

legislature '79

Senate G.O.P. picks new leadership

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OLYMPIA — A woman was leading a political caucus for the first time in state history today, after Senate Republicans threw out their top two leaders.

Senator Jeannette Hayner, 60, of Walla Walla, was elected Senate Republican Leader by the Republican caucus late yesterday.

By a vote, reported to be 10 to 9, the 19 Senate Republicans voted to replace Senate Minority Leader Jim Matsen of Selah and Minority Caucus Chairman Charles E. Newschwander of Tacoma.

Mrs. Hayner will be "the first among equals" in a new team concept of running the minority caucus, reporters were told at a press conference called last night.

The team concept will be used to try to win new Republican Senate seats in the 1980 election, Mrs. Hayner said. "We believe the climate is most favorable for a change, so that Republicans are in the majority," she said.

Two other senators, George Scott of Seattle and R.H. (Bob) Lewis of Spokane, were elected to top leadership posts, to be nearly equal in rank to Mrs. Hayner.

The new leaders praised the dedication of Matsen, but said he had controlled the money and party power in elections too closely.

Although Matsen and Newschwander knew there were senators who wanted them replaced, the vote yesterday took them by surprise.

Neither was available after the



JEANNETTE HAYNER
New leader

vote, but colleagues said that Matsen, in particular, was angry.

Several Republicans said they believe Matsen might resign his Senate seat in the near future. Presumably, Representative Alex Deccio, Yakima Republican, would fill the seat.

If that were to happen, a hot political race to fill Deccio's vacancy would be certain.

Democrats and Republicans probably would spend vast sums trying to fill the seat, with Democrats hoping to regain control of the House, which is tied with 49 members from each party.

Matsen, 51, has been in the Senate since 1968 and in Senate Republican leadership since 1972. He has led the party for two years



JIM MATSEN
Loses post

and helped forge a conservative coalition which controlled much Senate action during the 1977 session.

Matsen was aware that many Republicans wanted him replaced, and bitterly told a Times reporter last month that he hoped they would remove him from his leadership post so he wouldn't have to work so hard.

Matsen ran the Senate Republican campaign committee with little outside help, and some Republicans complained that they were kept in the dark.

Matsen was accused by critics of monopolizing decisions about which candidates should be supported and how much money they



CHARLES NEWSCHWANDER
Outgoing chairman

would receive.

About three weeks ago, a number of Senate Republicans approached Matsen and suggested in strong terms that he decentralize control of the 1980 campaign.

A seven-member committee was created, ostensibly at Matsen's suggestion, to control the campaign.

But the new leaders said that the committee was not enough of a change. Winning in 1980 requires new people to carry out the fresh approach, Mrs. Hayner said.

Many Republicans in both House and Senate were suspicious of the role of Matsen and Newschwander in promoting passage of the Democratic budget.

Matsen was outspoken at times,



GEORGE SCOTT
Moves up

suggesting that House Republicans might as well accept the inevitable and buy the budget.

Rumors that Matsen and Newschwander might be involved in deals to pass the budget outraged some Senate Republicans, including at least one member of the new leadership.

At the press conference, the new leaders would say only that a fresh approach was needed. The end of the session is at hand, and the time has come for new beginnings, they said.

The new leaders said they felt no personal animosity toward Matsen or Newschwander.

"I'm sure Jim is very mad, but we have nothing but good will," Scott said.



R.H. LEWIS
High post

Mrs. Hayner said she hopes Matsen will continue to be active in the Republican caucus, but noted that Newschwander is expected to resign soon.

Newschwander, a dentist, hopes to be appointed by Gov. Dixy Lee Ray to the State Board of Tax Appeals.

Mrs. Hayner and her husband, H.H. (Dutch) Hayner, both are attorneys practicing in Walla Walla. They have three grown children.

She was elected to the House of Representatives in 1972 and 1974. She was assistant whip in the House G.O.P. caucus before being elected to the Senate in 1976.