CHAPTER IX
Preparedness

Pre-session Conferences Arranged by the American Legislators' Association

THE PRE-SESSION IDEA

The "pre-session conference" is an innovation of the American Legislators' Association. It is designed to enable experienced legislators to pass some of their knowledge on to the greater number of inexperienced legislators. A plan of organization and legislative activity may be worked out which will save much valuable time at the opening of the regular session. Legislators of one state or of a region assemble to discuss problems which will be considered at the convening of the regular sessions. State administrative officials and students of government discuss various phases of governmental problems. Sometimes the conference even succeeds in planning much of the agenda of the forthcoming session.

The pre-session conferences described here have been very successful. That they have been valuable is evidenced by the thousands of complimentary letters and press editorials which preceded and followed every conference. By reprinting a few of these it is possible to tell to a large extent the story of each conference.

The following article from the Saturday Evening Post describes the condition which the pre-session conferences remedy:

Saturday Evening Post: "In addition to, or operating within, the federal and forty-eight state governments, we have in this country more than 3,000 counties, some 200,000 separate governing and taxing bodies, and 900,000 elective officials. In other words, government has got into a snarl. No amount of excitement over the liquor question or even a presidential campaign alters this basic fact. Nothing so much matters as the way in which government, as a whole, has become cumbersome and tangled.

"Under the American system, final sovereignty rests with the states, and municipalities derive their powers from the states. Thus, the straightening out of the situation outlined really rests with the state legislatures.

Legislative Personnel

"There are about 7,500 state legislators, and the data recently gathered by the American Legislators' Association, which was organized by state senators and representatives throughout the country in hope of improving legislative conditions, show that these men and women are largely amateurs or novices at their all-important work. Three out of four are elected for a term of office including only one regular session. A typical body with one hundred and thirty-five members will contain fifty who have never before sat in such an assembly, twenty-five who have previously been members for only one session, and not more than a dozen who have attended more than five sessions.

"This means that state legislatures are not permanent deliberative bodies. About 98 per cent are men and 2 per cent are women, very few being under thirty, few in legislative experience, continuity of policy, collective knowledge and professional standards, large numbers of them are really juveniles. Considering that many of the sessions are for only sixty days, it really requires four or five sessions before a member learns the ropes and becomes acquainted with the intricacies of state government, not to mention its responsibilities to the county and local governments.

"It makes no difference how many good
men are selected to these legislatures, their influence is slight unless they come back again and again. Otherwise members of the various political gangs, who often do get themselves re-elected many times, can control much larger numbers of well-meaning amateurs.

"Yet these bodies directly control some two billion dollars of expenditure and have supervision responsibility for the spending of much larger sums by local agencies. Local government depends so largely upon state statutes that it cannot be effective unless the state legislators are men of outstanding caliber and training.

"Originally, the state legislators were elected for terms which included two regular sessions, the sessions being annual. But when the sessions were made biennial, the proper adjustment of doubling the term of office was not made. If representatives were elected for four-year terms and senators for six-year terms, there would be a considerable increase in experience.

"Many state legislators receive absurdly small compensation, although there is no certainty that increased pay would improve the character of those elected.

"More planning of legislative work in advance of sessions is considered a promising method. Much time is now wasted on petty bills—the bulk of work on which could be done beforehand—while major issues wait. The main point is the existing lack of training and continuity. Those interested in the problem, either as legislators or as students, have long sensed this situation.

"The soundness of the whole American scheme of government requires that state lawmaking be handled in a less slipshod manner.

**Legislative Process**

"It is almost incredible, but in the typical state, our actual process of lawmaking is this:

"On a day early in January about 150 men dash into the capitol and congregate in two rooms. Most of them are strangers to each other. About half of them are men who have never occupied seats in either of those rooms before. In fact, sixty days previously the half of them didn’t know definitely that they were to be legislators.

"They take their seats, and one, two or three thousand bills are promptly poured into their collective lap. Hundreds of lobbyists begin to buttonhole them.

"Most of these 150 men would admit that their knowledge of the science of government is rather haphazard. They come together with practically no agenda.

"Sixty or ninety days later they rush home, after taking a shot at the form of state, county, and municipal governments, after altering the rules of conduct for almost every individual and corporation in the state, and after spending many millions.

"Throughout this process there is no real provision for perspective and planning, although most legislators keenly feel the need of them.

"A significant—almost spectacular—experiment quietly progressed down south. It is of interest to every man and woman who thinks about law-making. This means that it interests legislators, too.

"Last December the Board of Managers of the American Legislators’ Association, composed entirely of experienced state legislators, decided to try an experiment. Perspective and planning were the key words.

"A six-state conference was called to convene in Asheville, North Carolina, on September 22, 1932. Forty members of the House and Senate Councils of the American Legislators’ Association from South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, Tennessee, and West Virginia, as well as economic experts and state officers set eagerly to work and delved into the difficulties confronting these six states."

**History via the Press**

The next few pages contain newspaper accounts of the various pre-session conferences and statements concerning these conferences made by outstanding officials and citizens.

**The Asheville Regional Pre-session Conference, 1932**

*Christian Science Monitor, Boston, Mass.* September 20, 1932—“An unusual kind of invitation has been sent out by the American Legislators’ Association, during the last few days to a selected group of public officials in North Carolina, South Caro-
PIONEERS AT ASHEVILLE

lina, Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. It is an invitation to a three-day "house party" to be given by the Association at the Grove Park Inn at Asheville, North Carolina, beginning next Thursday and extending from September 22 to 24, 1932.

"Hoping to afford the officials a pleasant week-end, but basing its proposal upon an appeal to their sense of responsibility, the Association has a serious purpose in mind. It is to try out a new experiment in state government, namely, the unofficial organization of groups of four, five, or six states for the purpose of better government.

"In this particular case, however, the objective is to get the six states to exchange ideas on emergency legislation which will undoubtedly be necessary at their next legislative sessions.

"What must the states do to qualify for their share of the $300,000,000 unemployment relief fund made available through the Federal Reconstruction Finance Corporation? How can they qualify for reconstruction loans for housing and slum rehabilitation, as only one state is now so qualified? How must state laws be modified to carry out the provisions of the Home Loan Bank? These are among the matters the five-state conference will probably discuss.

Richmond News-Ledger: September 19, 1932—"The first definite steps towards state legislative planning will be taken at a regional conference of legislators and state officials from the Carolinas, Georgia, West Virginia, Virginia and Tennessee.

"J. Vaughan Gary of Richmond, Virginia, secretary of the conference, said particular stress would be placed on emergency relief and finances. The primary purpose of the conference, it was pointed out, is to eliminate the necessity of legislatures facing at the beginning of their sessions a mass of unrelated and unplanned legislation and to make it possible to prepare an agenda placing most vital problems first.

"The American Legislators' Association, which is sponsoring these regional and state conferences, was organized by state legislators throughout the country who recognize the fact that legislative conditions must be improved and that the responsibility rests primarily upon them," said Senator Toll, director of the Association and a former member of the Colorado State Senate.

"There are about 7,500 state legislators and the data recently gathered by the American Legislators' Association, show that these men and women are largely inexperienced.
“Our records show that 40 per cent are newcomers and another 20 per cent have served only one previous term. This means that state legislatures are not permanent legislative bodies. Considering that many of the sessions are for only 60 days, it really requires several sessions before a member learns the ropes and becomes acquainted with the intricacies of state government, not to mention its responsibilities to county and local governments.

“Definite planning of legislative work in advance of sessions, we believe, is a promising method. Much time which should be devoted to major legislation is now wasted on petty bills.”

Opinions Concerning the Conference:

“I am sure that this Regional Conference will be of great interest and benefit to the legislatures of North Carolina and of the adjoining states.”

—Hon. Ruby Laffoon, Governor of Kentucky.

“It seems to me that your plan for legislators’ conferences is an excellent one. Certainly the legislators need to have these things intelligently discussed.”

—Professor J. L. Gillin, University of Wisconsin.

“I am quite in agreement with the proposition that your plan of regional conferences is a good one. I hope that when you get around to it, something of the kind will be planned for the Pacific Coast states.”

—Professor William B. Munro, California Institute of Technology.

“I like your idea. We have already held many such conferences concerning Roads and Highways, and concerning Fish and Game; between our bordering states, north and south. Much could come of this regional conference plan if it were carried out in advance of the meeting of the Legislature. We would see things more clearly.”


“I am following the work of the American Legislators’ Association with much interest. It seems to me high time for some worthy organizations to be giving attention to that field. The holding of some regional conferences should prove productive of greater interest and larger achievement.”

—Frederick C. Ferry, President of Hamilton College.

“I thoroughly enjoyed this meeting. I feel that it will be a great help to those who were present, and that it will mean better legislation.”

—Hon. H. C. Kunbrough, Georgia House of Representatives.

“I enjoyed very much meeting the members of the conference, and I was glad to secure the great amount of information obtained through the association with the members from our neighboring states.”

—Hon. J. M. Simmons, Georgia House of Representatives.

“I am impressed by the opinion that great good will come out of conferences of this nature. The opportunity offered for men of the states to discuss so many questions in which they are interested is exceedingly helpful. The privilege of exchanging the experiences of the different states relating to these questions is invaluable. I think that the meeting at Asheville was interesting and highly profitable.”


“It was a great pleasure to meet those who attended the conference, and I believe that it will produce splendid results. Certainly some suggestions made are invaluable to me.”


“I wish to take this early opportunity of expressing my sense of value in the conference recently held in Asheville, I find that people generally were interested through the papers. Several members of the Legislature have expressed to me their desire for a conference in Columbia.”

—Hon. Neville Bennett, Chairman, Ways and Means Committee, South Carolina General Assembly.

“I want to say most emphatically that the Asheville conference was one of the finest gatherings that I have ever attended.
I must commend the business-like way in which the meeting was conducted. I feel that this is the beginning of one of the most important steps for the betterment of government that has been taken in a long time.”

—HON. A. J. GRAVES,
Tennessee State Senator.

“I was very much pleased with the conference and felt that it was of decided benefit. It was interesting to know that other states in the same territory, whose conditions are similar to those in this state, are confronted with similar legislative problems.

“Not only were the informal discussions in the group as a whole beneficial, but I believe that each of us derived equal benefit from private conversations with the representatives from the different states. I am quite sure that from these contacts and from the information obtained, I will be better prepared to attack the problems which will come before the next session of the General Assembly of Georgia.”

—HON. ORVILLE A. PARK,
Georgia House of Representatives.

The above are just a few of the comments listed in the files. More information is available upon request.

South Carolina Conference, 1932

The call for the first state pre-session legislative conference as reported and discussed by the Columbia State: “A regional meeting of the American Legislators’ Association was held in Asheville in September and was attended by several legislators from each of the states of South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. Now a call is made for a conference of South Carolina legislators to meet in Columbia on the second and third days of November, 1932, for discussion of legislative problems.

“It is planned that men who have had experience in North Carolina and Virginia in dealing with various legislative problems will address the conference and take part in the discussions.

“The idea is new to us, but it holds a promise of beneficial results.

“The business of legislating for a state is certainly important. The successful conduct of this business calls for certain mental attributes, an understanding of all sides of many questions, and sound information. The best legislators, other things being equal, are those who have long years of experience and who, during those years, have been industrious in digging for and storing up information.

“According to the State’s understanding of the purpose of the American Legislators’ Association’s activities, one of its more important functions is the maintenance of a clearing house for information, through which legislators interested in some particular legislation may obtain the results in any other states of similar efforts.

“There is, we are assured, no propaganda, no attempt to ‘put over’ anything; no ‘outside interference.’

“It may be, probably will be, inconvenient for legislators to meet here in conference. But it might be highly beneficial to have a conference for the discussion of numbers of problems about which it is desirable to discover the facts. That is the sort of discussion which is difficult, if not impossible, to have during a legislative session.”

Speakers and Subjects: Over 100 South Carolina legislators were addressed by Governor Blackwood. Henry Burke, budget assistant to Governor Gardner of North Carolina, spoke on budget control methods. Discussion centered on such topics as allotment systems, road building loans, pay as you go, federal relief aid, work relief, et cetera. At the night session, G. H. Morrissett of Virginia, told how governmental reorganization had enabled Virginia to meet the test of economic depression without a deficit but a surplus of $56,000. He answered many questions as to how Virginia managed her affairs. A thorough discussion of county government was also undertaken before final adjournment of the conference.

Opinions of South Carolina legislators on the Columbia Conference:

“I consider the meeting very helpful, and I think that it will be a wonderful help to South Carolina to have men from other states tell at the meeting of various experiments which have proven their worth and value.”

—HON. E. L. DAVIS.
"The meeting was a great success. I heard more about governmental problems more intelligently expressed than during an entire session of the legislature. It may be slow bearing fruit, but work of this kind is bound to do much good."

—HON. R. BEVERLEY HERBERT.

"Lasting good can be accomplished if a good attendance can be kept at such meetings. Every two years at least, a conference should be held and veteran legislators of other states should give the benefit of their experience."

—HON. O. C. SCARBOROUGH, JR.

"I found the proceedings of this conference very interesting and very instructive. It should prove very valuable to the legislators who attended. For years South Carolina has had a wasteful government due to the lack of coordination and unnecessary duplication of work, and now a psychological time appears for some very constructive work along the lines of consolidation and efficiency. The conference just held advanced many ideas along these lines which should prove helpful."

—HON. J. M. MOORER.

"A wealth of material was offered to legislators upon which constructive legislation can be based. Experiences of other states in finance, reorganization of governments, and other matters were obtained at first hand, and the meeting was entirely wholesome and beneficial.

"It will be of great value to have similar conferences each year.

"My only criticism is that sufficient time was not available for discussion of the problems presented, but this can be cured by longer conferences or a more limited field of subjects to be discussed."

—SENATOR R. M. JEFFERIES.

"I am sure that this Association will be invaluable to men who are interested in their legislative work."

—HON. RICHARD L. LANE.

Tennessee Pre-session Conference, 1932

Chattanooga Times, November 16, 1932—

"The legislative conference which is scheduled to be held in Knoxville on November 23 and 24 under the auspices of the American Legislators' Association ought to be attended by every member of the next Tennessee General Assembly and also by many other citizens interested in better government. It is to be one of a series of similar conferences in different states, and the one recently held in South Carolina is reported to have been very successful.

"The American Legislators' Association is a comparatively young organization. Only last September it held its seventh annual conference at Washington. It is, however, gradually becoming an influence of considerable importance. It maintains general offices in Chicago, has twelve advisory boards consisting of numerous prominent citizens, has Senate and House Councils in each state legislature, and publishes a valuable magazine, State Government.

"The Association's regional legislative conference idea, as a member of the last Tennessee General Assembly has said, 'has the germ of legislative orientation in it which may finally prove to be one of the leavens which will help our whole legislative system.'

"Perhaps the greatest handicap of the American Legislators' Association movement is the turnover in the membership of state legislatures at every election. It is stated in a recent article in the Saturday Evening Post that 'a typical (legislative) body with 135 members will contain fifty who have never before sat in such an assembly, twenty-five who have previously been members for only one session, and not more than a dozen who have attended more than five sessions.' Because state legislatures have little permanence as to membership, conferences such as the one to be held in Knoxville should be of considerable value."

Discussion at the Tennessee Conference:

At the opening session Dr. Lindsay Rogers, professor of Public Law at Columbia, addressed 'over one hundred' legislators on "Functions and Agencies of State Government." He also spoke on taxation and constitutions. The finances of the state were reviewed from two angles on the last day of the conference by Prof. T. L. Howard of the University of Chattanooga and Dr. Charles P. White of the Department of Finance, University of Tennessee.
Extracts from a few of the many letters which were received by the American Legislators' Association follow:

Excerpts from Letters of Tennessee Legislators: "The thoughts carried away from the conference will prove invaluable in the approaching legislative session."

—HON. LEON GILBERT.

"The conference was most valuable indeed, for two reasons:

First: it afforded legislators an opportunity to meet—and in some cases to appraise—each other prior to the meeting of the legislature.

Second: the discussions to which they listened, and in which they took part, not only imparted valuable knowledge to all who attended, but set all participants to thinking about matters which would not otherwise have come to their attention until the legislative session was half over."

—SENATOR WILLIAM P. MOSS.

"I know of no conference or convention that has been held in Knoxville in many years that received as much favorable comment as this particular meeting. I have heard many newspapermen and other citizens most emphatically that this was the most constructive and the finest thing that we have ever had here, and I am of the candid opinion that the conference did much good."

—SENATOR A. J. GRAVES.

"I had some hesitancy in accepting the invitation to this conference, as I knew nothing about the American Legislators' Association, its purpose or methods, and was just a little suspicious that it had been called to spread some kind of propaganda. I decided that the best thing to do was to attend and find out. I was glad that I made this decision when I discovered the spirit and purpose of the meeting, and I am of the opinion that it was highly beneficial."

—SENATOR WALTER FRANKLIN.

West Virginia Conference, 1932

The Morgantown Post and the Parkersburg News—"The invitation the American Legislators' Association has sent to members of the West Virginia legislature to hold an informal meeting at Charleston, December 2 and 3, for the primary purpose of acquainting new members with legislative functions and procedure and of discussing 'general problems of state government, the tax plan followed in the state of Virginia, and other taxation methods and proposals' ought to be accepted by as many legislators as are able to go to the Capital.

"Nothing but good can come from such a meeting in view of the fact that so many members of the legislature will be serving for the first time; and in view of the large number of new problems that must be taken up at the approaching session.

"If for no other purpose than to see more clearly the broad outlines of some of the major problems with which they must deal at their approaching session, West Virginia legislators should find it eminently worth their while to attend."

From the Grafton Sentinel: "The meeting of a large part of the newly elected members of the state legislature at Charleston for two days just at this time, a little more than a month ahead of the constitutional convening of the regular session, for a general conference upon problems which they will face when the regular session meets, and to discuss the general fiscal and legislative problems of the state, as well as incidental plans for organization, is a new departure in this state. We believe it is a good thing, and that it will go far to expedite the quick organization of the regular session, and will minimize to a large extent the preliminary confusion and incidental delay. This meeting is bound to have a beneficial result in laying much of the groundwork for real business the regular session will have to do."

Comments on West Virginia Conference:

"I heard virtually every one of the legislators in attendance at the Charleston meeting express appreciation of the benefits derived therefrom. I believe it will do much to generate an intelligent approach to the complicated problems of this state."

—SENATOR CHARLES E. HODGES.

"The conference was a definite step toward the improvement of legislative conditions; it tended to familiarize the members of the legislature with the great problems that are before them, and it showed clearly that it would be quite possible for one state to profit greatly from the experiments made
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by the others if there was some agency to convey this information from one legislative group to the other."

—Hon. John J. Pelter.

"The conference was of great value to all of us as it gave us views of the successful things which have been done in other states, as well as helpful suggestions as to what we can do in our state. Some who attended regretted that the subjects of utility regulation and the development of our water power were not taken up for discussion."

—Senator Earl H. Smith.

"I feel that this conference gave the members of the West Virginia Legislature an insight into needed legislation, from a nonpartisan standpoint, and that it would be advisable to hold these conferences biennially."

—Hon. R. M. Hiner.

Kentucky Pre-session Conference, 1933

The conference was attended by 84 Kentucky legislators and numerous other officials interested in legislation. The general idea is conveyed in the following two editorials from two sections of the country.

The News, Dec. 9, 1933, Middlesboro, Kentucky—"The pre-session conference of Kentucky legislators being held this week at the University of Kentucky, under the auspices of the American Legislators' Association, is one of the finest things that has happened lately. The discussion will be led by capable people, free of partisanship and with only one aim in mind, and that to outline remedial legislative programs for the coming session of the Kentucky legislature."

"The program includes the discussion of the principal economic, political, and social problems now facing Kentucky, and only the best interests of the state are being considered in the round table conference."

"Subjects stressed will be taxation reform, governmental reorganization, public debts, relief problems, liquor control, state finance, and county municipal economy."

"Of course it is too sanguine to hope that an ideal legislative program can be worked out which will be adopted in toto at the coming legislature, for things do not happen that way in Kentucky legislatures, but certainly we may believe that the incoming legislators who are present for the discussions will get many valuable viewpoints and have many things definitely fixed in their minds before they go to Frankfort."

"We need more such discussion. Our legislators all too often are completely at sea when a session meets, and then, without a program or without any definitely fixed ideas, they are left helpless in the see-sawing and log-rolling which begins after the session opens. We cannot expect much progress in such sessions, unless there are some outstanding legislators who have previously worked out sensible programs which they can jam through by exerting political pressure. Too often such measures are selfish and not all embracing with the long look for the good of all the people."

The Press Telegram, Long Beach, California—"It is being widely recognized that one of the reasons why American legislation so often meets inadequately the public needs is that legislators are ill prepared for their duties. When they assemble in the capitol of their respective states for annual or biennial sessions, they have given little time and thought to the subjects upon which it will be their duty to legislate."

"What is stated here is not a criticism of California or any other state. The criticism is intended for the system. Legislators as a rule receive a per diem compensation, which is at a modest enough rate even for the limited time that it runs; and it stops when the legislators adjourn. They are in session for a few months of each year or every other year, and in the brief time of their sessions they are besieged by a clamorous public, reinforced by importunate lobbyists."

"A great mass of proposed legislation is thrown into the legislative hopper; legislators mill around in an atmosphere of tension and confusion produced by debate, parliamentary maneuvering, lobbying, petitions, protests, and denunciations. Toward the end of the allotted period 'for the session, decisions, deferred as long as possible, are forced by exhaustion of the legislators' time and strength."

"From a recognition of these conditions has sprung in recent years a plan for legislative conferences in advance of the convening
of legislatures for their regular sessions. Several states actually have adopted this experimental scheme for bringing greater deliberation to the task of legislation.

"Kentucky is the fourth state to try out the plan—its conference of legislators having been held early this month. The American Legislators' Association has been interested in developing the device, believing that the possession of a program formulated before the legislature meets for its constitutional session will give it a great advantage in the performance of its duties."

**Colorado Legislative Planning Campaign**

The last pre-session conference sponsored by the Association was held in Denver, November 26-28, 1934. For the first time a program of legislative planning was developed in conjunction with the pre-session conference idea. Eight interim commissions were set up in advance to study outstanding legislative problems. A research staff was appointed to serve these committees. When the conference met, the reports of these commissions were considered, and the research staff was instructed to draft bills in accordance with the decisions of the conference. Typical newspaper comments and a list of the conferees follow:

*Fort Collins Express-Courier: By James R. Miller, Member of the Colorado Senate.*

When, of a legislature of 100 members, 87 take their tasks with a sufficient degree of seriousness that they will travel from all parts of Colorado and spend three days in Denver at their own expense in order to engage in a pre-session conference on legislation, it is a hopeful indication. At least it may be considered indicative of the caliber of the majority of the men who will comprise the personnel of the thirtieth general assembly when it meets at the capitol on January 2.

The interim committees, which were created to study legislative problems between sessions of the state assembly, are made up of leading citizens of Colorado, representing a variety of occupational interests and selected without regard for political affiliations. They serve absolutely without pay. Certainly it is a public service worthy of commendation. At least the reports gave the legislators some definite indication of the trend of public thinking on state issues, and some valuable information upon which to base studies during the month remaining before the assembly convenes.

Reports of these interim committees were, of course, the chief features of the conference. Probably the greatest interest centered in the committee on revenue and taxation, of which Mortimer Stone, Fort Collins attorney, is chairman. The report stated that for emergency purposes (such as the relief situation which is generally admitted to be the first problem which the general assembly must meet) the sales tax has the advantages of bringing quick revenue in volumes easy to forecast; of being an "installment payment" method felt less than most tax methods; and of avoiding duplication of any federal tax. It has the disadvantages of raising the costs of the necessities of life, of not being based upon ability to pay and therefore a heavier burden upon the poor, and of being more difficult for the small merchant to shift to the consumer than for the large merchant. The income tax, while slow in returns and therefore not adapted to emergency use, would be more suitable as a replacement for the tax on real estate.

Attorney General Paul P. Prosser praised the twenty-ninth assembly for much beneficial legislation, including the administrative code measure and amendment of the inheritance tax law.

*The Rocky Mountain News: A report submitted by Ferry Carpenter, chairman of the interim committee on county government, showed that, outside of Denver, there is a local unit of government levying taxes for general property for every 82 families.*

The report recommended four things:

1. A constitutional amendment to provide for consolidation of counties and county manager administration.
2. A law providing for receivership for insolvent counties.
3. Transfer of all county welfare work to a central state department.
4. Transfer of maintenance and building of all roads from the counties to the state highway department under revised form.

Professor J. H. Risley of Pueblo made a partial report for the interim committee on public schools. He described the present
system, whereby there are more than 2,000 school districts in the state, and said, a study is being made with a view to presenting a bill for a county unit system. "The change," he said, "is being considered chiefly with the idea of efficiency, but economy also will play a part in the program."

John E. Gross, secretary of the Colorado State Federation of Labor, outlined a survey made by the interim committee on social welfare legislation. Among his recommendations were the following: formation of a state public welfare department; more efficient county and state health administration; state child labor laws; more adequate workmen's compensation laws; state NRA legislation; minimum wage for women and minors; revision of factory inspection laws and of the laws governing the safety of coal mine workers.

Representative J. J. Trainor of Ordway advocated a retail sales tax to raise $10,000,000—with $4,000,000 allocated to relief purposes and $6,000,000 to be used for the purpose of removing the heavy tax burden from real property.

The Denver Post: Closer cooperation among the state's institutions of higher learning through the control of a state educational council was urged in a report by Paul W. Lee, chairman of the interim committee on higher educational institutions. He recommended that the council be composed of members from all judicial districts of the state, and an executive secretary. The secretary would be empowered to study the curricula and functions of the educational institutions and recommend changes to eliminate waste and overlapping of courses and to centralize activities.

Delegates

Presiding Officers: Ed C. Johnson, Governor; Ray H. Talbot, Lieutenant Governor.


Speakers: Leslie A. Miller, Governor of Wyoming.

Ben M. Cherrington, Director of the Foundation for the Advancement of the Social Sciences, University of Denver.

Oscar L. Chapman, Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

Lawrence Lewis, Member of the United States House of Representatives.

F. H. Guild, Research Director, Kansas Legislative Council.

Paul P. Prosser, Attorney General of Colorado.

Burdette G. Lewis, Member of the National Committee on Prisons.

Donald Howard, Statewide Social Welfare Survey of Colorado.

Allen Moore, Special Counsel, National Recovery Administration.

Henry W. Toll, Executive Director, American Legislators' Association.

John T. Barnett, Chairman, Colorado State Planning Board.

J. H. Risley, Superintendent of Schools, Pueblo.
PRE-SESSION CONFERENCES IN 1934

Four states—Arkansas, Colorado, Missouri, Tennessee—officially invited the "American Legislators' Association to organize pre-session conferences prior to the convening of their 1935 legislatures. Impressed by the success of the 1932 and 1933 pre-session conferences they were anxious to call together their legislators to plan a legislative agenda before the sessions convened.

It was necessary for the American Legislators' Association to disappoint these states and to suspend temporarily a valuable service since the organization of Motor Vehicle Conferences and the expanding work of the Interstate Reference Bureau have made heavy demands on the Association's limited funds and personnel.

Several requests for pre-session conferences—including one from Virginia—are on file for next fall. It is hoped that the organization of these conferences and of those for the legislatures convening in 1937 will be made possible by an adequate budget and staff. The work is too valuable to stop.