Many techniques are available for presenting your case to the senators. Please check the frequency you use each of the techniques listed below in the appropriate place.

	Most of the time	Some of the time	Once in a while	Never
Personal presentation of arguments	()	()	()	()
Presenting research results	()	()	()	()

	<u>Most of the time</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Once in a while</u>	<u>Never</u>
Appearing at committee hear- ings	()	()	()	()
Having an influen- tial constituent contact the senator	()	()	()	()
Getting close to a person who has the ear of the senator you want to convince	()	()	()	()
Socializing at noon or in the evenings	()	()	()	()
Contributing money to a political campaign	()	()	()	()
Contributing work to a political campaign	()	()	()	()
Inspiring a letter- writing or telegram campaign	()	()	()	()
Publicizing voting records	()	()	()	()
Obtaining assistance of other organiza- tions	()	()	()	()
Other (please specify the nature of the technique) _____	()	()	()	()
_____	()	()	()	()

5. Which of the following categories of interest groups do you feel are most successful in achieving their objectives (check as many as necessary but please indicate the three most successful by numbering them 1, 2, 3)?

Banking	()	Labor	()
Business	()	Liquor	()
Citizens	()	Public power	()
Communications	()	Railroads	()
Education	()	Ranching/Livestock	()
Farming	()	Real Estate	()
Local governmental (city, county, school board, etc)	()		

State governmental
(Game Commission,
Governor's assist-
ants, etc.) ()

Other (please
specify) _____

If possible, please indicate what specific organiza-
tion(s) seem most successful.

6. Do any interest groups to your knowledge take an active
interest in the legislative campaigns and the candi-
dates running?

YES () NO ()

If YES,

- a. How many groups take an active interest in the
campaigns? almost all (); many (); some ();
a few ().
- b. Does this extend to the: primary (); general
election (); both ().
- c. What sort of activities are involved? (check as
many as apply)

Encouraging people to run ()
Campaign aid other than financial
(passing out literature, contacting
people, etc.) ()
Financial help in the campaign ()
Other (please specify) _____

7. Do you personally participate in partisan politics at
any level beyond merely voting?

YES () NO ()

If YES, please check the activities this participation
includes (as many as apply).

Encouraging fellow party members to run
for office ()
Campaign aid other than financial (passing
out literature, contacting people, etc.) ()
Financial help in the campaign ()
Attendance at party convention or other
meetings ()
Holding party offices (past and/or present) ()

8. How would you classify yourself politically? (please
check appropriate place)

Strongly active Republican	()	Strongly active Democrat	()
Moderately active Republican	()	Moderately active Democrat	()
Merely registered Republican	()	Merely registered Democrat	()
	Independent	()	

9. Do you feel your objectives would be easier to achieve if the Unicameral were a partisan body?
 YES () NO ()

Kindly state why or why not you feel it would be easier to work in a partisan legislature. _____

Senatorial Questionnaire: Electoral Influences

The questionnaire was sent to the 49 Senators of the 1967 Legislature. A total of 37 returned the questionnaire completed, one chose to answer the questions in an expository manner rather than merely checking the appropriate columns, and one returned the questionnaire uncompleted since he was appointed following a resignation and thus had not been through an election campaign and felt unqualified to answer. Thus, a total of 39 respondents are included in the sample (79.5 percent).

1. Was your candidacy for the state legislature the result of encouragement from others as opposed to a personal desire to run?

YES () NO ()

If YES,

- a. Which of the following encouraged you to run (check as many as necessary)?

()	Businessmen	()	Realtors
()	Bankers	()	Teachers
()	Lawyers	()	Political party leaders
()	Ministers	()	Other (please specify) _____
()	Doctors, Dentists	()	
()	Farmers, Ranchers	()	

b. Which group (of those checked) was most influential in your decision to run; i.e., whose encouragement contributed most to your ultimate decision to run? _____

2. In your campaign, the support of which of the following persons or groups was most helpful in your success (please indicate no more than the three most helpful)?

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| () | Realtors | () | Agricultural groups |
| () | Merchants | () | Political party organizations |
| () | Bankers | () | Service clubs |
| () | Teachers | () | Masonic lodges |
| () | Attorneys | () | Other lodges |
| () | Ministers | () | Labor unions |
| () | Liquor dealers, bartenders | () | Lay church groups |
| () | Political party leaders | () | Local newspapers |
| () | Doctors, dentists | () | Public power groups |
| () | Womens organizations | () | Other (please specify) _____ |
| () | Veterans groups | | |

3. If you can, specify which of the above was the most helpful in the success of your campaign. _____

4. If you were to run for the state legislature again, the active support of which persons or groups would you deem essential to the success of your candidacy (indicate as many as necessary)?

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| () | Realtors | () | Agricultural groups |
| () | Merchants | () | Political party organizations |
| () | Bankers | () | Service clubs |
| () | Teachers | () | Masonic lodges |
| () | Attorneys | () | Other lodges |
| () | Ministers | () | Labor unions |
| () | Liquor dealers, bartenders | () | Lay church groups |
| () | Political party leaders | () | Local newspapers |
| () | Doctors, dentists | () | Public power groups |
| () | Womens organizations | () | Other (please specify) _____ |
| () | Veterans groups | | |

5. In any election for the state legislature in your district that you can remember (since the Unicameral), has there been any public or openly visible activity on the part of either political party organization: county committee, local political clubs, party officials, etc.?

YES () NO ()

If YES,

- a. Was such activity in reference to the:
primary (); general election (); both ()?
- b. Is such activity present in your district:
always (); most of the time ();
sometimes (); rarely ()?
- c. What sorts of activities have been involved
(please check as many as needed to describe the
situation in your district?

By Reps By Dems

Public endorsement of candidates	{ }	{ }	
Use of party machinery	{ }	{ }	
Use of funds and/or fund raising	()	()	
Use of party offices as headquarters	()	()	
Other activities (please indicate which party)	{ }	{ }	
_____	{ }	{ }	
_____	{ }	{ }	

d. In your opinion did this party activity help the candidates?
Helped (); made no difference (); hurt ().

6. In contrast with political party organizations, are individual party leaders in your district also active in elections for the state legislature either as partisans or nonpartisans (please check appropriate answers for each party)?

Leading Reps Leading Dems

Many are active	{ }	{ }	
Some are active	{ }	{ }	
Few are active	{ }	{ }	
None are active	{ }	{ }	

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: _____

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Public Documents

Nebraska. House Journal of the Legislature of the State of Nebraska. First session through Fifty-first session, 1867-1935.

Nebraska. Journal of the Nebraska Constitutional Convention 1919-20. 3 vols.

Nebraska. Laws Passed by the Legislature of the State of Nebraska. Fifty-second session through Seventy-seventh session, 1937-1967.

Nebraska. Legislative Journal of the State of Nebraska. Fifty-second session through Seventy-seventh session, 1937-1967.

Nebraska. Revised Statutes of Nebraska 1943.

Nebraska. Rules of the Nebraska Legislature 1965.

Nebraska. Senate Journal of the Legislature of the State of Nebraska. First session through Fifty-first session, 1865-1935.

Nebraska Legislative Council. Nebraska Blue Book. 1915-1966.

Nebraska Legislative Council. Report of the Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on Annual Legislative Sessions. Report No. 39, 1952.

Nebraska Legislative Council. Report of the Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on Budget. Report No. 95, 1960.

Nebraska Legislative Council. Report of the Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on Election Laws. Report No. 97, 1960.

Nebraska Legislative Council. Report of the Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on Legislative Processes. Report No. 70, 1956.

Nebraska Legislative Council. Report of the Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on the Organization and Functions of the State Government. Report No. 28, 1950.

- Nebraska Legislative Council. Report of the Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on Proposed Changes in the State Constitution. Report No. 27, 1950.
- Nebraska Legislative Council. Report of the Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on State Government Reorganization. Report No. 104, 1960.
- Nebraska State Canvassing Board. Official Report: Primary Election and General Election 1916-1966.
- Nebraska State Historical Society. Official Report of the Debates and Proceedings in the Nebraska Constitutional Conventions. 3 vols.
- U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Census of Manufactures: 1963, Vol. III.
- U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. County and City Data Book: 1962.
- U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Eighteenth Census of the United States: 1950. Population, Vol. II.
- U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Nineteenth Census of the United States: 1960. Population, Vol. I.
- U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Religious Bodies: 1926, Vol. I.
- U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Religious Bodies: 1936, Vol. II.
- U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Seventeenth Census of the United States: 1940. Population, Vol. I.
- U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1930. Population, Vol. I.
- U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1966.
- U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census of Agriculture: 1964, Vol. I.

U.S. Works Project Administration. Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska 1854-1941. 4 vols. Lincoln: University of Nebraska and the Nebraska State Historical Society, 1941.

U.S. Works Project Administration. Nebraska Party Platforms. Lincoln: University of Nebraska and the Nebraska State Historical Society, 1940.

Books

Adrian, Charles R. State and Local Governments. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967.

Baldwin, Sara and Baldwin, Robert (ed.). Nebraskana. Hebron: The Baldwin Co., 1932.

Barber, James D. The Lawmakers: Recruitment and Adaptation to Legislative Life. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965.

Bebout, John E. Introduction to Model State Constitution. New York: National Municipal League, 1963.

Billington, Ray A. "The Garden of the World: Fact and Fiction." The Heritage of the Middle West. Edited by John J. Murray. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958.

Breckenridge, Adam C. One House For Two. Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1957.

Buechner, John C. State Government in the Twentieth Century. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1967.

Clem, Alan L. Prairie State Politics. Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1967.

Council of State Governments. American Legislatures: Structure and Procedures. Chicago: By the Author, 1959.

_____. State Regulation of Lobbying. Chicago: By the Author, 1951.

_____. Book of the States 1966-67. Chicago: By the Author, 1966.

- Crampton, John A. The National Farmers Union: Ideology of a Pressure Group. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965.
- Curti, Merle. The Growth of American Thought. New York: Harper and Bros., 1943.
- Debel, Niels H. The Direct Primary in Nebraska. Nebraska History and Political Science Series, Bulletin No. 7. Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, 1914.
- Dick, Everett. The Sod-House Frontier. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1937.
- Dye, Thomas R. "State Legislative Politics." Politics in the American States. Edited by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965.
- Easton, David. A Systems Analysis for Political Life. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965.
- Gettys, Luella. The Reorganization of State Government in Nebraska. Nebraska Historical and Political Science Series, Bulletin No. 11. Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, 1922.
- Goldman, Eric. Rendezvous With Destiny: A History of Modern American Reform. New York: Vintage Books, 1956.
- Graves, W. Brooke. American State Government. Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1953.
- Griswold, A. Whitney. Farming and Democracy. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1948.
- Groves, Harold M. Financing Government. 6th edition. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Co., 1964.
- Harder, Marvin A. Nonpartisan Election: A Political Illusion? Cases in Practical Politics, Eagleton Institute, Case 5. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1960.
- Hicks, John D. The Populist Revolt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931.
- Higbee, Edward. Farms and Farmers in an Urban Age. New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1963.

- Hofstadter, Richard. The Age of Reform. New York: Alfred Knopf Co., 1956.
- Hynamen, Charles S. "Who Makes Our Laws?" Legislative Behavior. Edited by Heinz Eulau. Glencoe: Free Press, 1959.
- Jacob, Herbert. "Dimensions of State Politics." State Legislatures in American Politics. Edited by Alexander Heard. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966.
- Jewell, Malcolm E. The State Legislature: Politics and Practice. New York: Random House, 1962.
- Keefe, William J. and Ogul, Morris S. The American Legislative Process: Congress and the States. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964.
- Key, V. O. American State Politics. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Co., 1956.
- _____. Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups. 5th edition. New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1958.
- Kraenzel, Carl F. Great Plains in Transition. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955.
- Lee, Eugene C. The Politics of Nonpartisanship. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960.
- Lief, Alfred. Democracy's Norris. New York: Stackpole and Sons, 1939.
- Link, Arthur S. Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era. New York: Harper and Bros., 1954.
- Lockard, Duane. "The State Legislator." State Legislatures in American Politics. Edited by Alexander Heard. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966.
- Luckey, Carl. 85 American Years. New York: Exposition Press, 1955.
- McAvoy, Thomas T. The Midwest: Myth or Reality? Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1961.
- McConnell, Grant. The Decline of American Democracy. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953.

- Merrill, Horace. Bourbon Democracy of the Middle West. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953.
- Milbrath, Lester. The Washington Lobbyists. Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1963.
- Mitau, G. Theodore. Politics in Minnesota. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1960.
- _____. State and Local Government. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966.
- Morlan, Robert. Political Prairie Fire. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955.
- Morton, J. Sterling and Watkins, Albert. Illustrated History of Nebraska. 3 vols. Lincoln: Jacob North and Co., 1905.
- Mowry, George E. The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900-1912. New York: Harper and Bros., 1958.
- _____. The Progressive Era 1900-1918: Recent Literature and New Ideas. Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1964.
- Mullen, Arthur. Western Democrat. New York: Wilfred Funk, Inc., 1940.
- National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Churches and Church Membership in the United States. New York: By the Author, 1956.
- Nebraska Press Association. Who's Who in Nebraska. Lincoln: By the Author, 1940.
- Neuberger, Richard L. and Kahn, Stephen B. Integrity: The Life of George W. Norris. New York: Vanguard Press, 1937.
- Nicoll, Bruce and Keller, Ken. Sam McKelvie: Son of the Soil. Lincoln: Johnsen Publishing Co., 1954.
- Norris, George. Fighting Liberal. New York: Macmillan and Co., 1947.
- Nugent, Walter T. The Tolerant Populists. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.
- Nye, Russel. Midwestern Progressive Politics: A Historical Study of Its Origins and Developments, 1870-1958. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1959.

- Olson, James C. History of Nebraska. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955.
- J. Sterling Morton. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1942.
- Osgood, Ernest S. Day of the Cattlemen. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957.
- Pollack, Norman. The Populist Response to Industrial America. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962.
- Ranney, Austin. "Parties in State Politics." Politics in the American States. Edited by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965.
- Ransone, Coleman B. Office of the Governor in the U.S. University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1956.
- Reichley, James. States in Crisis 1950-1962. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964.
- Riker, William. Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1964.
- Robbins, Roy M. Our Landed Heritage: The Public Domain, 1776-1936. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947.
- Saloutos, Theodore and Hicks, John D. Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West 1900-1939. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1951.
- Schattschneider, E. E. Party Government. New York: Rinehart and Co., 1942.
- Schlesinger, Joseph A. "The Politics of the Executive." Politics in the American States. Edited by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965.
- Searcy, N. D. and Longwell, A. R. Nebraska Atlas. Kearney: Nebraska Atlas Publishing Co., 1964.
- Senning, John P. The One-House Legislature. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1937.
- Shannon, Fred A. The Farmer's Last Frontier: Agriculture 1860-1897. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1945.

- Shannon, James P. Catholic Colonization on the Western Frontier. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.
- Sheldon, Addison E. (ed.). Nebraska Constitutions of 1866, 1871, and 1875. Nebraska Historical and Political Science Series, Bulletin No. 13. Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, 1920.
- _____. Nebraska, The Land and the People. 3 vols. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1931.
- Sheldon, Addison E. and Keegan, Myrtle. Reform of the Legislative Procedure and Budget in Nebraska. Lincoln: Legislative Reference Bureau, 1914.
- Shover, John L. Cornbelt Rebellion. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965.
- Smith, Henry Nash. Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950.
- Snider, Clyde F. American State and Local Government. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965.
- Sorauf, Frank J. Party and Representation: Legislative Politics in Pennsylvania. New York: Atherton Press, 1963.
- Steadman, Murray and Steadman, Susan. Discontent at the Polls. New York: Columbia University Press, 1950.
- Steiner, Gilbert and Gove, Samuel K. Legislative Politics in Illinois. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960.
- Taylor, Carl C. The Farmer's Movement 1620-1920. New York: American Book Co., 1953.
- Terral, Rufus. The Missouri Valley: Land of Drought, Flood, and Promise. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947.
- Wahlke, John C. Legislative Behavior. Glencoe: Free Press, 1959.
- _____. et. al. The Legislative System. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962.
- Webb, Walter P. The Great Plains. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1931.

Wolfenbarger, A. G. (ed.). Nebraska Legislative Yearbook for 1897. Lincoln: By the Author, 1897.

Zaigler, Harmon. "Interest Groups in the States." Politics in the American States. Edited by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965.

_____. Interest Groups in American Society. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964.

Zaeller, Belle. American State Legislatures. New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1954.

Zucker, Norman L. George W. Norris: Gentle Knight of American Democracy. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966.

Articles and Periodicals

Adrian, Charles R. "A Typology for Nonpartisan Elections." Western Political Quarterly, XII (June, 1959), 449-458.

_____. "Some Characteristics of Nonpartisan Elections." American Political Science Review, XLVI (September, 1952), 766-776.

Aylsworth, L. E. "Nebraska's Nonpartisan Unicameral Legislature." National Municipal Review, XXVI (February, 1937), 77-81.

Breckenridge, Adam C. "Partisan Legislative Setups Sought in Nebraska." National Municipal Review, XLIII (March, 1954), 139.

_____. "Pre-Primary Trial Dropped," National Municipal Review, XLII (April, 1954), 186-91.

Bromage, Arthur. "Partisan Elections in Cities." National Municipal Review, XL (May, 1951), 250-253.

Caldwell, Lynton K. "Laboratories for Democratic Government." State Government, XXIII (April, 1950), 76-80.

Crane, Wilder. "A Test of Effectiveness of Interest Group Pressures on Legislators." Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, XLI (December, 1960), 335-340.

- Crittenden, John. "Aging and Party Affiliation." Public Opinion Quarterly, XXVI (Winter, 1962), 648-657.
- _____. "Aging and Political Participation." Western Political Quarterly, XVI (June, 1963), 323-331.
- Cutright, Phillips. "Nonpartisan Electoral Systems in American Cities." Comparative Studies in Society and History, V (January, 1963), 212-226.
- _____. "Urbanization and Competitive Party Politics." Journal of Politics, XXV (August, 1963), 552-564.
- Dascha, Julius. "Farmers on Strike." Reporter, XXVII (November 22, 1962), 32-35.
- Dawson, Richard E. and Robinson, James A. "Inter-party Competition, Economic Variables, and Welfare Policies in the American States." Journal of Politics, XXV (May, 1963), 265-289.
- Dobbins, Harry T. "Nebraska's Fifth Unicameral." Nebraska History, XXVI (January-March, 1945), 49-52.
- _____. "Nebraska's One House Legislature--After Six Years." National Municipal Review, XXX (September, 1941), 511-514.
- Ewing, Cortez A. M. "Lobbying in Nebraska's Legislature." Public Opinion Quarterly, I (July, 1937), 102-104.
- Ferkiss, Victor C. "Populist Influences on American Fascism." Western Political Quarterly, X (June, 1957), 350-373.
- Freeman, J. Leiper. "Local Party Systems: Theoretical Considerations and a Case Analysis." American Journal of Sociology, LXIV (November, 1958), 282-289.
- Gaus, John M. "The States Are in the Middle." State Government, LIII (June, 1950), 138-142.
- Hagensick, A. Clarke. "Influences of Partisanship and Incumbency on a Nonpartisan Election System." Western Political Quarterly, XVII (March, 1964), 117-124.
- Hahn, Mrs. Lloyd. "John Norton: Organizer, Farm Leader, Legislator, Administrator." Nebraska Agriculture, XXIV (December, 1954), 13.

- Hofferbert, Richard I. "The Relation Between Public Policy and Some Structural and Environmental Variables in the American States." American Political Science Review, LX (March, 1966), 73-82.
- Holbo, Paul S. "Wheat or What? Populism and American Fascism." Western Political Quarterly, XIV (September, 1961), 727-736.
- Johnson, Walter. "Politics in the Midwest." Nebraska History, XXXII (March, 1951), 1-19.
- King, Judson. "Nebraska, the Public Power State." Public Utilities Fortnightly, XXXIX (April 10, 1947), 483-488.
- Lowitt, Richard. "Populism and Politics: The Start of George W. Norris' Political Career." Nebraska History XLII (June, 1961), 75-94.
- Manley, Robert N. "The Nebraska State Council of Defense and the Non-Partisan League 1917-18." Nebraska History, XLIII (December, 1962), 229-252.
- Meller, Norman. "Legislative Behavior Research Revisited: A Review of Five Years' Publications." Western Political Quarterly, XVIII (December, 1965), 776-793.
- Morrison, Frank B. "Streamlining the Executive in Nebraska." 40 Nebraska Law Review 634-647 (June, 1961).
- "Nebraska's Unicameral Adjourns." State Government, X (July, 1937), 131-134.
- Obenhaus, Victor and Schroeder, Widick. "Church Affiliation and Attitudes Toward Selected Public Questions in a Typical Midwest County." Rural Sociology, XXVIII (March, 1963), 35-47.
- Pollack, Norman. "The Myth of Populist Anti-Semitism." American Historical Review, LXVIII (October, 1962), 76-80.
- Ransone, Coleman B. "Political Leadership in the Governor's Office." Journal of Politics, XXVI (February, 1964), 197-220.
- Rodgers, Jack W. "One House for 20 Years." National Municipal Review, XLVI (July, 1957), 338-342.

- Rosewater, Victor. "A Curious Chapter in Constitution Changing." Political Science Quarterly, XXXVI (September, 1921), 409-419.
- Rowley, William D. "The Loup City Riot of 1934: Main Street vs. the 'Far-Out' Left." Nebraska History, XLVII (September, 1966), 295-327.
- Salisbury, Robert and Black, Gordon. "Class and Party in Partisan and Non-Partisan Elections: The Case of Des Moines." American Political Science Review, LVII (September, 1963), 584-592.
- Sellers, James L. "James E. Lawrence, Dedicated Nebraskan." Nebraska History, XXXVIII (December, 1957), 249-258.
- Senning, John P. "Nebraska's First Unicameral Legislative Session." Annals, CXC (January, 1938), 159-167.
- _____. "Nebraska's One-House Legislature." Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, XVIII (September, 1938), 115-125.
- _____. "Nebraska Provides for a One-House Legislature." American Political Science Review, XXIX (February, 1935), 69-74.
- _____. "Pro--Should the States Adopt the Unicameral System of Legislation." The Congressional Digest, XVI (August-September, 1937), 214.
- _____. "Unicameralism Passes Test." National Municipal Review, XXXIII (February, 1944), 60-65.
- Sheldon, Addison E. "Unicameral Legislature." Nebraska History, XIX (July-September, 1938), 246-247.
- Shover, John L. "The Farm Holiday Movement in Nebraska." Nebraska History, XLIII (March, 1962), 53-78.
- Shumate, Roger V. "The Nebraska Unicameral Legislature." Western Political Quarterly, V (September, 1952), 504-512.
- Sittig, Robert F. "Unicameralism in Nebraska 1936-1966." State Government, XL (Winter, 1967), 38-41.
- Sorensen, C. A. "Tributes to Addison E. Sheldon." Nebraska History, XXIV (October-December, 1943), 217-218.

- Spencer, Richard C. "Highest Score Sheet." National Municipal Review, XLVI (November, 1957), 502-505.
- _____. "Nebraska Idea 15 Years Old." National Municipal Review, XXXIX (February, 1950), 83-86.
- _____. "Nebraska Unicam Operates Smoothly." National Civic Review, L (September, 1961), 424-425.
- Stone, James A. (ed.). "The Norris Program in 1924." Nebraska History, XLII (June, 1961), 125-139.
- Tucker, William P. "Characteristics of State Legislators." Social Science, XXX (April, 1955), 94-98.
- Wahlke, John C. "American State Legislators' Role Orientations Toward Pressure Groups." Journal of Politics, XXII (May, 1960), 203-227.
- Wesser, Robert F. "George W. Norris: The Unicameral Legislature and the Progressive Ideal." Nebraska History, XLV (December, 1964), 309-321.
- Wilcox, Benton. "An Historical Definition of Northwestern Radicalism." Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXVI (December, 1939), 377-394.
- Wilkening, E. A. and Hultt, Ralph K. "Political Participation Among Farmers as Related to Socio-Economic Status and Perception of the Political Process." Rural Sociology, (December, 1961), 395-408.
- Wilson, Richard D. "Registration of Lobbyists." 27 Nebraska Law Review 123-126 (November, 1947).
- Winter, Arthur B. "Constitutional Revision in Nebraska: A Brief History and Commentary." 40 Nebraska Law Review 580-595 (June, 1961).
- Wright, Deil S. and McAnaw, Richard L. "American State Executives--Backgrounds and Careers." State Government, XXXVIII (Summer, 1965), 146-153.
- Zucker, Norman L. "George W. Norris: Nebraska Moralist." Nebraska History, XLII (June, 1961), 95-124.

Unpublished Material

- Adrian, Charles R. "The Nonpartisan Legislature in Minnesota." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1950.
- Aeschbacher, William D. "Political Activity of Agricultural Organizations 1929-1939." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1948.
- Anderson, Raymond V. "Adoption and Operation of the Initiative and Referendum in North Dakota." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1962.
- Barnhart, John D. "History of the Farmers Alliance and People's Party in Nebraska." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1930.
- Beal, Annabel L. "The Populist Party in Custer County, Nebraska." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1965.
- Clem, Alan L. "Analysis of the 1958 Campaign in Nebraska's Third Congressional District." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, American University, 1960.
- Dahl, Lawrence W. "Pressure Groups Before the Nebraska Legislature." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1939.
- Fiore, Alphonse T. "History of Italian Immigration in Nebraska." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. University of Nebraska, 1938.
- Hall, Richard L. "The Direct Primary in Nebraska." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1935.
- Hart, Dale J. "Edward Rosewater and the Omaha Bee in Nebraska Politics." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1938.
- Herscher, Juliette. "Early Third Party Movements in Nebraska." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1931.
- Hinkie, Edmund D. "Changing Patterns of Population Distribution in Nebraska 1930-1960." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1963.

- Hughes, Delos D. "The Influence of Ideas on Political Action: The Agrarian Idea in American Politics." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1964.
- Jones, Virginia. "Influence of Railroads on Nebraska State Politics." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1927.
- Knibbs, Joseph C. "The Political Map of Nebraska 1900-1934." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1935.
- Kubicek, Clarence J. "The Czechs of Butler County 1870-1940." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1958.
- Lewis, John G. W. "The Nebraska Constitutional Convention of 1919-20." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1924.
- Lux, John. "Administrative Reorganization of the State Government of Nebraska." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1951.
- McCall, Martha. "History of the Popularization of the Governmental Process in Nebraska." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1938.
- Manley, Robert. "Nebraskans and the Federal Government." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1962.
- Marvel, Richard D. "Decision-Making in the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature for the 1959, 1961, and 1963 Sessions." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1966.
- _____. "The Factor of Sex in Politics: A Case Study." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1960.
- Mulvey, Claire P. "Republican Party in Nebraska." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1934.
- Phillips, Elmo B. "The Non-Partisan League in Nebraska." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1931.
- Ramsey, Maurice M. "Some Aspects of Nonpartisan Government in Detroit 1918-1940." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1944.

- Raymond, Bruce. "Nebraska's Constitution: An Historical Study." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1937.
- Rodine, Floyd. "The Farm Bureau in Nebraska." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1952.
- Schmieding, Arthur C. "Geographic Patterns of Failure of Wheat and Corn in Nebraska, 1931-1952." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1954.
- Senning, John P. "The Legislature and the Lobby." Unpublished, undated manuscript in Senning Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society (Typewritten).
- Shuck, Bryle G. "The One-House Legislature: A Study of Procedural Practices, 1939 Session." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1940.
- Smith, Carl H. "Party Alignments in Nebraska 1908-1916." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1950.
- Stone, David M. "Democratic Party Organization in Nebraska." Unpublished paper, 1967 (Typewritten).
- _____. "Politics and Elites in Nebraska 1890-1895." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1968.
- _____. "Republican Party Organization in Nebraska." Unpublished paper, 1967 (Typewritten).
- Stone, James A. "Agrarian Ideology and the Farm Problem in Nebraska State Politics." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1960.
- Stromer, Marvin E. "Congressional Redistricting in Nebraska--1961." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1962.
- Stubenhaus, Kieve. "Origins and Growth of the Nebraska Population 1870-1900." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1935.
- Tompkins, Phillips K. "George W. Norris Persuasion in the Campaign for the Unicameral Legislature." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1957.

Wenstrand, John F. "A History of Population Trends in Nebraska As Shown by the United States Decennial Census Reports 1860-1940." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1945.

Wright, Mary E. H. "Primary Election Laws in Nebraska: Popular Control of Political Parties Through Legal Regulation." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1967.

Yoder, Byron E. "Political Life of Edward R. Burke." Unpublished manuscript in the Nebraska State Historical Society (Typewritten).

Zimmerman, William F. "Legislative History of Nebraska Populism 1890-1895." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1926.

Reports

Cooperative Extension Service, University of South Dakota. Providing and Paying for Public Services. Extension Circular 645. Brookings: By the Author, 1966.

Lawrence, James E. History of the Lincoln Star. A report prepared in connection with a 1954 application made by KFAB Broadcasting Corp. to the Federal Communication Commission for grant of a television license in Omaha. Lincoln: Lincoln Star Publishing Co., 1954 (Mimeographed).

Lawrence, James E. Public Service Record of the Lincoln Star. A report prepared in connection with a 1954 application made by KFAB Broadcasting Corp. to the Federal Communication Commission for grant of a television license in Omaha. Lincoln: Lincoln Star Publishing Co., 1954 (Mimeographed).

Peterson, Everett E. and Timmons, Jack D. Financing Public Services in Nebraska--1968. Lincoln: University of Nebraska College of Agriculture and Home Economics, Extension Service, 1968.

University of Nebraska. School of Journalism. Nebraska--land--Its Beauty. Depth Report No. 3. March, 1964.

University of Nebraska. School of Journalism. Nebraska--Its Politics. Depth Report No. 4. September, 1966.

University of Nebraska. School of Journalism. Statistical Summary of One Hundred Years. Supplement to Depth Report No. 4. September, 1966.

University of Nebraska. School of Journalism. Unicameral Legislature. Depth Report No. 1. August, 1961.

Manuscript Collections

Nebraska State Historical Society. Brandsberg Collection.

Nebraska State Historical Society. Brooks Collection.

Nebraska State Historical Society. Butler Collection.

Nebraska State Historical Society. Kline Collection.

Nebraska State Historical Society. Lawrence Collection.

Nebraska State Historical Society. Non-Partisan League Collection.

Nebraska State Historical Society. Norris Collection.

Nebraska State Historical Society. Senning Collection.

Nebraska State Historical Society. Sorensen Collection.

Personal Interviews

Ackerman, James, Banker's Life Nebraska. October 11, 1967.

Anderson, Clifford, long-time Democrat. July 11, 1968.

Batchelder, Clifton B., State Senator, District 10. May-July, 1967.

Bloom, Bill, State Senator, District 20. May-July, 1967.

Brauer, S. H., State Senator, District 21. May-July, 1967.

Budd, Rick, State Senator, District 2. May-July, 1967.

Burbach, J. W., State Senator, District 19. May-July, 1967.

Carpenter, Terry, State Senator, District 48. May-July, 1967.

Carstens, Fred W., State Senator, District 30. May-July, 1967.

- Crosby, Robert B., Governor of Nebraska 1953-55. April 17, 1968.
- Danner, Edward R., State Senator, District 11. May-July, 1967.
- Denney, Robert V., Congressman, First District and former State Republican Chairman. December 10, 1963.
- Elrod, Donald, State Senator, District 35. May-July, 1967.
- Ely, Richard L., State Senator, District 37. May-July, 1967.
- Fleming, George H., State Senator, District 47. May-July, 1967.
- Gerdes, George C., State Senator, District 49. May-July, 1967.
- Harsh, Lester, State Senator, District 38. May-July, 1967.
- Hasebroock, William H., State Senator, District 18. May-July, 1967.
- Holmquist, C. W., State Senator, District 16. May-July, 1967.
- Hopkins, Herbert, Banker's Life Nebraska. October 11, 1967.
- Hughes, Calista Cooper, State Senator, District 1. May-July, 1967.
- Kjar, Albert A., State Senator, District 39. May-July, 1967.
- Klaver, Sam, State Senator, District 9. May-July, 1967.
- Knight, John E., State Senator, District 26. May-July, 1967.
- Kokes, Rudolf C., State Senator, District 41. May-July, 1967.
- Kremer, Maurice A., State Senator, District 34. May-July, 1967.
- Luedtke, Roland A., State Senator, District 28. May-July, 1967.
- McCoy, Dale, Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen. October 25, 1967.

- Marvel, Richard D., State Senator, District 33. May-July, 1967.
- Matzke, Stanley A., State Senator, District 24. May-July, 1967.
- Morrison, Frank B., Governor of Nebraska 1961-67. March 9, 1968.
- Moulton, C. F. "Pat," State Senator, District 8. May-July, 1967.
- Moylan, Harold T., State Senator, District 6. May-July, 1967.
- Nore, Herb, State Senator, District 22. May-July, 1967.
- Orme, Fern Hubbard, State Senator, District 29. May-July, 1967.
- Orr, Lorraine, Republican State Chairman. April 25, 1967.
- Osterberg, Harris V., Nebraska Banker's Association. October 18, 1967.
- Payne, Dale L., State Senator, District 3. May-July, 1967.
- Peterson, Val, Governor of Nebraska 1947-53. April 30, 1968.
- Proud, Richard, State Senator, District 12. May-July, 1967.
- Rasmussen, Eric, State Senator, District 32. May-July, 1967.
- Rasmussen, Ross H., State Senator, District 15. May-July, 1967.
- Reynolds, Florence B., State Senator, District 14. May-July, 1967.
- Robinson, Leslie, State Senator, District 36. May-July, 1967.
- Ruhnke, Arnold, State Senator, District 31. May-July, 1967.
- Schuetz, Jack, Former Executive Secretary, Republican State Central Committee. April 25, 1967.
- Shochdopole, K. A., Aksarben. October 25, 1967.

- Simpson, Harold D., State Senator, District 46. May-July, 1967.
- Skarda, William R., Jr., State Senator, District 7. May-July, 1967.
- Stryker, Harold B., State Senator, District 23. May-July, 1967.
- Swanson, William F., State Senator, District 27. May-July, 1967.
- Syas, George, State Senator, District 13. May-July, 1967.
- Towle, Max, October 9, 1967.
- Viehmeier, Glenn, State Senator, District 45. May-July, 1967.
- Waldron, J. James, State Senator, District 42. May-July, 1967.
- Wallwey, Elmer, State Senator, District 17. May-July, 1967.
- Walters, George, Nebraska Petroleum Marketers. October 13, 1967.
- Warner, Jerome, State Senator, District 25. May-July, 1967.
- Whitney, Ramey C., State Senator, District 44. May-July, 1967.
- Williams, Frank, Executive Secretary, Omaha Education Association. October 26, 1967.
- Wylie, William M., State Senator, District 40. May-July, 1967.
- Yeutter, Clayton, Executive Assistant to Governor Norbert Tiemann, March 25, 1968.

Table of Cases

- Appeal of Union Stockyards Co., 103 Neb. 224, 170 N.W. 908 (1919).
- Axberg v. City of Lincoln, 141 Neb. 55, 2 N.W. 2d 613 (1942).
- Baker v. Carr, 369 U.S. 186, 7 L. Ed. 2d 663, 82 Sup. Ct. 691 (1962).

- Beatrice v. Brethren Church, 41 Neb. 358, 59 N.W. 932 (1894).
- Blauvelt v. Beck, 162 Neb. 576, 76 N.W. 2d 738 (1956).
- Carlberg v. Metcalf, 120 Neb. 481, 234 N.W. 87 (1930).
- Chicago B. & Q. R. Co. v. State, 47 Neb. 549, 66 N.W. 624 (1896).
- City of Grand Island v. Ehlers, 180 Neb. 331, 142 N.W. 2d 770 (1966).
- Consumers Public Power District v. City of Lincoln, 168 Neb. 183, 95 N.W. 2d 357 (1959).
- Continental Insurance Co. v. Sarha, 131 Neb. 791, 270 N.W. 122 (1936).
- Copple v. Bowlin, 172 Neb. 467, 110 N.W. 2d 117 (1962).
- Drainage District v. Richardson County, 86 Neb. 355, 125 N.W. 796 (1910).
- East Lincoln Lodge No. 210, A. F. & A. M. v. City of Lincoln, 131 Neb. 379, 268 N.W. 91 (1936).
- Elmen v. State Board, 120 Neb. 141, 231 N.W. 772 (1930).
- H/K Company v. Board of Equalization, 175 Neb. 268, 121 N.W. 2d 382 (1963).
- Herman v. City of Omaha, 75 Neb. 489, 106 N.W. 593 (1906).
- In re Metropolitan Utilities District of Omaha, 179 Neb. 783, 140 N.W. 2d 626 (1966).
- K-K Appliance Co. v. Board of Equalization, 165 Neb. 547, 86 N.W. 2d 381 (1957).
- Laverty v. Cochran, 152 Neb. 354, 271 N.W. 354 (1937).
- Lennox v. Housing Authority of City of Omaha, 137 Neb. 582, 290 N.W. 451 (1940).
- Lincoln Dairy Co. v. Finigan, 170 Neb. 777, 104 N.W. 2d 227 (1960).
- McDonald v. Rentfrow, 176 Neb. 796, 127 N.W. 2d 480 (1964).

- Mekota v. State Board of Equalization and Assessment, 146 Neb. 370, 19 N.W. 2d 633 (1945).
- Metropolitan Utilities District v. City of Omaha, 171 Neb. 609, 107 N.W. 2d 397 (1961).
- Nagle v. City of Grand Island, 144 Neb. 67, 12 N.W. 2d 540 (1943).
- Nelson v. Tilley, 137 Neb. 327, 289 N.W. 338 (1940).
- Niklaus v. Miller, 159 Neb. 301, 66 N.W. 2d 824 (1954).
- Power Oil Co. v. Cochran, 138 Neb. 827, 295 N.W. 805 (1941).
- Railroad Tax Cases, 170 Neb. 77, 106, 139, 101 N.W. 2d 856, 873, 892 (1960).
- School District No. 8 of Sherman County v. State Board of Education, 176 Neb. 722, 127 N.W. 2d 458 (1964).
- School District No. 39 v. Decker, 159 Neb. 693, 68 N.W. 2d 354 (1955).
- Steinacher v. Swanson, 131 Neb. 439, 268 N.W. 317 (1936).
- Smithberger v. Banning, 129 Neb. 651, 262 N.W. 492 (1935).
- State v. Frank, 61 Neb. 679, 85 N.W. 956 (1901).
- State v. Graham, 16 Neb. 74, 19 N.W. 470 (1884).
- State v. Hall, 125 Neb. 236, 249 N.W. 756 (1933).
- State v. Howard, 96 Neb. 278, 147 N.W. 689 (1914).
- State ex rel Beck v. Obbink, 172 Neb. 242, 109 N.W. 2d 288 (1959).
- State ex rel Beck v. Young, 154 Neb. 588, 48 N.W. 2d 677 (1951).
- State ex rel Fischer v. City of Lincoln, 137 Neb. 97, 288 N.W. 499 (1934).
- State ex rel Grand Island v. Johnson, 175 Neb. 498, 122 N.W. 2d 240 (1963).
- State ex rel Martin v. Cunningham, 158 Neb. 708, 64 N.W. 2d 465 (1954).

State ex rel Meyer v. Sorrell, 174 Neb. 340, 117 N.W. 2d 872 (1962).

State ex rel Meyer v. Story, 173 Neb. 741, 114 N.W. 2d 769 (1962).

State ex rel Missouri Pacific Railroad Co. v. Clarke, 98 Neb. 566, 153 N.W. 623 (1915).

Terry Carpenter, Inc. v. Nebraska Liquor Control Commission, 175 Neb. 26, 120 N.W. 2d 374 (1963).

Thorin v. Burke, 146 Neb. 94, 18 N.W. 2d 664 (1945).

United Community Services v. Omaha National Bank, 162 Neb. 786, 77 N.W. 2d 576 (1956).

United States Cold Storage Corp. v. Stolinski, 168 Neb. 513, 96 N.W. 2d 408 (1959).

Winkler v. City of Hastings, 85 Neb. 212, 122 N.W. 858 (1909).

Wittler v. Baumgartner, 180 Neb. 446, 144 N.W. 2d 62 (1966).

Young Women's Christian Association v. City of Lincoln, 177 Neb. 136, 128 N.W. 2d 600 (1964).