

Legislature Faces Change If Constitution Passes

By DENNIS E. CURRAN
IR State Bureau

Montana's legislature has a problem. Mistrusted and sometimes ridiculed by many of the people

it represents, the legislature suffers from a bad image and doesn't always function as well as many would like. The new constitution would try to change that. Of all the changes in the pro-

posed document, those affecting the legislature are the most numerous and significant.

The legislature itself would be "modernized," and many restrictions on its operation would

Some think an unrestricted legislature would be more accountable to the people and their needs, while others, sharing some of the same distrust of the framers of the 1889 constitution, believe limits on the legislature are necessary to protect the people.

proposed constitution also would greatly increase the legislature's power — most notably in the area of taxation.

Legislature Feared

Most of the objections raised over the taxation article really boil down to a fear of the legislature.

Removal of the two-mill limit on statewide property taxes would allow the legislature to levy property taxes without a vote of the people just as it now can levy income or sales taxes without vote of the people.

The new highway antidiversion section would earmark highway revenues for highway uses but would allow the legislature to override that earmark.

State and local debt limits, tax exemptions, methods of tax assessment, taxation in general — all would be left to the legislature.

The restrictions would be fewer and the visible power greater (though in actual practice the legislature wields much of that power now).

Throughout the proposed constitution the legislature also would be directed to implement the broad fundamental state ments, just as it implements the fundamentals of the present constitution. For example, the new environmental protection provisions must be implemented by the legislature if they are to be effective.

To counter the increased power of the legislature, the proposed constitution would try to give the people increased power, too.

All meetings of the legislature would be open, all votes would be recorded, and each legislator

would come from a single-member district — in the hope that a public right to know what government is doing and what people want.

The new document would declare a public right to know what government is doing and what people want.

News Analysis

be lifted, giving the lawmakers broad new powers and responsibilities.

The unshackling of the legislature is hailed by many as the greatest improvement of the proposed constitution and by many others as its worst feature.

It's really a question of faith.

Dramatic Change

The most dramatic change of course would be the substitution of a unicameral (one-house) legislature for the present bicameral (two-house) system if the voters so choose in a ballot side issue.

But with either one house or two, a most significant change would be annual meetings of the legislature. The present constitution provides that the legislature meet once every two years for 60 days; the new constitution calls for annual 60-day sessions.

Moreover, those 60 days would not have to be consecutive and could be extended by future legislatures. The legislature as well as the governor could call special sessions.

The net effect: the legislature would be in session more often much to the horror of those who foresee doubled costs and passage of unneeded laws and much to the delight of those who believe the legislature would do a better job if it had more time over time.

The new constitution would omit legislative rules like requiring that amendments set out the entire law being amended, that all revenue bills originate in the lower house, that a committee consider each bill and that all bills be signed in public.

Other changes throughout the

Hijacker's Arrest Shocks Relatives

RENO, Nev. (AP) — The air piracy arrest of a Vietnam veteran contemplating a career in law enforcement has shocked his friends and relatives here.

"I think everyone in the community is taken aback . . . They can't understand why Robb would do something like that," said the Rev. Bill Walters of Reno's First Baptist Church. "It's unbelievable," said Harold Heady after visiting his son in Washoe County Jail here Saturday.

The elder Heady, a chemist with the University of Nevada-Reno's school of mines, said his

son was considering a career in law enforcement. "He didn't need money and he had a job lined up," Heady's father said.

Heady's brother, Donald, 20, said the motive "wouldn't be money at all." The brother said Robb appeared unchanged by his Vietnam experience.

"No one in the family or I recognized any changes in his life," Don said.

Walters said Heady was "moderately active" in church affairs prior to Vietnam but ceased attending services when he returned.

State Will Seek Aid For ABM Workers

Acting Gov. Thomas L. Judge said Sunday that state officials were compiling the necessary information for an official request of federal aid in view of recently abandoned Montana ABM project. Judge said the statistics on the state's work force and unemployment were being compiled by the State Employment Security Division and "should be ready to rush to Washington, D.C. by Monday morning."

He said the Great Falls-Conrad area should qualify for assistance under the Economic Development Act because of the abrupt and unusual rise in unemployment "which will result from the closure of the Anaconda zinc plant and the termination of ABM construction."

Judge said county commissioners had requested "that this avenue of assistance be ex-

plored. I have placed a call to the Secretary of Commerce, advising him of the situation and alerting him that this official request is being formulated now."

Although some ABM workers have already begun filing for unemployment insurance, said Judge, many have already exhausted their benefits due to extended layoffs prior to the job openings at the missile sites.

The job market, said the lieutenant governor, who is running for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination, will be in even worse shape as college students hit the job market for the summer.

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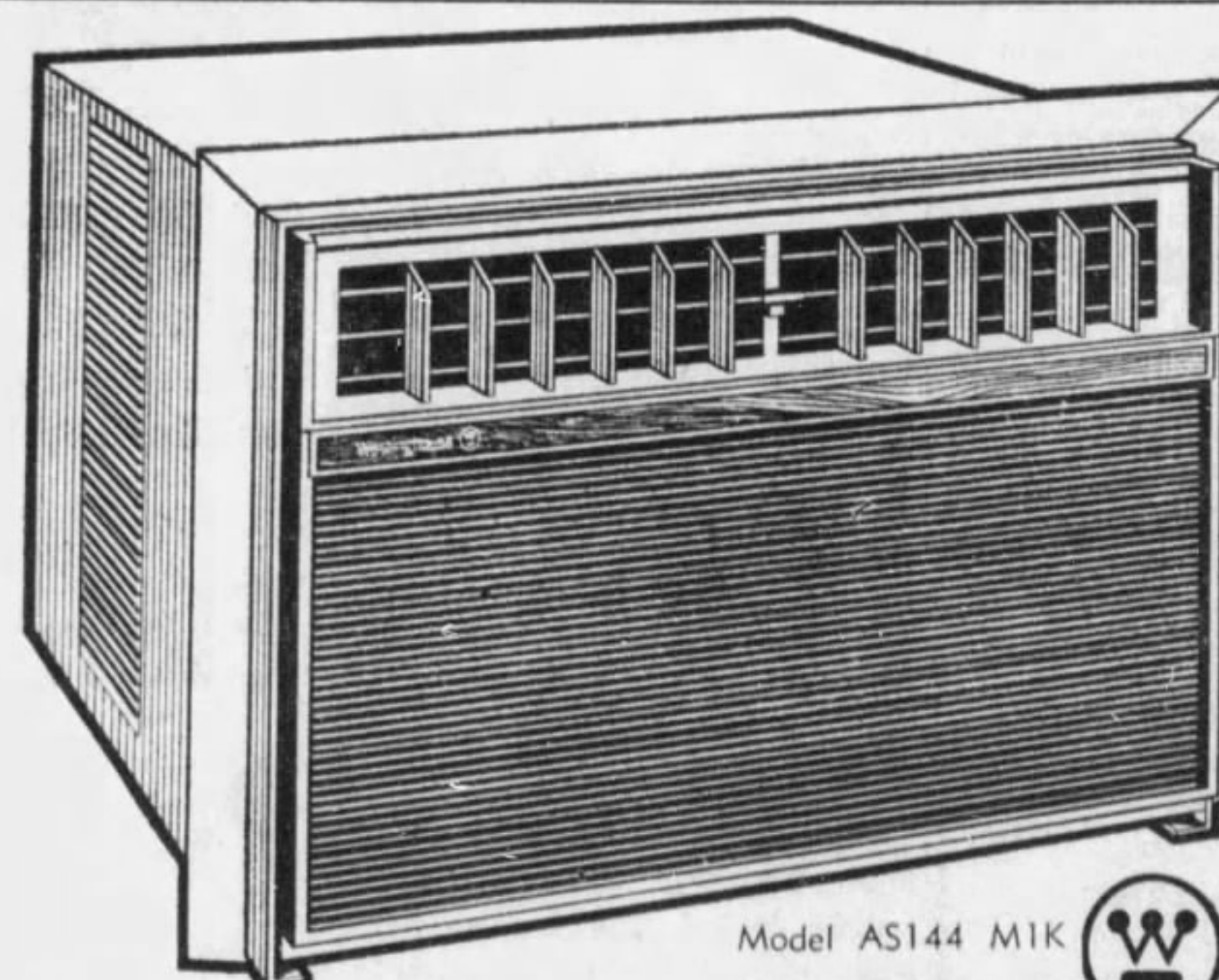
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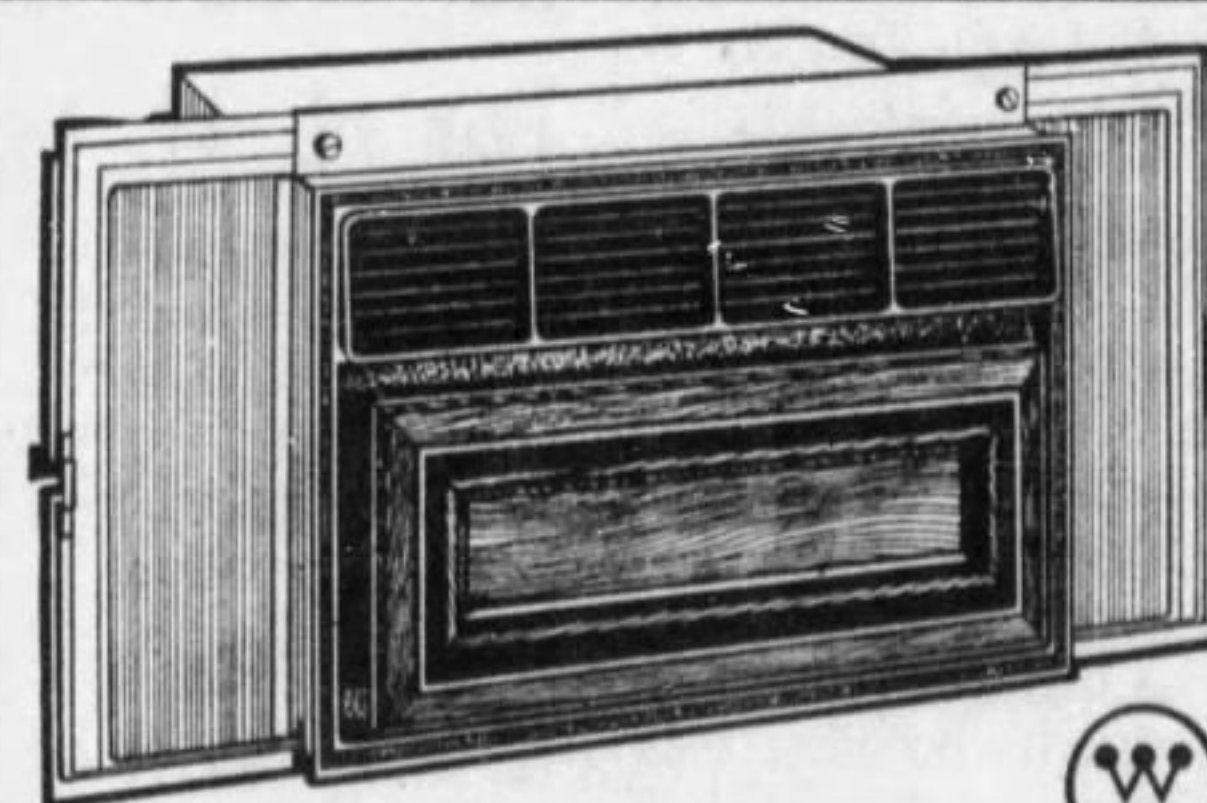
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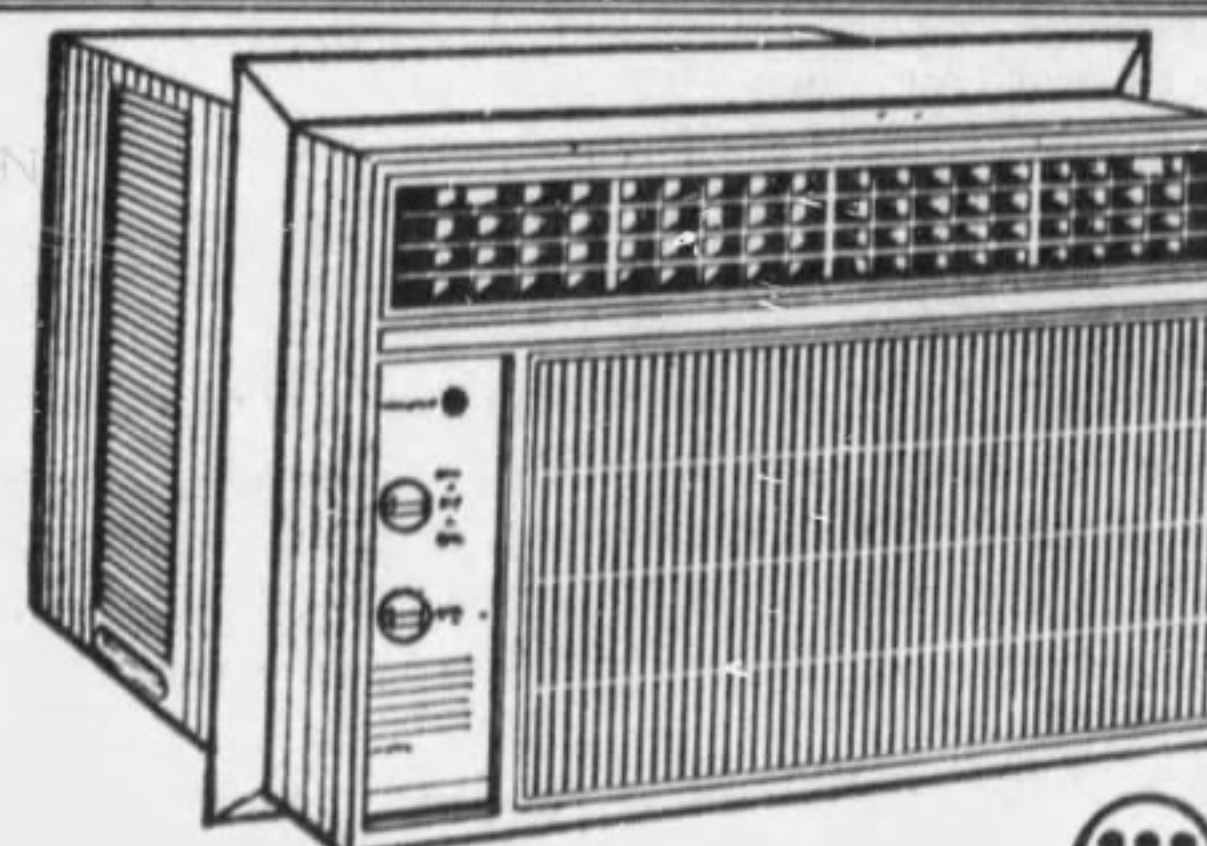
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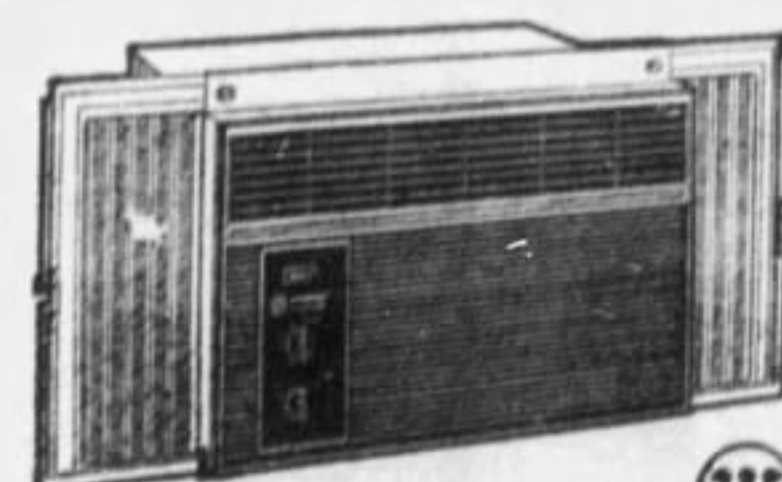
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