

DOUBT SEEN IN FILLING OF CONLON POST

Some Say Question Of
Successor May Have
To Go To Courts

City Council President Dies At Estimates Board Meeting

Legal authorities in municipal and political circles last night declared there was considerable doubt as to the method of selecting a successor to Thomas E. Conlon, President of the City Council, who died suddenly yesterday at a meeting of the Board of Estimates.

Although no one would be quoted, it was said the matter might have to be decided by the courts. Meanwhile, under the provisions of the City Charter, James F. Arthur, Vice-President of the Council, will act as temporary presiding officer.

Stricken Soon After Meeting

Mr. Conlon, who was 60, was stricken shortly after the meeting of the Board of Estimates had been called to order. He was removed to a couch in the near-by office of Galen L. Tait, adviser to the Mayor, and then was taken in a Fire Department ambulance to Mercy Hospital, where further efforts to revive him failed.

As President of the Council, Mr. Conlon was president of the Board of Estimates as well as a member of the Board of Awards, and had met with the latter body just prior to the meeting of the Board of Estimates.

Mr. Conlon's health had not been strong in recent years.

Slated To Meet Monday

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for 5 P. M. Monday. It was asserted yesterday at the City Hall that the Council would convene and then adjourn immediately out of respect to Mr. Conlon.

It was said unofficially that under the Charter no member of the City Council can be elected to succeed Mr. Conlon. If it is decided finally that the Council has the right to select a new president

then someone must be selected from the citizenry of Baltimore who can meet the qualifications of a Mayor, it was said, since in the event of a vacancy in the Mayor's office, the President of the Council succeeds the Mayor.

Charter Provision "Not Clear"

Attaches of the City Hall asserted there seemed to be no clear provision in the City Charter to take care of such a situation as that created by the death of Mr. Conlon.

They point out that when Howard Bryant, President of the Council, died in September, 1930, James J. O'Meara, Vice-President, officiated as acting President until the end of Mr. Bryant's term, the following May.

However, Mr. O'Meara did not receive the salary of President which now is \$5,000 a year. The same situation would arise, officials said, if Mr. Arthur, who receives \$3,000 a year, would be permitted to serve as

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CONLON POST DOUBT RAISED

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acting President. Mr. Arthur could not be paid the President's salary, succeed to the Mayoralty in the event of a vacancy, or serve as a member of the Board of Estimates and the Board of Awards. The President of the Council is president of the Estimates Board and also a member of the Board of Awards.

Called Politest Candidate

Mr. Conlon, whose political career began in his latter years, was recognized by Democratic leaders as the politest candidate the party had produced in many years. In none of his campaigns did he resort to name calling, to vitriolic attack, innuendo or personalities.

He spoke in a quiet tone and without gestures, his attitude always being more than retiring than forceful. Yet, he could emphasize a point by a slight rise in the voice.

Mr. Conlon was a family man. During campaigns he delighted in narrating how he had several sons and a son-in-law in the armed forces and how he and Mrs. Conlon were caring for his son-in-law's family.

Avoided Publicity

Mr. Conlon, whenever possible, avoided publicity.

However, there were few men in politics who liked better to tell a story or to listen to one.

Mr. Conlon used to explain that he was a railroad employe because railroading was in his blood. His father was an employe of the New York Central Railroad for fifty years.

Native Of Ohio

Mr. Conlon was born June 27, 1883, at Toledo, Ohio. He attended Toledo grade schools and La Salle Academy in Toledo. As a youth, he entered the service of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad as a stenographer. In 1910 he was transferred from Toledo to Pittsburgh and, in 1918, he came to Baltimore as supervisor of freight suits, preparing law actions growing out of lost and damaged freight.

On January 1, 1940, he was made assistant to the general freight claims agent, and on May 1, 1941, he was promoted to tax agent. He became general tax agent for the railroad on November 1, 1942.

Led His Ticket

Mr. Conlon's entrance into politics was paved by friends without his knowledge or consent. In 1934 he underwent an operation and took a boat trip to the Pacific

Coast to recuperate. While he was away a neighbor and admirer sent him a candidacy certificate for the Legislature from the Fifth district to be filled out.

Mr. Conlon, returning, made only a few speeches in the few weeks that remained before the election. However, he led his ticket. He was affiliated with the wing of the party led by William Curran after 1938, although previously he had been considered a member of the faction headed by former Mayor Jackson.

Banished Lobbyists

All factions of the party got behind Mr. Conlon in 1939 and gave him a testimonial dinner on the eve of the Mayoralty election. The year before he had been elected to the House of Delegates for a second term and had been elected its Speaker.

As Speaker, Mr. Conlon displayed his decisiveness, although, as usual, quietly. One of his first rules was to banish lobbyists from the floor of the House. Several times the lobbyists tried to overrule him, but each time they were defeated.

Friend Of Governor

Throughout the 1942 session of the Legislature, Mr. Conlon and Governor O'Connor developed a close political and personal friendship. Mr. O'Connor urged Mr. Conlon to seek reelection. So did Mr. Curran and Mr. Jackson. Mr. Conlon, consenting to become a candidate again, went back to the Speaker's chair by a substantially larger vote.

At the last Mayoralty primaries, Mr. Conlon became a candidate for the Presidency of the Council against the incumbent, Lieut. Col. Richard C. O'Connell. Mr. Conlon won the primary and the subsequent general election.

Soon after his inauguration, Mr. Conlon suffered a heart attack and entered Mercy Hospital where he remained for some time. He later went to Florida to regain his health and strength.

Was Member Of K. Of C.

A Catholic, Mr. Conlon was a member of All Saints' Church and the Knights of Columbus. He also was a member of the Bar Association of Baltimore city and the Optimist Club.

He is survived by his wife, formerly Miss Marcella Elizabeth Quigley, whom he married in 1908 in Pittsburgh; three sons, Lieut. Frank Conlon, USA; Joseph Conlon, who is serving in the navy, and Thomas E. Conlon, Jr., an attorney in Kansas City, and three daughters, Mrs. John Algood, Miss Marcella Conlon and Miss Elizabeth Conlon.