

County Executive Ideas Probed

By TIM RICHARD
A committee of Wayne County supervisors is considering four ideas for establishing a county executive.

The committee, headed by James DeSana of Wyandotte, vice chairman of the board, received four alternative plans in a technical report from the Citizens Research Council of Michigan.

Michigan's 83 counties have what has been called "headless" government. There are a half-dozen elected department heads, and they share administrative authority with the board of supervisors.

The Wayne County board tossed the question of county home rule, which would allow some reorganization of county government, into the lap of DeSana's special reorganiza-

tion committee. Carl Pursell of Plymouth is a member.

THE FOUR PLANS under consideration are (1) the county board form, (2) the administrative officer, (3) the county manager and (4) the elected county executive.

Michigan counties generally operate with the county board plan. Chief disadvantage is that administrative power and responsibility are diffused over a large area.

The county administrative officer (CAO) functions as a kind of manager, but he has few appointive and budgetary powers.

The CAO plan is used by counties in 15 states, and some 95 of the 3,000 counties in the nation use it.

The county manager would

be like a city manager—he would be appointed by the board, have authority to appoint most department heads, prepare and submit a budget for board approval, and enforce board ordinances and resolutions.

Only 44 counties in 12 states have county manager systems. North Carolina has 19. California, Georgia and Virginia four each.

A COUNTY executive would be elected directly by the people, in the same way that a strong mayor or governor is elected. He would function independently of the county board.

Fifteen counties, including 10 in New York state, have county executives. Chief advantage of the elected county executive are that he operates with a popular mandate, answers directly to the people, and can exercise aggressive leadership.

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How Charlie Made Senator

By W.W. EDGAR

One of the most hilarious and fascinating chapters in the history of the Democratic Party in Michigan was closed last week with the death of Charlie Edgecomb, a devout member of the clan who served as a county auditor for 17 years until his retirement two years ago.

It was a chapter that opened with a humorous attack on the hierarchy of the party and ended by paving the way for the Late Patrick V. McNamara, a rather obscure gravel-voiced pipefitter to become a powerful figure in the United States Senate for whom buildings are now being named across the country.

THOUGH A NATIVE of Maine, Charlie, a man of biting wit, was a staunch Democrat who worked his way up through the UAW to become a political figure of no mean proportions as he earned a place on the Detroit Common Council and later played a prominent role in county government.

But, staunch as he was, he delighted in harassing "The Establishment" at the time when Gov. G. Mennen "Soapy" Williams was the ruler of all he surveyed in democratic circles in the state.

He had opposed the appointment of Blair Moody, former Detroit News sport writer, when Williams named him to succeed the late Arthur Vandenberg in 1952. And he was "too sorrowful" when Charles Potter, a Republican, beat Moody in the regular election.

But when Moody again was the choice of the governor and the powers that be to contest Judge Homer Ferguson for the senate seat in 1954, it was too much for Edgecomb.

Sitting in the dining room of the Hotel Fort Shelby one afternoon following a meeting of the Crisis Club, an unusual luncheon club he helped organize, Edgecomb called a few of his friends together and opined that "Soapy" shouldn't have things his own way in backing Moody...that something should be done to harass him.

"We've got to give him some opposition," Charlie declared. "We've got to come up with a candidate—but who?"

After several names were mentioned, Charlie chuckled and said:

"I've got the man — Pat McNamara—and what a lot of fun we can have with him!"

AT THE TIME "McNamara's Band" was one of the popular bits of music and Edgecomb envisioned the fun it would be in bringing Pat to the platform to the strains of a brass band.

"We'll drive him batty," he chided. And all agreed.

Pat, who had served on the board of education for a time, gained what little political reputation he had by walking out of a Detroit Common Council meeting on the premise "I can't work with those jerks." And he resigned.

But he accepted the idea of opposing Moody with some eclat and the fun was on.

Edgecomb was at the height of his glory doing what came naturally, when the bomb fell. Blair Moody died in the midst of the campaign.

And while, Moody's death was shocking, it was any more so than the thought that the party was stuck with gravel-voiced Pat. But the party band and all to accept him—and all.

It is history now that he scored an upset victory over the incumbent Senator Ferguson and went to become chairman of the powerful Public Works Committee in the U.S. Senate where he

served with distinction until death.

Today, the Livonia Senior Citizens Towers are named in his honor, and a Macomb County Hospital also carries his name. Within a few years a high rise government office building will be built downtown and carry his name, too.

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Salmon Avocado Spread
Preparation Time: 8 Minutes

1 can (1/2 ounces) salmon 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
1 avocado 1/4 teaspoon grated onion
1 tablespoon lemon juice 1/4 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon olive oil 4 drops tabasco
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Drain and flake salmon. Peel avocado and remove seed. Grate avocado using a medium grater. Combine all ingredients. Toss lightly. Serve with crackers. Makes about 1 pint of spread.

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