

We were anxious to stay away from the holidays; the closer one got to Christmas and New Year, the less likely that the organization session, which is mentioned earlier, could be utilized to best advantage. Consequently, we decided upon the second Wednesday of December following the election.

Turning now to legislative sessions, I should say that this probably was the area where we had the greatest stalemate in the Committee. It is important, I think, to be precise about the meaning of terminology. There was considerable argument for what is popularly termed continuous sessions of the General Assembly, rather than following the present practice here in the General Assembly of the seventy-day session with a thirty-day extension under stipulated circumstances. There was a large body of Committee members who felt that it was rather impossible in 1967 to look forward even five, ten, fifteen or twenty years and say with any degree of certainty how many days a year the General Assembly would have to be in session in order to be an effective legislature.

If one recognizes that within a short period of time, scarcely within the span of a single decade, the budget has gone from \$146 million to over \$1 billion a year, and the sheer workload of going through it would be enough to decide against trying to set a definite limit upon the meeting time of the General Assembly.

The argument to the contrary was this: that the General Assembly, being composed of human beings, would be prone to procrastination and that if it did not have some particular deadline to which it would address itself and its schedule, it would never come to an end.

This was an argument which was made by a substantial number of legislators themselves, who felt that a deadline was necessary. The problem arose, however, not in recognizing the principle, but in applying it and coming up with a sufficient number of days. It was asked, why restrict the legislature to a ninety-day session or a seventy-day session; why make it an involuntary part-time body? How could you possibly hope to strengthen it, to put it on a par with the Executive and Judiciary Branches of Government, which meet consistently throughout the year? There is no part-time Governor, no part-time judicial system. These other two branches of the government do in fact work throughout the entire year, and if the idea was to

upgrade the legislature, shackling it and manacling it with specific time limitations seemed most unwise.

Consequently, the Committee adopted the following compromise: the General Assembly shall meet up to a period of 90 days, may extend itself for an additional period of 30 days by a majority vote, and by a three-fifths vote may extend itself an additional 30 days, so that there exists within the framework of section 3.12 the possibility that a General Assembly may go 150 calendar days.

The compromise seemed to provide sufficient time for not only the foreseeable future, but the remote future as well, and those members of the Committee who had opted to give the General Assembly the power to determine its own length of sessions agreed, or a portion of them agreed to the point where we were able to obtain a sufficient majority to make it a Committee recommendation.

Reading the precise language of 3.12, "The General Assembly may provide by law for an organization session prior to the convening of the regular session; the General Assembly shall convene in regular session on the third Wednesday of January of each year, unless otherwise prescribed by law, and may continue in session for a period not longer than 90 days, provided that by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of each house a session may be extended for a period not longer than 30 days, and that by the affirmative vote of three-fifths of the members of each house a session may be extended a second time for a period not longer than 30 days. The governor may convene a special session of the General Assembly at any time, and must convene a special session upon the written request of three-fifths of all the members of each house. The Presiding Officer of the House of Delegates and the Presiding Officer of the Senate, acting concurrently, may convene a special session of the General Assembly at any time."

I have already discussed the 90-30-30 compromise. I point out to you that at the outset of section 3.12 we provided for the first time for an organization session prior to the convening of the regular session.

The purpose of this session is one which members of the legislature have desired to achieve for quite some time. The idea, of course, would be that the legislature would meet, would elect its presiding officers, could accept bills which had been filed,