

# A Few Men Will Play Key House Roles



AUBREY W. DIRLAM

The Minnesota House is a complex legislative instrument.

Its 135 representatives, often divided by conflicting partisan, regional and ideological loyalties, do not operate according to pat formulas. As decisions are made, old coalitions disappear and new alliances are struck in a continuing process of legislative accommodation.

At the core of the process, however, are a few men who occupy positions that allow them to shape the process. Because of length of service, parliamentary skill and the regard of their peers, they will play key leadership

roles with a responsibility for efficient operation in the House.

In the speaker's chair will be Aubrey W. Dirlam, a 57-year-old Conservative from rural Redwood Falls. The majority leader since 1963, Dirlam will succeed Lloyd L. Duxbury, who left public office after last session to work in Washington, D.C., as counsel for the Burlington Northern Railroad.

Dirlam, a farmer, has been a House member continuously since 1941. Throughout the years he has grown impatient with parliamentary delays.

"As speaker, I'll tell the House I'll use a fast gavel," he said in an inter-

view in his Capitol office. "I think the thing I'll be most displeased with is floor debate that is neither pertinent nor meaningful."

A tall, stately man with graying hair, Dirlam mentioned the improvement of health care services in rural areas, and regional development as being among key issues.

He said he also expects abortion reform and the possible banning of student snow tires to receive considerable attention.

But, he added, the most difficult issues will involve questions of tax and finance.

While Dirlam will exert over-all control, much of

His counterpart in the DFL — in minority — caucus will be Martin Sabo, a 32-year-old life insurance salesman from Minneapolis.

Sabo will be serving his second term as minority leader, a post that he has won and held despite challenges from within the

Liberal caucus.

Sabo's job has changed in substance since the 1969 session when he headed a caucus of 50 DFLers. Last fall's elections have added 15 DFL seats.

"I'm now going to be a spokesman in the House for the governor's program, rather than a critic as I was generally two years ago.

"Of course, it's always easier to be a critic than a proponent. But then I'm one who doesn't believe in

proving the House's image. That means making the House more responsive to the wishes and desires of its statewide constituency, he said.

It also will mean an ethics code for its members and possibly financial disclosure requirements for lobbyists, he added.

"There are going to be no more lawyer-legislators carrying bills for their clients in the House. If I hear of any cases where this happens, I can assure you that the bill will not leave the House," said Lindstrom, a lean, square-jawed man.

On the other hand, legislators—and particularly, lawyer-legislators—have received some unjustified criticism in recent years, he noted. The activities of a few members should not taint the reputation of the entire body, he said.

the intricate, detailed work in running the House will fall on the shoulders of Richfield Conservative Ernest A. Lindstrom, who will be majority leader.

The Conservative caucus chose Lindstrom as its leader last month even though he is hardly one of its more senior members, having been first elected in 1962.

A certified public accountant and a lawyer, Lindstrom's most conspicuous role previously was his fight for a constitutional amendment that will permit the Legislature to tax some properties now exempt.

Lindstrom, 39, said his "initial goal" will be im-

being a critic just for the sake of being against something," said Sabo, who was first elected to the House in 1960.

The importance of money bills lends prominence to the chairmen of the House Appropriations Committee. Richard W. Fitzsimons, Warren Conservative, is expected to continue in that post.

Fitzsimons, a 48-year-old farmer, is dismayed by the trend toward "ever-enlarging budgets."