



STATE OF WISCONSIN

Senate Journal

April 1998 Special Session

11:55 A.M.

THURSDAY, May 21, 1998

The Senate met.

The Senate was called to order by Senator Brian Rude.

The Chair, with unanimous consent, asked that the following comments be spread upon the journal.

As we prepare to adjourn this session, I would like to take this opportunity to remind the members of the historic significance of this time period 150 years ago.

The first elections for the Wisconsin State Legislature were held on May 8th, 1848. 19 senators and 66 representatives to the assembly were elected.

At this election, two representatives to Congress, Dr. Mason Darling of Fond du Lac and William Pitt Lynde of Milwaukee, both Democrats were also elected.

All state constitutional officers were elected. The Democrats controlled both houses of the legislature and all constitutional offices.

The State Legislature convened for the first time on Monday, June 5, 1848, in the State Capitol in Madison, Wisconsin. Lt. Governor John Holmes, served as President of the Senate and N.E. Whiteside was elected as Speaker of the Assembly.

Henry Abbey was elected Chief Clerk of the Senate and Lyman Seaver was elected as Sergeant at Arms.

The legislature remained in session for 85 days, adjourning on August 21st.

The First Governor, Nelson Dewey, who later served as a state senator, delivered his address to the Joint Session of the legislature on Thursday, June 8, 1848. In his message, he called upon the legislature to provide for election of Judges, State Superintendent of Schools, County Officers and members of Congress. He also asked that they reorganize the existing two systems of local government into one County System. He suggested review of Capital Punishment and declared his proposed modification as a humane measure. He called for the building of a prison, review of the budget, providing for a solid communication and transportation system and adoption of the Homestead Exemption Principle. Finally, he asked the legislature to provide expeditiously for the printing of state government materials.

During the 85 day session, the legislature acted upon most of what the Governor requested. The Homestead Exemption was highly controversial. A local newspaper wrote:

“The legislature has passed a bill, which, if not immediately repealed, will work some most wonderful changes in the business transactions of our new State. This, to a majority of our people, was the most odious feature in the condemned constitution. We can regard it as nothing more or less than a covert, under which villany can practice its devices

unmolested, as it is a permission for rascals to get in debt, if they can, and pay when they please, not when they ought, as justice demands”.

The legislature failed to elect regents for the University of Wisconsin, but gave away its authority by passing a bill to allow the Governor to fill vacancies.

The budget for the state was approximately \$35,000. The property value of the state was assessed at approximately \$14 million.

It is important to note that on May 29, 1848, when President Polk signed the State Hood Proclamation, it not only made Wisconsin a State, but ended the old Northwest Territory.

The State Senate of 150 years later is deliberating some of the same issues outlined in Governor Nelson Dewey’s first address to the State Legislature; communication (internet connectivity), transportation, prison construction, and budget.

The Senate has for the past 2 years been meeting in this temporary Chambers.

On November 16, 1995, the Senate last met in the State Capitol. At that time I commented on the sacrifice members would be making to allow for the restoration of the south wing and the Senate Chamber. The Chamber was first occupied by the State Senate on January 8, 1913. The President Pro Tempore, H.C. Martin marked the occasion by saying “This building will grow in beauty and grandeur as the arrangements are perfected”.

I am pleased to say that through the implementation of the Capitol Master Plan, the building has grown in beauty and grandeur. The south wing is nearing completion. In November, almost 3 years to the date from our last meeting, the State Senate will begin to occupy the south wing of the Capitol once again. I will be working with Senator Risser and others to plan a re-dedication of the wing and a Sesquicentennial celebration. Preliminary plans call for inviting all former members of the Senate to a special ceremony to open the wing to the public. I believe it will be a fitting tribute to the 150th birthday of our State and the 85th anniversary of the State Senate occupying the south wing of the Capitol.

I would therefore like to ask unanimous consent that the Senate adjourn today in honor of the 150th Birthday of our Great State.

The Chair, with unanimous consent, asked that the proper entries be made in the journal.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

**THE STATE OF WISCONSIN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

EXECUTIVE ORDER #333

Relating to a Proclamation that the Flag of the United States and the Flag of the State of Wisconsin be Flown at Half-Staff on Memorial Day

WHEREAS, Memorial Day was created by General Order No. 11 issued by General John A. Logan, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, on May 5, 1868; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the people of the State of Wisconsin remember and honor the brave men and women of the Armed Forces who, throughout our Nation's history, have laid down their lives in defense of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, Federal law requires the flag of the United States to be flown at half-staff from sunrise until noon on Memorial Day (see 36 USC s. 175(m)); and

WHEREAS, Memorial Day will be observed on May 25, 1998;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TOMMY G. THOMPSON, Governor of the State of Wisconsin, by the authority vested in me by Federal and State law, DO HEREBY ORDER that the flag of the United States and the flag of the State of Wisconsin shall be flown at half-staff at all buildings, grounds and military installations of the State of Wisconsin beginning at sunrise on May 25, 1998 and ending at 12:00 PM CDT on that date.

IN TESTIMONY WHERE OF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Wisconsin to be affixed. Done at the Capitol in the city of Madison this twentieth day of May in the year one thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight.

TOMMY G. THOMPSON
Governor

BY THE GOVERNOR:

DOUGLAS LA FOLLETTE
Secretary of State

ADJOURNMENT

Senator Rude, with unanimous consent, asked that the Senate adjourn until pursuant to Assembly Joint Resolution 135.

Adjourned.

11:59 A.M.

**LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU
CORRECTIONS**

CORRECTIONS IN:

**April 1998 Special Session
1997 SENATE RESOLUTION 2**

Prepared by the Legislative Reference Bureau
(Wednesday, May 20, 1998)

In engrossing, the following correction was made:

1. Page 2, line 6: delete "live" and substitute "lives".