

JOURNAL
OF THE
House of Representatives
OF THE
REGULAR SESSION
OF THE
Fifty-third Legislature
OF THE
STATE OF TEXAS

BEGUN AND HELD AT
THE CITY OF AUSTIN
JANUARY 13, 1953



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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-third Legislature, and announced that nominations for Speaker are now in order.

The Chair recognized the Honorable Joe Kilgore of Hidalgo County who placed in nomination for Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-third Legislature the Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt of San Saba County, Mr. Kilgore speaking as follows:

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

The genius of Texans and Americans has been twofold, to furnish leadership timber and to select from that timber great leaders. In recent years men and women throughout this great land have been heartened and gratified to see men of all walks of life lay aside personal profit and gain to respond to the call of duty to high office.

The members of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-third Legislature have, with overwhelming urgency, pressed upon one of their colleagues a precedent-shattering demand to again accept the heavy responsibility of the highest office within their power to confer. You know as I do, that Reuben Senterfitt did not want or seek this office again; that only a sense of honor and devotion to duty commensurate with every part of his past service made him accede to the call of his colleagues.

His life to this time, and it hasn't covered a great span of years, reads like your kind and my kind of a Texan. He was born in San Saba County and was graduated from San Saba High School as Valedictorian

of his class. He graduated from the University of Texas Law School with honors and was editor of the Texas Law Review. The San Saba Junior Chamber of Commerce elected him as their president as did the Rotary Club of that city.

During the war he left his family and law practice to serve in the Navy. He was in the Southwest Pacific in Naval Communications, working on the staff of General Douglas MacArthur, where he handled the most secret documents dealing with the nation's battle plans in that theatre.

Returning to civilian life he became commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, active in the American Legion, and resumed his active membership in the Baptist Church.

He is married to a Burnet girl and they now have three fine children. He heads a prominent law firm and is to serve his seventh term in the Texas Legislature. He is outstanding as a lawyer, rancher, statesman, and, as our fathers used the term, a real Christian gentleman.

It is not surprising, in the light of this record, that he will become the first man in the history of this state to be elected Speaker of the House in two successive terms without opposition. In the larger sense this is not a nominating speech by a member. I am only your spokesman, under the rules of the House, to make mechanically possible the completion of the selection you have already so wisely and judiciously made.

He has a proud past; he has a firm grip on the realities of the present, and, as few men of his time have, he has before him a glorious future.

It becomes a high honor for me to place before you the candidacy for Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-third Legislature, the Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt of San Saba.

Honorable Dorothy Gillis Gurley of Val Verde County seconded the nomination of the Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt, speaking as follows:

"Mr. Secretary, Members of the House:

Today we are taking part in one of the most significant phases of our

state government. For in selecting the Speaker of the House of Representatives, we are choosing one of the most important and powerful officials of Texas. As head of this section of our Legislature, he controls the legislative program and directs many of the affairs of our state.

Especially, in this present era of Big Government in Washington—of the federal government's grab policies—it is imperative that we guard well our state prerogatives and insure key positions are filled with competent and courageous people who will protect and preserve the heritage of our once-sovereign Texas.

Therefore our responsibility now is to place in such a high position as leader of the House someone who can ably and fairly, honestly and intelligently administer the duties of this office.

This particular occasion will probably be among the unique in Texas history. For we are fortunate in this session to have with us one who has already proven himself worthy of our trust and capable of outstanding leadership — one who has already demonstrated that we and all Texans can be proud of him—one to whom we can again hand the responsibilities of Texas government with confidence.

We honor ourselves, we honor our state and above all, we uphold the trust of the people we represent in considering this outstanding member for another term as our spokesman.

It is truly a pleasure to second the nomination of Reuben Senterfitt for Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-third Legislature.

Hon. Bill Daniel of Liberty County, having been recognized by the Hon. Secretary of State, spoke as follows:

"I rise to make a Motion, sir, a friendly Motion, — very friendly!

Mr. Secretary of State, Ladies and Gentlemen of this historic Body, fellow Texans:

As you can readily see, I am not on the scheduled agenda here today, however, I wish at this time to present the following motion to you. I move you, sir, that we accept the nomination and second thereof of the Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt, the gentleman from San Saba, for the Speakership of the Fifty-third Ses-

sion; further, that the nominations cease, and that we elect Mr. Senterfitt by acclamation. In support thereof and as a reason therefor, I ask your unanimous vote on this motion so as to mark the beginning of this session with the true and typical Texas spirit of cooperation and harmony of which we are all so justly proud. And, as a further general word, I ask that each one of you Representatives, whether you are an old or a new member, whether you represent the small rural counties or the big cities, the little man, Mr. Tom, (Mr. Daniel gestured toward the Honorable Tom Cheatham, Representative from Cuero) or the big (Mr. Daniel then gestured toward the balcony), give Mr. Senterfitt, the officers and employees of this House your unqualified and best cooperation and support not only for their sake, but because it is for the best interest of our grand old state of Texas at large. The eyes—yes, all the eyes of Texas are truly upon us and by joining hands now in a true and brotherly spirit we can accomplish more through unity, dignity and accord, the results of such teamwork being excelled by no other approach. Though at times we may differ, with this neighborly spirit so much can be done and so much must be done for the people of our State. Finally, when the opportunity of service comes to each of us, whether it be to the Speaker, to the Governor or for any other common cause to the best interest of our people at large, let us each resolve now to say:

I am but one, but I am that one,
I cannot do all things for Texas,
that's true

But I can do some.

What I can do, I should do

And by the grace of God, I will do.
Thank you."

Honorable W. R. Chambers of Brown County seconded the nomination of the Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt, speaking as follows:

"We are now going to perform one of the most important duties upon which this Legislature will be called upon to pass—that of selecting the Speaker to preside over this body. Much of the success of this Legislature will depend upon the wisdom

and the ability of the one we place in this Chair.

When we look back over the roster of the Speakers who have presided over this distinguished Body we find the list to include some of Texas' most outstanding sons. They have been of the highest type of citizenship.

I am confident all of us can agree that a person selected to fill this high position must possess three major characteristics. First, he must have ability—the sort that is required to handle numerous administrative duties and to preside with fairness over the sessions of this House. Second, he must have character—the sort that has for generations marked Texans who have contributed so greatly to the building of this great empire. And, third, he must have calmness of mind and resoluteness of purpose—the sort so essential to any successful presiding officer.

The name that I shall present for your consideration is that of a man who possesses all of these characteristics to a high degree and has demonstrated them so successfully in the House of Representatives. In his past service he has been tried and not found wanting in any respect whatsoever.

This gentleman cannot be classed as a candidate of any section for the high position as Speaker, for he comes from the center of this great State. His training and experience qualify him to recognize and appreciate the needs of every section and of all the people of Texas.

I consider it an honor and a happy privilege to second the nomination of the Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt of San Saba, Texas, for Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-third Legislature."

Honorable Richard S. Stark, of Cooke County, seconded the nomination of the Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt, speaking as follows:

"Mr. Secretary of State, Members of the Fifty-third Legislature:

Today a great honor has been bestowed upon me. I have the sincere pleasure and opportunity to second the nomination of a distinguished statesman for Speaker of the House of Representatives.

I am speaking to you not as an experienced legislator, and not as a long time friend of Reuben Senterfitt. I come before you today as a new member of this great Body, never having served a day in this House.

But since a great majority of us are serving here for the first time, I humbly assume the responsibility to speak briefly, particularly to the new members on behalf of Reuben Senterfitt's candidacy for Speaker of this historic assembly.

As I stated at the outset, I have not known Reuben Senterfitt a great while. I know little of his supreme stewardship in the last session of the Legislature. I am only qualified to speak upon "Senterfitt the Man."

I first met Reuben Senterfitt about a year and a half ago. Upon that first meeting Reuben Senterfitt impressed me as a man made of that sterner stuff, consecrated to what was morally right, and devoted to his duties, always administering them fairly and conscientiously. Subsequent meetings with Reuben Senterfitt confirmed this first impression, and as I came to know him better my admiration of this man never wavered, but consistently increased.

We, the Members of the Fifty-third Legislature have the opportunity to call into service today a great Texan, a man unafraid to assume duties which are above and beyond the call of a public servant, a man who has proved himself in the past as a great presiding officer, a leader among leaders, a man who will continue to impartially administer the affairs of this House of Representatives.

I have heard much pessimism regarding this session of the Legislature. Many consider this session as a great ordeal, a rigor never to be forgotten. In all certainty, I say that such gray clouds will be wiped away, and such a dark climate cannot persist in the Reuben Senterfitt atmosphere.

Therefore it is with humble pride that I come before you today to second the nomination of Reuben Senterfitt for the office of Speaker of the House of Representatives for the Fifty-third Legislature of the great State of Texas.

Mr. Secretary of State, I move that nominations for the office of Speaker be closed and that the temporary Chief Clerk of the House be in-

structed to cast the votes of all members for the Hon. Reuben Senterfitt of San Saba County for Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-third Legislature of the State of Texas."

Honorable Richard S. Stark of Cooke County and Honorable Bill Daniel of Liberty County moved that nominations for the office of Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-third Legislature be closed and that the temporary chief clerk of the House be instructed to cast the entire vote of the House of Representatives for Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt of San Saba County for Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-third Legislature.

The motion prevailed unanimously.

The Honorable Jack Ross, Secretary of the State of Texas then declared the Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt to be the duly elected Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-third Legislature.

HOUSE NOTIFIED

A Committee from the Senate appeared at the Bar of the House, and being duly announced, stated that the Senate is now organized and ready for the transaction of business.

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. Buchanan, Clements, Fisk, Houston, Niemann, Paxton, Smith of Hays and Wood.

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

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED

The Honorable Jack Ross, Secretary of State, declared the Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt to be the duly elected Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-third Legislature.

The Honorable Secretary of State

then administered the Constitutional Oath of Office to Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt.

The Honorable Secretary of State then presented Honorable Fred Niemann of Lavaca County, who presented Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-third Legislature, speaking as follows:

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

It is a privilege and honor to present to you a distinguished lawyer from the Hill country of Texas. The second man in our modern history to be chosen as Speaker of the House of Representatives. An outstanding presiding officer who is recognized for his efficiency and great fairness. A man of dignity, sincerity, humility and tolerance, who is destined to be an even greater leader in the State of Texas. Our Speaker, The Honorable Reuben E. Senterfitt, of San Saba. Mr. Speaker."

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

"Members of the House:

Having had the privilege of serving as presiding officer of this House for one Session was certainly a great honor, and to again serve you in this capacity multiplies the honor many fold, and I am most grateful for the confidence you have placed in me.

I appreciate the compliments of those who placed my name in nomination. I especially appreciate the remarks of Mr. Daniel in regard to cooperation during this session. I want each member of this House to know that I feel you have bestowed upon me the greatest honor within your power—that of being your presiding officer.

Also, I wish to say to you I will serve you conscientiously, with humility, and with the utmost endeavor to make this a successful session.

I offer the active cooperation of the office of Speaker to the Membership of this House as well as to the other State Departments. In like manner, I hereby solicit your support individually and collectively in our joint undertaking in behalf of our State Government.

With your permission, I wish to express my appreciation to my family

for their patience and unselfish devotion during the time I have given to political and public affairs.

Also, with you permission, I want to acknowledge the indulgence of my business associates, Mr. Crump and Mr. Jameson.

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, family and friends.

We, the Legislature, are selected by democratic process as the Governing Board of a Great Enterprise. We must strive to be fair to all the 8,000,000 people who have entrusted to us the handling of the business of this great State. We must approach and discharge our duties in a manner that will reflect credit to our office.

Sometimes, it has been popular to criticize the Legislature. Let us go about our duties here in a manner that will dignify our position—that will merit respect for the Legislature—and respect, also, for our personal and official conduct while here.

It is not easy to serve in the Legislature. There are many essentially difficult matters upon which we must act before we can conclude the Session successfully.

I do not desire to impose further upon your time with a detailed speech. I do want you to know I am grateful for every consideration you have given me.

I am thankful, also, that we can begin our work without unnecessary delay and with a unified organization. In my conversations with you individually, I have been impressed with your determination to do a good job for Texas.

Let us enter into our duties in a spirit of cooperation, with economy of time and with the determination to demonstrate to all our people that economy is truly an essential part of good government.

As a Member, and as your Speaker, I will work hard to justify the confidence you have shown in electing me to preside again this Session.

You have been most gracious to me and my family.

Thank you."