

Reorganization leans toward Anchorage power

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The third week of the second session of the 12th Legislature saw a final organization of the House. The new Republican-led organization, after nearly three weeks of organization attempts, reconstructed their last session's nine-member finance committee by adding an additional two members from the Anchorage area. This increases the size of the committee to eleven members. Previously, the Anchorage area had three members. They now have five on this major committee. The Great Interior and South-eastern regions still have only one representative each from their areas to see that their constituent's concerns are properly addressed. Unfortunately, these two members appear to be dancing only to the tune of the band from Anchorage.

Unfortunately for the Interior, the lone Interior member on the House Finance Committee has already stated that the other four members of the House Interior delegation won't get very much for their constituents this year. In other committees the pell-mell rush to push bills out of committee without apparent realistic or proper considerations created numerous problems with the bills on the floor. Bills had to have floor amendments proposed, or made, that should have been taken care of in committee. Then bills had to be returned to committee for further consideration and correction.

One example of rushing bills from committee was a bill out of Judiciary, HB 632, that needed a cost (fiscal) note per existing law. This created much floor debate. During the debate, comments were made that it could be corrected over in the Senate committees, since by that time, a cost estimate would be available. This kind of an approach to bill work makes a unicameral legis-

lature more acceptable.

It seems to me that rather than make a record in the number of bills moved from the House in a short session, we should move only those that will need little or no change in the other body. If the other body uses the same tactics of rapidly moving bills for the sake of moving bills, neither house would be contributing to either good legislation, or a short session.

This session finds only three days per week calendared for floor sessions. The three day week is supposed to allow more time for committee work. Funny thing, judging by this week's floor sessions, we are really on the floor the equivalent of six days since the sessions on these days are normally not being adjourned until 6:00 to 8:00 PM, primarily due to inept committee work.

I note an interesting development in the headlines department of the Anchorage newspapers that indicates the manner in which the meat axe budgets are made to appear as a blessing. One paper, The Daily News, accurately notes that Juneau will be awash in constituent mail in coming weeks due to Anchorage Republican Representative Cuddy's committee proposal of meat-axing 12 million dollars from Social Services from the already inadequate 86 million proposed for continuing services. These services include senior citizens, daycare, and numerous other services for low-income Alaskans.

Shortly afterwards, the Anchorage Times came out with an article stating Representative Cuddy was proposing to return funding to certain programs. Of course this was after the message flood hit Juneau from the upset constituents. The point to the above comments is that it looks like a coalition effort is being made to scare the living daylights out of the people, then after they have been sufficiently

shook up, a proposal to add to the originally cut funding will be accepted. The folks would be grateful for these small favors and not notice the fact that it is still a meat axe death blow. Furthermore, the folks who might not need these services won't notice that a little thing like municipal revenue sharing is also being meat-axed. As a result we will probably see a flood of messages from those folks who won't relish a raise in their municipal taxes.