

**JOURNAL**  
**OF THE**  
**House of Representatives**  
**OF THE**  
**REGULAR SESSION**  
**OF THE**  
**Fifty-second Legislature**  
**OF THE**  
**STATE OF TEXAS**  
**BEGUN AND HELD AT**  
**THE CITY OF AUSTIN**  
**JANUARY 9, 1951**



**A. C. Baldwin & Sons**  
**Austin**

### ELECTION OF SPEAKER

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

Honorable Sterling Williams, of Scurry County, nominated Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt of San Saba County, for the office of Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-second Legislature, speaking as follows:

"Mr. Secretary of State, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House:

It is my privilege and honor to place in nomination for Speaker of this House the name of a close and an eminent friend. One who has served ten years in this House of Representatives, so satisfactorily to the people of his district that they have seen fit to elect him for a sixth consecutive term. I have served with this gentleman from San Saba County, as many of you have, for a period of six years. A period in which I have been sincerely impressed by his intelligence and his instinctive sense of fairness and honesty. I can say that the Legislature has never had a more sincere and conscientious member, and during his ten years in office, I have never heard him spoken of disparagingly by anyone.

He was born in San Saba County, Texas, where he was reared and where his parents still live. After graduating from San Saba High School as valedictorian of his class, he attended the University of Texas, as an honor student. He gained recognition in law school and was se-

lected as one of the editors of the Texas Law Review. After earning his law degree he returned to San Saba to practice law. He is at this time senior member in a law firm that is outstanding in that section of the State. He has been active in civic affairs in his community and has served as president of his Junior Chamber of Commerce and of his Rotary Club. During World War II he left his practice, his business, and his freedom as a civilian and served in the Navy of the United States.

He is past commander of his post of Veterans of Foreign Wars and is a member of that organization and of the American Legion. Both he and his wife are members of the Baptist Church and they have three lovely children. He is one of the best posted members in parliamentary procedure it has been my pleasure to serve with. He is honest and he will remain honest. He will be fair as Speaker as he has been as a member. He has every qualification to recommend him to be Speaker.

So my friends, I place before you, in nomination for Speaker of the House of Representatives of the 52nd Legislature, the name of Reuben Senterfitt of San Saba County, Texas."

Honorable Joe M. Kilgore, of Hidalgo County, seconded the nomination of the Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt, speaking as follows:

Mr. Secretary:

Members of the House of Representatives:

I think it not amiss to view this opening day of the Texas Legislature from the larger and broader

perspective. We convene at a time when the entire world stands on an abyss of uncertainty, when we cannot longer presume the further existence of the democratic process without armed defense of it; at a time when our state faces its greatest financial crisis in recent years; at a time when our very rights of statehood have been shattered by an unlawful seizure!

In such an hour the genius of Americans and Texans has been to provide leadership, solidarity under that leadership, and oneness of purpose.

We have an opportunity here today to avail ourselves of the highest calibre of leadership. Reuben Senterfitt is a man of character, of deep understanding. He is possessed of great Christian devotion to duty, and fortified with long experience in legislative functions.

We will demonstrate to the strife-torn world the real function of basic representative government—we will demonstrate to our state our sincere devotion to the duty before us; we will do these things with force and impact by electing the gentleman from San Saba, the Honorable Reuben Senterfitt, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-second Legislature.

Honorable Horace B. Houston, Jr., of Dallas County, also seconded the nomination of the Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt, speaking as follows:

Mr. Secretary of State and Ladies and Gentlemen of the House:

"I speak to you as one who has just come upon the scene, about the impression which I have received on contact with Reuben Senterfitt. I met him for the first time just a few months ago. I had had nothing to do with the move which has placed him on the brink of a position of great honor. He had sufficient support to place him there before I even knew him.

What was my impression of him? He was a complete stranger to me, yet I noticed immediately his entirely open and friendly attitude, his modesty mixed with self assurance, his clear eye.

You can imagine how encouraging it is to one who has previously known little about this great body

of Texas patriots, the House of Representatives, to find that its members had thrust forward a man like Reuben Senterfitt. It made me feel that the affairs of this state have been in good hands.

Few people away from the Capitol know that the Speaker of the House of Representatives holds a position which is second to none in the great state of Texas in power, prestige, and honor. The general public does not know the importance of exercising great care to see that only a man of unquestioned fairness and intelligence obtains that position.

When the total time is added that I have spent in the presence of Reuben Senterfitt, whether in private or in the company of others, it does not exceed a few hours. Yet, in that short period of time I have been impressed with the feeling that he has a set of principles which he lives and will be guided by at all times.

Devotion to principle is the only thing that can drive a member of this House to extraordinary activity. Reuben Senterfitt's high principles give him an anchor which is so sorely needed in these perilous times. I am encouraged by the prospects which his leadership opens before us.

Speaking of extraordinary activity to which devotion to high principles can drive a man, you are all aware, and I wish the general public knew, of the countless and I hope not thankless hours which this fine man has already spent in seeing that the Fifty-second Legislature gets off to a quick and businesslike start. We and the people of Texas must be grateful to him.

Mr. Secretary of State, I regret that I can claim no part in having placed Reuben Senterfitt in the forefront, yet I do the ones who have done so, and myself, great honor by seconding the nomination of Reuben Senterfitt as Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-second Legislature of Texas.

Honorable Clyde Whiteside, of Baylor County, then moved that nominations for the office of Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-second Legislature be closed, and that the temporary Chief Clerk of the House be instructed to

cast the votes of all Members of the House of Representatives for the Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt for Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-second Legislature."

The motion prevailed unanimously.

The Honorable John Ben Shepperd declared the Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt to be the duly elected Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-second Legislature.

#### COMMITTEE TO ESCORT THE SPEAKER-ELECT TO THE SPEAKER'S ROSTRUM

The Honorable Secretary of State announced the appointment of the following committee to escort the Speaker-elect to the Speaker's rostrum, for the administering of the Oath of Office:

Messrs. Williams of Scurry, Graham, Staton, Wood of Smith, and Warden.

The Committee then escorted the Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt to the Speaker's rostrum.

#### OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED

The Honorable Secretary of State then administered the constitutional Oath of Office to Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt, as Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The Honorable Secretary of State then presented Honorable Callan Graham of Kimble County, who presented Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-second Legislature to the House.

Mr. Senterfitt then addressed the House, speaking as follows:

"In accomplishing for us the enormous task of providing the greatest system of government yet devised by man, sometimes democracy seems to be of the nature as to ignore personalities.

It is the casual function of democracy to take a man of ordinary ability and place him in a position of the highest importance in governmental affairs.

It is a safeguard of democracy that an officer thus selected finds it impossible to escape human emotions.

Such is the position in which I find myself at this time.

Therefore, I seek your indulgence as I try to express to you my feelings upon being chosen Presiding Officer of this House for this Session of the Legislature.

Mere words cannot tell you of my gratitude for your friendship, for your kindness and your thoughtfulness, for your most generous cooperation, your hard work, and the expression of your confidence.

You have taken time, I know, from your own personal affairs in order to bring the Speakership election to a successful conclusion.

I say, now, to each and every member of this House, that I am determined to sustain your trust in me by serving you with humility, with sincere and utmost effort, and with a deep sense of responsibility to each Member of this House and to all the people of Texas.

Approximately 7,700,000 citizens have an investment in the Great Enterprise we call Texas. You and I have been chosen by democratic process as the Governing Board of this Great Enterprise.

We have many problems of grave importance facing us. We must first and foremost, cooperate fully with all governmental agencies of this state and of the United States in the accomplishment of a defense program to meet and overcome every difficulty of the present national emergency.

This Legislature must formulate a sound fiscal policy that will care for our necessary financial needs without undue and unfair hardship on any particular individual or group of individuals.

This Legislature must reapportion legislative districts in this state according to the Constitutional Law of this state and possibly realign congressional districts.

There are other essential matters upon which we must successfully act before we can conclude the Session. I shall not take time to enumerate them now.

I have said before, and I repeat: 'This Legislature is as well qualified as any Texas has ever had.' In my conversations with you, I have been impressed with your determination to do a good job for Texas.

We are not faced with an easy task. Much of our serious and most difficult work will be rewarded only with the satisfaction derived from seeing the job well done and from the everlasting friendships of those with whom we labor.

Let us enter into our tasks with courage, and conviction, with caution, and with cooperation, so that when the day of final adjournment is reached, we will have left a record of which all Texans will forever be proud.

With your permission, I would like to acknowledge the patience, and understanding, and unselfish devotion to my candidacy of a very special person. Without her, I would not be talking to you now. Of course, you know I refer to Mrs. Senterfitt. Probably, only one who has served in the Legislature, and particularly one who has been a candidate for Speaker can really appreciate the many sacrifices demanded of his wife and family."