

## Albany Session Labeled 'Do Nothing'

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ALBANY, Feb. 17 — Democratic leaders today labeled the current session of the Legislature as a do-nothing session and charged the Republican majority with ignoring the problems in the state.

"We are in the seventh week of the 1972 session and nothing of any consequence has been done," Senator Joseph Zaretski of Manhattan and Assemblyman Stanley Steingut of Brooklyn said in a joint statement.

"This doldrum Legislature is the result of a master plan put together by the Republican leaders in the Senate and the Assembly," they said. "The plan is simple: do nothing of any importance in 1972, close down the Legislature as soon as possible and, above all, ignore the pressing problems facing the people of the state."

The Democratic leaders said that Republican committee chairmen had bottled up legislation in committee and had not allowed measures dealing with major problems to come to the floor.

### Major Clashes Avoided

They proposed a legislative program of their own that must still come through the Republican-dominated committees, and chances that their proposals would be acted on favorably are slim.

Of the more than 18,000 bills in the legislative hopper, only 104 have been passed by the Assembly and 102 by the Senate during the shortened work weeks that have been the norm thus far. In order to be signed by the Governor and enacted into law, the bills must pass both houses, and a total of only 21 bills have passed

both houses, with seven of them being forwarded to the Governor, the index clerk of the Legislature said today.

The Legislature has been meeting about two days a week, taking up minor bills and avoiding any major clashes on controversial items. Many members have complained that on the days when there are to be committee meetings only a few members show up and many times the meetings have to be canceled.

Majority Leader Earl W. Brydges of Niagara County, who is hospitalized with the flu, answered his critics by stating that action in the Senate was running well ahead of last year, when only 56 bills had been passed by this time.

### 'Proper Deliberation'

"In terms of major legislation, we have already overcome the greatest challenge facing us this year — meeting the revenue crisis," Senator Brydges said in a statement released by his office. "We have held hearings on the proposed new budget, and the fiscal committees are now diligently examining every aspect of the Governor's recommendations with a view toward discharging our legislative obligation of determining priorities and seeking even further economies."

Senator Brydges added that the Republican majority was seeking to meet the needs of the people through "proper deliberation," rather than pursuing some elusive date for ending the session.

"We intend to accomplish this end without over-reacting to petty and partisan criticism on the part of the minority leadership, which has as its only claim to fame an un-

blemished record of inability to govern this state," Mr. Brydges said.

Last year many of the early days of the session were taken up with attempts to forge a consensus to pass budget cuts and behind-the-scenes maneuvering on the budget. This year, however, fiscal problems and possible massive cuts in department budgets were alleviated by passage of about \$400-million in new taxes during a special session in December and by the Governor's proposed hold-the-line budget.

In other action here today, the Governor announced that he had submitted a bill to the Legislature that would speed court procedures by reducing from 12 to 6 the number of jurors needed in civil cases.

"Six-member juries will speed the process of justice by expediting the jury selection and, at the same time, provide litigants with a jury panel fully capable of rendering a fair decision," the Governor said.

### Testimony on Willowbrook

Meanwhile a joint legislative committee on the operation of facilities of the Department of Mental Hygiene heard additional evidence of deplorable conditions at institutions for the mentally retarded.

Dr. William Bronston, a staff member of the Willowbrook State School, told the legislators that treatment at Willowbrook and other institutions was dehumanizing and that adequate records were not kept on the men, women and children.

"The most profoundly handicapped, whether by original diagnosis or acquired disability through institutionalization, receive no program input and are essentially left day in and day out to die," Dr. Bronston said.