

HOOSIER POLITICS—

Control of Legislature Puts Gov. Gates on Political Spot

By ROBERT BLOEM

When the first roll is called next January, Governor Gates will have one of the most overwhelming favorable legislatures in state history—and at least 10 big legislative headaches to go with it.

Landslide proportions of Tuesday's election victory, observers pointed out today, will clinch Republican organization control of the legislature. Organization control, particularly when it is virtually unopposed, means organization responsibility, these observers remind.

In past months political developments have demonstrated more and more clearly, they point out, that Governor Gates is head man of the organization. The huge burden of steering the legislature through the maze of complicated problems coming up appears to fall directly on the governor.

Here are some of his headaches: Direct primary—It's a Democratic platform plank but numerous Republican legislators, following the lead of State Auditor A. V. Burch, have expressed themselves in favor of it. The Republican organization of which the governor

is chief opposes it, but it will be the legislature's number one "hot potato."

Local option—Some political observers have come to the conclusion that "dry" strength in Indiana is at a new high since repeal. Both parties, but particularly the G. O. P., are split on the subject and it will be pretty much up to the governor to decide, one way or the other.

Liquor in politics—Hand in glove with the local option question goes the question of patronage control of liquor and beer licenses. Governor Gates, at the party's convention last June, pledged in his keynote speech to get liquor out of politics. The coming legislature will give him his "opportunity" to demonstrate how he intends to do it, probably with considerable opposition from influential Republicans who seem satisfied with the situation as it is.

The Bonus—Reports from Maine indicated that a Republican governor almost lost the election because he favored a veterans' bonus. Democrats have favored it and so have many members of the Republican veterans' organization. Public and veterans alike are expected to watch the governor with an "it's up to you" attitude, and no matter what is done or not done somebody is going to be mad.

Reapportionment—Cities have long demanded better and more equitable representation in the legislature. Reapportionment is mandatory under the constitution but hasn't been done in many years. If the governor gives the legislature a "go ahead" on this issue, the rural areas will raise a fuss, if not the cities will cry anew.

Taxes—Republicans the nation over are pledged to economy. But inflation is biting into governments as well as individuals, and budgeters are becoming increasingly convinced that either some state functions will have to be dispensed with, or some new taxes added.

Non-partisan election of judges—This is not a popular issue, but it is a momentous step either to pass it or relegate it to the scrap heap. Again, somebody's not going to like whatever is done.

Gasoline tax distribution—Marion county, the state's biggest, and sporting the largest legislative delegation, wants more and will fight to get it despite opposition from the other 91.

Mental hospitals—Much has been said about overcrowding, understaffing, poor pay, poor working conditions, inadequate care of patients. Conceding that something must be done, the question is what, how and how much will it cost?

Extension of the merit system—Politicians like the old system of party responsibility. Civic groups go for the merit system. This could develop into a tug-of-war between the partisans on one hand, civic groups on the other, with the governor in the middle.

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