

CHAPTER XV

Looking Forward from the Assembly

Record of the Third General Assembly forecasts new courses and indicates advances in interstate cooperation movement.

By HAL HAZELRIGG

It was the night of January 21, 1937. The scene was the informal dinner preceding the Third General Assembly of the Council of State Governments at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington. Indiana's handsome former Governor, Paul V. McNutt, President of the Council, stood at his chair, calling the roll of the states.

A cylindrical, frosted-glass globe at the dais flashed red occasionally, signalling when a delegate had exceeded his allotted sixty seconds. State delegates responded.

Boyle, of California . . . Johnston, of Connecticut . . . Atkinson, of Georgia . . . Governor Horner, of Illinois . . . Treadway, of Indiana . . . Ryan, of Kansas . . . Sweeney, of Louisiana . . . Goudy, of Maine . . . Marbury, of Maryland . . . Hunt, of Massachusetts . . . Lamoreaux, of Michigan . . . Sletvold, of Minnesota . . . Lewis, of Missouri . . . Hartshorne, of New Jersey . . . Ostertag, of New York . . . Bryant, of North Carolina . . .

Ohio Strikes Responsive Chord

One by one, men whose names symbolize the racial strains forming the bloodstream of America, arose and answered the call for their states, near and distant. Their responses were friendly, incisive, sometimes humorous; and it was evident that they were glad to be there, glad and proud to join their states in this common enterprise.

Then—"Ohio!" called the chairman, and the sudden stillness in the hall indicated that in each mind there appeared the vision of turgid waters, pouring into homes and factories, smashing levees, endangering lives. For on that day the world had received the news that the surging enemy flood, had shut down cities and laid waste great areas in the Ohio Valley.

Machinery Set in Motion

The spokesman from Ohio arose slowly, his face grave. Ward, of Ohio. . . . With restrained emotion, he spoke his mind simply, asking that these conferees do something toward furthering interstate cooperation to ease the distress of the people in his region.

Before the four-day conference was over, the Ohio Valley Committee was functioning, and the Third General Assembly was on record as favoring interstate action in the Ohio Valley. Within two weeks, the nine states of the area had met in Columbus and formed the Interstate Commission on the Ohio Basin. Within another two weeks this commission had been organized in a session at Indianapolis; had set up machinery to cooperate with the appropriate federal agencies, and today it is embarked on a broad-gauge legislative and planning program to combat future Ohio floods.

The swift action of the Ohio Basin states epitomizes the rising movement for interstate cooperation, and dramatizes the growing cohesion of the states as expressed through affiliation with the Council of State Governments. The states simply have decided that the No Man's Land of government must be abolished; that certain problems running across state boundaries which cannot be solved completely, either by individual states or within the jurisdiction of the federal government, must be solved by intergovernmental action.

Twenty-five States Join Council

"Gembly," as the Council secretariat staff has nicknamed the General Assembly, marks the turning point of the interstate cooperation movement.

Today, twenty-five states have established Commissions on Interstate Cooperation, automatically aligning themselves with the Council of State Governments. Other states still in regular legislative session are rapidly passing measures designed to bring them into the movement.

The keynote of the Third General Assembly as expressed in the *Declaration of Interdependence of the Governments within the United States*, read by Henry W. Toll, Executive Director of the Council of State Governments, at the Friday banquet, permeated each session.

Elsewhere in this issue will be found the details of formal proceedings. But let us look at a brief digest of the record of this year's General Assembly and see what the action reported there forecasts in the great field of mutual interstate action.

Chicago Meeting Ordered

COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT—A firm and permanent foundation for progress of the Council of State Governments was established in the Interstate Commission on Council Development. Its chairman is Hon. Ellwood J. Turner, of Pennsylvania. The Assembly decided that a meeting of this permanent Commission is to take place in Chicago within the calendar year to take whatever action is necessary to develop the Council's organization and expansion.

SOCIAL SECURITY—The report for the Interstate Commission on Social Security was made by its chairman, William J. Ellis, Commissioner of Institutions and Agencies of New Jersey. Mr. Ellis cited the changing complexion in the general problem of relieving the poor, and stressed in his report that government must consider practical methods of securing a general over-all pattern of local relationships and practices.

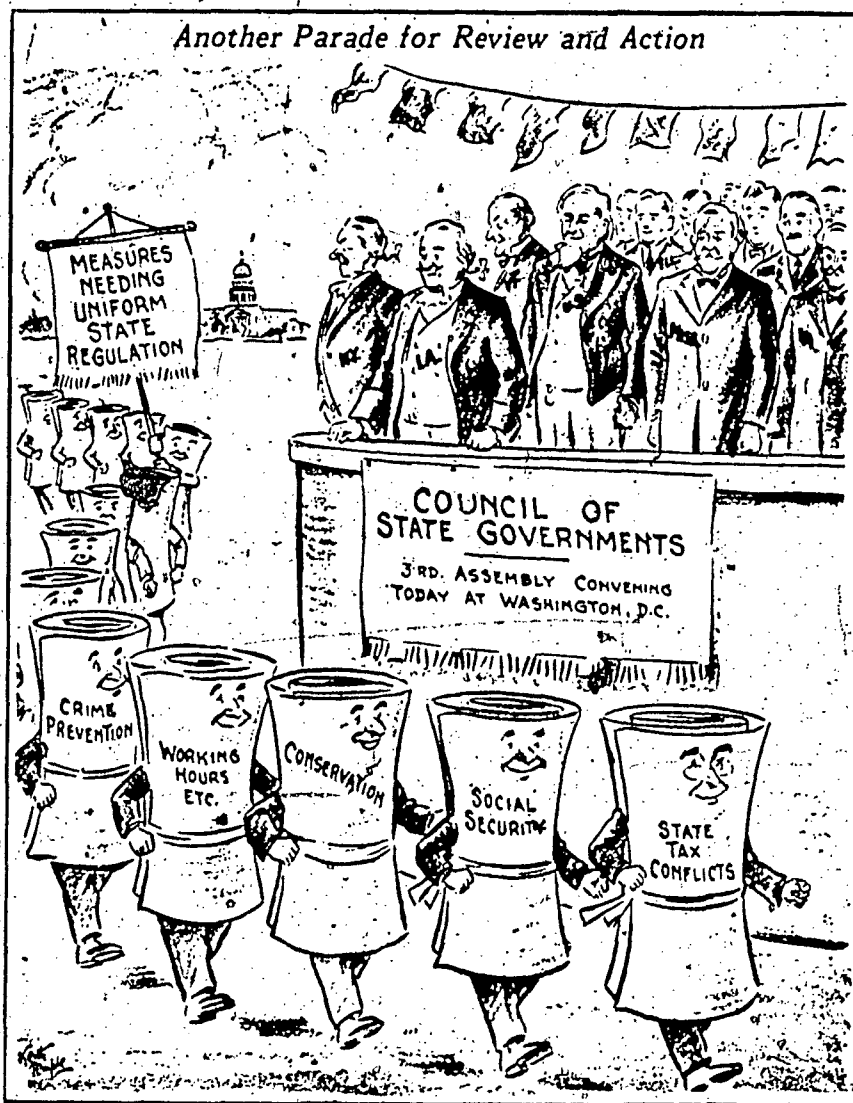
John G. Winant, as the then chairman of the Federal Social Security Board, presented the federal administration's viewpoint on federal-state cooperation in social security.

Mr. Winant said, in part: "If there is any enterprise that the United States government has engaged upon that calls for greater coordination and co-

operation between the federal government, the state governments and local governments, it is in the field of general welfare, certainly within the limited province of social security."

Need Tax Harmony

TAXATION—The report for the Interstate Commission on Conflicting Taxation was presented by Senator Seabury C. Mastick, of New York, Chairman; that, for the Tax Revision Council, by Representative Robert L. Doughton, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. Sen-



From New Orleans Times-Picayune

ator Mastick reiterated his commission's earlier recommendation that the federal tax on gasoline, which he said was originally levied only as a temporary emergency expedient, be relinquished by the federal government as a source of revenue for the exclusive use of the states. It was also recommended that Congress should leave electrical energy taxes for the states' exclusive use. This recommendation was again submitted for the consideration of Congress.

Representative Doughton said that the major objective of the Tax Revision Council is to develop machinery for simplifying and harmonizing federal, state, and local tax systems with the intermediary objective of assembling data and work material from which the proper ground-work can be laid.

CRIME—The report for the Interstate Commission on Crime was given by its Chairman, Judge Richard Hartshorne, of New Jersey. As a result of his report, the Assembly adopted resolutions on four uniform acts on crime, and urged their speedy enactment in all states of the Union.

United States Attorney-General Homer S. Cummings outlined the federal-state cooperation phases of his department's program. He said, at one point: "The movement for unified, integrated, consistent, and effective administration of criminal justice is making real strides. . . ."

"The federal government has sought to deal with crime in its interstate aspects, and of course we shall resist and continue to resist all attempts to take us into state or local criminal activities. We have sought, in other words, to develop in the Department of Justice a technique, a structure, predicated upon cooperation with state and local agencies."

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION—The great banquet held Friday, January 22, in the Mayflower Hotel's ballroom, again struck the note of cooperation among the governments within the United States. Many members of each house of Congress were present, in addition to the state delegates and local officials.

For the federal government a message from President Roosevelt was read by Council President McNutt. Louis Brownlow, Director of the Public Administration Clearing House, and chairman of the Pres-

ident's Committee on Administrative Management, spoke on "Intergovernmental Management." Henry W. Toll, Executive Director of the Council of State Governments, spoke for the states; and, in behalf of the local governments, the address of Clarence A. Dykstra, City Manager of Cincinnati, was read by Andrew Joyner, Jr., City Manager of Greensboro, North Carolina, and President of the American Municipal Association.

The central thought of the banquet followed an action taken earlier in the day when the Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution establishing a committee to promote interlevel cooperation among federal, state and local governments.

Another voice, speaking for the national government, had been heard when Vice President John Nance Garner appeared as the formal sessions opened and welcomed the delegates.

Governors and former governors of nine states participated in the Assembly.

State Senator T. V. Smith, of Illinois, spoke at the informal dinner, and also presented a brief report in behalf of the American Legislators' Association. Among the projects which have been suggested for ultimate research by the American Legislators' Association, Senator Smith listed the following studies: the unicameral system; the relation between the state legislature, the planning board, the legislative council, and their respective research staffs; the formulation of standards of procurement, training, and functions of staffs for legislatures; establishment of legislative councils; establishment of legislative reference bureaus, and consideration of a code of ethics for legislatures.

AGRICULTURE — Secretary Henry Wallace of the Department of Agriculture spoke to the Assembly on federal-state cooperation in agriculture. He emphasized the new phase of agricultural development, namely the rehabilitation of that part of the farm population which has been "submerged in poverty and chained by the handicaps of poor land, excessive debt, and insecurity in the occupancy of their homes." . . . "We cannot hope for a stable civilization unless these problems are solved. The goal is three-fold—security, conservation, and higher living standards."

Resources Committee Cooperates

PLANNING—Closely allied to the important problem of agriculture is that having to do with regional planning. Frederic A. Delano, Chairman of the Advisory Board of the National Resources Committee, spoke on federal-state activities in this respect.

Mr. Delano stressed the fact that "the National Resources Committee, as the temporary federal planning agency, has sought to encourage decentralization of planning activity, and has succeeded beyond its expectations in interesting the states in this important work.

"Political boundaries," he said, "are artificial barriers when it comes to planning the better use of our resources. We must deal with groups of states and, in many cases, a different combination of groups for each problem. There has thus sprung up a series of regional or interstate planning movements—partly in cooperation with the Council of State Governments and the Commissions on Interstate Cooperation, and partly by direct action of the National Resources Committee and the various state planning agencies."

REGIONAL ACTION—The regional activity illustrated by Mr. Delano's report is a new and interesting manifestation in the general development of the Council of State Governments. This movement is exemplified by the report delivered at the Assembly by Thomas A. Logue, Pennsylvania's Secretary of Internal Affairs, for the Interstate Commission on the Delaware River Basin.

Joint Responsibility

Mr. Logue asserted that the problems of the Delaware were national in the sense that

similar problems exist in the Columbia Valley of the Pacific Northwest, in the Red River Valley of the North, and in the Ohio and Tennessee Valleys; in fact, in most of the major drainage basins in the United States. He pointed out that the states in "Incodel," through their individual Commissions on Interstate Cooperation, undertook a joint responsibility for the problems arising from their mutual geographic participation in the Delaware River Basin.

THE INDIVIDUAL COMMISSION—

Demonstrating the potentialities of the individual commission on interstate cooperation, Harold C. Ostertag, Chairman of the New York Joint Legislative Committee on Interstate Cooperation, read his report.

Among its accomplishments the Commission reported passage of all four model crime-measures recommended by it; the pollution compact established by New Jersey, Connecticut, and New York; the nine-state highway safety conference held in New York City; the six-state eastern liquor control conference last November; a proposed regional conference on interstate conservation, and a proposed banking conference.

Thus, through all these advances reported toward solution of the most momentous problems facing government today, a new course is set for the interstate cooperation movement. Clearly, the Third General Assembly marks a milestone in the development of a potentially useful and comparatively new form of governmental machinery in the United States, rooted in the many permanently established Commissions on Interstate Cooperation operating through their central entity, the Council of State Governments.