

JOURNAL
OF THE
House of Representatives
OF THE
REGULAR SESSION
OF THE
Forty-Seventh Legislature

BEGUN AND HELD AT
THE CITY OF AUSTIN
JANUARY 14, 1941



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Austin

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The Honorable Secretary of State announced that the next business in order is the election of a Speaker of the House of Representatives, of the Forty-seventh Legislature, and announced that nominations for Speaker are now in order.

Hon. C. H. Gilmer of Edwards County nominated Hon. Homer Leonard of Hidalgo County, speaking as follows:

Mr. Secretary of State, Members of the 47th Legislature of the State of Texas, Ladies and Gentlemen:

We are meeting here today to begin the 47th Session of the Texas Legislature under new and threatening conditions, conditions that were not contemplated two years ago, conditions that threaten our representative and democratic form of government. The world is in turmoil and many of the strong and established nations of the earth have fallen to the dictator-controlled nations.

I think that circumstance and that tragic condition should move this body of chosen representatives of the State of Texas to consecrate themselves anew, not necessarily to the solution of the problems that remain to this body from the Forty-sixth Legislature, but in addition, to acquit ourselves as representatives of a free people and to pledge ourselves with an unusual feeling of thankfulness that we are yet able to continue under our chosen system and of hope that succeeding generations and succeeding Legislatures will enjoy that wonderful privilege.

Now, ladies and gentlemen of the Forty-seventh Legislature, with that thought in mind, and under those conditions, I think it behooves us to choose of the best material this Forty-seventh Legislature presents for leadership, for how worthy may be our purpose, how strong our determination, how great our numbers, we will not succeed unless we have at the head a man who is capable of coordinating those energies and those faculties, in the service of Texas.

Forty-two years ago today, in another state, there was ushered into this world a man who was destined to make his mark in the State of Texas, and it was fitting, appropriate, and significant that this man was born in Texas County, Missouri, because he came to Texas in 1927 after having equipped himself for a profession that he doesn't now follow, to establish himself in one of the great counties of Texas, in one of the new sections of Texas and helped to make that new section one of the greatest advertised sections of Texas, and I refer to the Rio Grande Valley.

This man has had a wealth of experience, not just in legislative work

—no, he has been grounded in many ways. He has been a geologist; he has edited a school paper; he has worked for companies and he knows that side of human life and human experience. Since he has been in Texas he has been associated with a business which to my mind gives him a better insight into all of the various ramifications of statehood, into all of personal experience, the top and the bottom. In other words, in the newspaper business.

This gentleman that I am going to propose to you has had opportunity to see a broad cross section of Texas life and Texas business throughout Texas for the last thirteen continuous years.

To pass on, he came to this body something like twelve years ago, not quite twelve years ago, because he begins today his twelfth consecutive year, his sixth tenure of office as a member of this body.

While he has served here he has risen through the ranks; he has worked in your various committees, and in this period of time culminated that service with the chairmanship for two successive terms of your most important committees, your Appropriation Committee and your Committee on Revenue and Taxation.

This man is a friendly, accessible man. I will venture to say that no man in that length of time is more widely acquainted, and is called by name or nickname, by given name or nickname, by more people than this man I am going to propose to you. He is a friendly, accessible, "meetable" man, if you please. He is a man that is capable; he is a man that is well grounded in the necessary background of human experience and a man that I know will well acquit himself in this position, which this body of people are seeing fit to place him in without opposition.

As I said a moment ago, he is an experienced man, and at this time when perhaps, and we do have, we have enough of local issues (I mean state issues by that)—we have enough to occupy ourselves, but I think over all of us falls the shadow of the necessity of serving in this position and trying to fill it in such a way that regardless of what may come to pass during these two years, we can hand it over to our succes-

sors in the same inviolate condition in which we received it, and it is with the feeling that this man can meet our situations that are of concern to the entire State of Texas as he has met these smaller honors and responsibilities that you have placed on him in the past, and with the sincere belief and with the confidence that you will be satisfied with entrusting the leadership of this Forty-seventh Legislature to the man I am going to name that I suggest him. And it speaks well of him and of the manner in which he has acquitted himself as a member of the community from which he comes that his neighbors and his friends are here today to see you place into his hands the leadership of the Forty-seventh Legislature. It is therefore my privilege, and I give to you in nomination for the office of Speaker-ship of this, the Forty-seventh Legislature, the name of my good friend from McAllen, Hidalgo County, the Honorable Homer Leonard.

Hon. Kirby Kelly of Walker County seconded the nomination of Hon. Homer Leonard.

Hon. Rushing Manning of Shelby County seconded the nomination of Hon. Homer Leonard.

Hon. Hop Halsey of Lubbock County seconded the nomination of Hon. Homer Leonard and moved that nominations for Speaker of the House be now closed and that the Chief Clerk be instructed to cast the entire vote of the House for Hon. Homer Leonard for Speaker.

The motion prevailed unanimously.

In accordance with the above action, the Chief Clerk then cast the entire vote of the House for Hon. Homer Leonard for Speaker.

The Honorable Secretary of State then declared Hon. Homer Leonard to be the duly elected Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Forty-seventh Legislature.

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED

The Honorable Secretary of State announced the appointment of the following members as a committee to escort Honorable Homer Leonard and his family to the Speaker's stand for the purpose of administering the oath of office to him:

Messrs. Reed of Dallas, Kersey, Hartzog, Celaya, Vale and Leyendecker.

The committee having escorted Mr. Leonard to the Speaker's stand, he then took the constitutional oath of office which was administered by Hon. M. O. Flowers, Secretary of the State.

The Honorable Secretary of State then presented Hon. W. R. Chambers, of Brown County.

Mr. Chambers in turn presented Hon. Homer Leonard, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Forty-seventh Legislature, speaking as follows:

Members of the House, one of the great statesmen of the past made the very remarkable observation that the most sublime scene that he had ever observed was that of the elected Representatives of a Free People busily engaged in the process of making their laws.

The lapse of time with its many changes has demonstrated the profound depth of this observation.

Today 150 members have met here for the purpose of making needed laws, to make more secure the Peace, Happiness, and Well-being of more than six million Free People.

The orderly processes of Freedom by Law and Justice have never been to the liking of the proud, the arrogant, or to those who seek to live by the sweat of other men's brows, nor to those who would wade to glory through the blood of their fellow men, nor to them who would satiate their greed by wringing the pittance from famished hands. These are the groups who have no place in this Government of ours.

Fellow Members, by our example and our labors here in this disturbed hour of world conditions, let us proclaim to a doubting world, a world in sorrow, to a world that is walking in the shadows, that the scales of Justice are evenly balanced in the State House in Austin.

Fellow Members, one of the most important steps in orderly Government is the selecting of a presiding officer who is fair, honest, and capable. The ballots which you have just cast are sufficient evidence that each of you realizes that political axiom. You have elected a Speaker

who stands every test of a Gentleman, and who stands every test of a scholar, and who will shirk no responsibilities. His Patriotism is of the highest order.

Any man who can carry every vote in this House for the important position of Speaker needs no further introduction to the Members of this House or to the citizens of Texas, but in fairness to the Speaker himself, for the long hours of labor that he has spent fitting himself for this important position to which he has been elevated, we beg your indulgence for a brief biographical sketch of the life of the Honorable Homer Leonard.

Honorable Homer Leonard was born in the State of Missouri in 1898. He received his early education in that State, graduating from the School of Mines, and as a further evidence of the serious mindedness of Homer Leonard, he graduated from that school majoring in civil engineering, which is a degree that is difficult to obtain. Any ordinary man would have there rested his academic laurels, but not so with Homer Leonard. He next broadened his scholarship by mastering telegraphy.

It has been truly said that the Speaker of this House should be one who has wide and varied experiences. The various groups of our citizens expect the Speaker of this House to know something of each one's occupation. We will say to the students of Texas that Homer Leonard is one of you. To the telegraph operator and to the laboring man, he is one of you and knows your problems. To the school teachers, we say to you that Homer Leonard is not a stranger to your problems, for he, too, has taught in the public schools of Texas. To those of you who believe that the Speaker of the House should be a lawyer, we answer you that Homer Leonard has mastered your course, and can labor with the best of you. To the newspaper men of Texas, we can say that Homer Leonard is one of you, for he was the editor of the McAllen Monitor. To those of you who labor in the skilled occupations, we commend Homer Leonard to you for he has risen to the rank of Master Printer. To those citizens who

expect of the Speaker one who has had legislative experience, we say to them, Homer Leonard has served six terms in this House, and that his work here has been of the highest order is evidenced by the fact that he has served on the most important committees of this House, having been Chairman of the Committee on Revenue and Taxation, and also having served on the Committee on Appropriations. To those citizens of Texas who say that the citizens who know a man most intimately should have faith in him, we say to you that Homer Leonard was selected by his neighbors as McAllen's most useful and outstanding citizen. To that group of citizens, which includes the majority of Texans, who believe that the Speaker of this House should be a man who loves his home, to them we say to you that Homer Leonard's home life is ideal. The success which he has attained can in no small degree be attributed to his wife and family.

To those who feel that Homer Leonard's success has been one without a battle, let us say to you that he knows the meaning of standing up for his convictions against all opposition.

He first came into notice in Texas as the champion of clean and good government, and the battle that he waged is memorable in the political archives of Texas, being opposed by a political machine of tremendous power. He was forced to make a campaign as a write-in candidate. Fellow Members, in so far as we can find, he is the only man who has ever been elected to a seat in this House under such a handicap.

And in conclusion, fellow Members, we are proud that Homer Leonard is in the prime of his manhood, ripe in scholarship, sincere in purpose. The State of Texas needs his ability.

Fellow Members, it is my happy privilege to introduce to you the Honorable Homer Leonard, the Speaker of the House of the 47th Legislature.

Mr. Leonard then addressed the House as follows:

Mr. Chambers, Mr. Secretary of State, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House and citizens of Texas:

I am the victim of my friends. I had wanted, and I urged no longer ago than Sunday, that there be no fine phrases said in my behalf. I very much wanted to do the thing that my eminent predecessor did two years ago—that is, that in the nomination of myself for this high place there be nothing spoken except the bare necessities of those words that would place my name in nomination. But we cannot always have the things we want, and my friends have ruled otherwise.

Things have been said here this morning of which I am not in the least deserving, but those words and those phrases come out of an enthusiasm of friendship which I am proud to claim with these men who have spoken them of me.

I had hoped also to be able this morning to bring to you members, and to you citizens of Texas, something that would provoke in your minds even more worthwhile thoughts than now exist there, but in my poor faltering way, with the few words at my command, I am, of course, unable to do that.

This ought to be a time also for some ponderous pronouncement on my part; perhaps I ought here be able to expound some sound, some wise philosophy of government in order that it might make a little mark on history's pages, and yet I find myself in my mean ability unable to accomplish that.

I want to say in the beginning that this honor that you have conferred upon me has not come through my efforts alone. As a matter of truth, I have contributed very little to it. My friends are responsible, of course, for the place that I hold here this morning. I have done very little in my own behalf. Weak indeed we are without the help of our friends. I have been blessed with that help.

I am grateful to you members, to each and every one of the 149 of you. You have chosen me unanimously. I cannot help but bow to you this morning in grateful appreciation for your unanimity of thought in my behalf. I am grateful also to others who have helped to make my election possible. I am grateful to all the former Members of this House with whom I have served. They have helped tremendously in

talking to you new Members who did not know me until you saw me after the election last summer.

I am grateful to the non-Members, to those who have never been Members of the House, but with whom I have become acquainted in the years that I have served here in Austin. They have been a great deal of help.

I am grateful to radio commentators for their kind words.

I am grateful to the newspapers of Texas, at home and over the State. I am especially grateful to the capitol correspondents here in Austin. Almost universally they have been kind to me.

I want at this time to take special note of one, Mr. Howard Marshall of the Associated Press. Not long ago he wrote a little story about me and he began this way, "Debonair Homer Leonard." You cannot overestimate the power of the press. Two days later I received a letter from a colored brother down in Grimes County who sought work as a porter here, addressed to "Debonair Homer Leonard, Austin, Texas."

To all of these I am grateful, and finally I am grateful to the people of Hidalgo County who have six times returned me to Austin. I cannot do enough, of course, to repay the debt I owe them. I shall only do my best as I have in the past.

I am grateful for this delegation here today from the Valley. I am grateful also, and hope you will pardon this personal mention, I am grateful for the presence here of my business partner, Mr. E. C. Hall of McAllen. Fourteen years we have been partners with never a cross word. That is not my fault. Had it not been for him, and the splendid way he has conducted our business, I could not have served here during the past years. I am grateful to you all.

I am grateful for myself, of course, but I am, I think, more grateful for my wife and my babies, my parents and my wife's parents and our other relatives who sit here on my left.

I am grateful to Reverend H. W. Shirley of McAllen, who came for the invocation this morning. To all of these I express a deep sense of gratitude and an utter lack of any ability to show by my deeds my real appreciation.

You have chosen me as your Speaker. In doing so, you have been unanimous in that choice, and yet you could have chosen from this number of 149 many men abler to occupy this office than I. It just perhaps is not their time to be Speaker. I think perhaps—I am quite certain that in most ways they would have done a better job for you that I can do.

I have come to know pretty well the Members of this new House, and I think I can say in all safety, there has never been a finer group to sit in the Hall than those who sit here today.

We hear a great deal of criticism about the Legislature, but I am not one of those who believe that that criticism is justified. We have here a cross section of Texas. We have men and women coming from all walks of life and coming from all sections, of course, of this great State. They come representing every school of thought in governmental philosophy. Some are known as liberal Members, some are known as conservative Members and some, most in fact, belong to that great group of reasonable men and women to whom you can appeal with reason. I have an abiding faith in the Legislature of Texas.

I have served I think with 450 men in addition to this group who sit here now during the time I have been in Austin. I have known in those men very, very few who were not absolutely sincere in their desire to serve the people of their districts and the people of Texas.

Those people of Texas have reposed their trust in you. Certainly, at a time like this, it is most fitting to invoke the aid of the Almighty, and with that divine help I am confident that you are not going to breach that trust. I have every confidence in you as individual Members of this House.

Many Speakers, I say, have served here. I believe I am the forty-sixth to be named. Most of those men have been able men—men of wisdom and great ability. I have served under four. I served first under Fred Minor of Denton. I served then for two terms under Coke Stevenson of Junction, one of the ablest men who ever sat in this or any other legislative Hall,

a man who now presides across the rotunda. Then I served under Bob Calvert of Hillsboro, another most able Speaker, and then I served during the past two years under my eminent predecessor, Emmett Morse of Houston.

It is a little bit terrifying as I go back through the years in my memory and contemplate the wise men who have sat here and know that my own feeble efforts must fall far short of their accomplishments. I shall only do the best that I can.

As I mention Mr. Morse I want to acknowledge before you to him my appreciation for this handsome Speaker's chair. This Speaker's chair was given to me by Mr. Morse. I shall occupy it until my service as Speaker ends, and then I hope to take it home with me and in its turn I shall leave for the man who succeeds me another chair, which I hope will be as pleasing and satisfactory to him as this one is to me.

I have named here this morning four honorary pages to the Speaker. The last three named are the little daughters of very dear friends of mine in McAllen. They are not able to be present here today. They are Barbara Lynn Miller, Betty Jane Dunlavey and Betty Ann Cook. Then I have as the other page, the Honorable Merritt Gibson, and I have him for protection purposes. The Honorable Merritt Gibson, a former distinguished Member of this House and now the County Judge of Gregg County, and the President of the Texas County Judges Association. Won't you please stand, Merritt?

Now I have seen something over a hundred of you and you have placed with me your applications for the committees on which you would like to serve. There are still about forty-five of you to be seen. I hope to get to that during the coming week.

One of the greatest tasks the Speaker has is to name the standing committees. It is a great physical task, a great mechanical work in itself, aside from the Speaker's desire and his utter inability to please each Member of the House. I want to tell you I am going to do the very best I can in that job. I shan't please you all, I know that, but please believe me, nothing would give me greater pleasure, and if you don't

receive the committee appointments you desire, then please remember I have done the very best I can.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, may I again offer to you my grateful appreciation for what you have done, and pledge to you my earnest efforts in your behalf, seeking your cooperation every day during the next four months? I trust and believe that this will be for Texas a constructive session in behalf of the people.

May I now at this time present to you the ones who make this honor worthwhile? May I present my wife, my daughter, Barbara May and my other little daughter, Marcia Fae?