

• Chapel Has Some Guesses On Special Session Bills

By CHARLES E. CHAPEL
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The Legislature will convene at noon Monday, Feb. 3, introduce the first version of the budget, remain in session until about Feb. 5, and then recess until about March 2, when we return to Sacramento and resume the Budget or short session of 1964. We shall then remain in Sacramento at least during March and probably until about April 15. These are the latest facts and are not necessarily accurate because it is impossible to prophesy what action the Legislature and the Governor will take. However, I believe that this is as close as anyone can come to estimating what will happen.

The California Constitution provides that no bill other than budget items can be introduced during the budget session except those bills put on the agenda by the Governor. Also, the Constitution provides that the Governor can call a special session any time he wishes and use his own discretion about what bills other than budget items can be introduced.

FURTHERMORE, the Governor can have two or more special sessions running at the same time as the budget session. Then at the end of the 30-day budget session, the Governor can call one or more additional special sessions and keep the Legislature in Sacramento as long as he wishes. This applies to any governor, not just the present governor.

I have explained budget and special sessions in this column many times in the past but must repeat the story because people forget these facts and write to me about bills which died in some previous session which they either want or do not want introduced again this year. If you want me to introduce any bill other than a budget item, you must write to the Governor and try to convince him that it should be on the agenda for a special session.

IN THEORY, the Governor does not put on the agenda for a special session any bills except those of an emergency nature or bills of state-wide importance. In actual practice, the Governor can decide arbitrarily whether a subject is of state-wide importance or an emergency, hence there may be a flood of peculiar bills if the Governor gives in to organized pressure. Of course, he will put on the agenda some good bills, too.

The bills themselves are not placed on the agenda but only the subject matter of the bills. For example, if you want a bill to regulate storm drain inspectors, and the Governor wants it considered at the special session, he does not put the bill on the agenda in detail but merely issues a proclamation stating that the subject of storm drain inspectors can be considered by the Legislature.

If the Governor's proclamation is written in broad terms, the lawyers find it possible to introduce a flood of bills which regulate all kinds of inspectors, including barber shop inspectors, sewer inspectors, dog inspectors, etc. This seems ridiculous but similar things have happened many times in the history of California.

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IF IT WERE NOT for the provisions of the California Constitution allowing the Governor to call special sessions, the Legislature could complete the budget session in a month and adjourn, but the uncertainty regarding what the Governor will put in the special sessions accounts for my state-

ment that we will probably be in Sacramento until about April 1. However, this date is merely a guess. We might be there till May 1.

All members of the Assembly, one-half of the State Senators, a member of the U. S. House of Representatives, and many other officials must face an election this year. There-

fore, most members of the Legislature are anxious to complete the work in Sacramento and return home as soon as possible.

THE FINANCING of education is one subject which probably will be included in at least one special session session this year. Although there is a great amount of interest in the subject of regulating firearms, the Governor is taking a chance of getting in the middle of a hot controversy if he places it on the agenda for a special session. The reason is that it is extremely difficult to write or enact laws on firearms which will not do more harm than good.

There are many other subjects which may be considered, but these two are the ones mentioned in most letters received by the Governor and other public officials.

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