

Michigan Mirror

Citizician—a new term for activists

By ELMER E. WHITE

Well paid—relatively speaking—but they put in lots of time for their money. That's the picture of Michigan lawmakers in a recent study of legislative salaries across the country.

The study, conducted by the Citizens Conference on State Legislatures, ranks Michigan's \$18,000 a year salary and \$3,300 annual expense money as sixth in the nation. Only California, New York, Illinois, Alaska and Wisconsin pay their legislators more.

But in terms of working days, Michigan ranks fourth, with an estimated

150 session days this year. South Carolina, California and Massachusetts lawmakers put in more time last year than Michigan's.

The conference, a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization headquartered in Denver, works to improve the 50 state governing bodies.

In 1971, it published a critical study of the 50 legislatures, ranking Michigan's eighth in the nation in terms of overall function and accountability.

The earlier report also suggested that no legislative salaries should be below the \$18,000 a year level. "Compensation of legislators in the larger

states should range from \$30,000 to \$38,000 a year," the report said. (Keep in mind that the report was published in 1971, and costs of living have gone up since that time.)

The "pay 'em more" people, those who figure higher salaries would encourage a higher quality legislator, still appear to have support from the conference.

"Higher compensation should be seen as an integral part of improving the quality and responsiveness of public office," says the most recent conference report.

While pay "is not, and should not be, the chief attraction to public office," the conference says, compensation should be high enough so that qualified people are not discouraged to run for office.

where he resides." It doesn't necessarily mean active participation.

And "politician" won't work either. Stearns says that term "has come to have an entirely negative connotation with the public."

Hence, "citizician."

Anybody can be one—Republican, Democrat, independent or whatever.

Apol says there is a "strong possibility" that lever-operated and even computer-type equipment now in use will be inadequate for all the political parties and candidates in next year's election. In that case, the paper ballot may have to be reinstated.

All a person need do is commit him or herself to making an impact on the government where he resides. That means voting, of course, but it also means more. A citizician works for political parties and candidates, helps get out the vote on election day and maybe even becomes a candidate himself.

Stearns says citizician "is quickly becoming a household word among mid-Michigan Republicans." And he's taking President Ford, Gov. William Milliken and others to help urge citizen-politicians to action.

YOU CAN'T unless you're told you can these days.

Come April 1, you can unless you're told you can't.

Gov. William Milliken recently signed legislation that will allow drivers to turn right after stopping for a red light—if the intersection is not posted with a "No Turn on Red" sign.

The right-turning motorist will have to yield to pedestrians and other intersection traffic before completing his turn.

More than 1,000 "No Turn on Red" signs already are on order.

They'll be posted at intersections designated by the state and county and city officials, depending on who has jurisdiction.

At least 25 other states already allow turns at red lights.

Backers of the system say it eases traffic congestion and reduces the amount of gasoline wasted by idling engines at red lights.

CITIZICIAN ..

Not exactly a household word—yet, but Paul W. Stearns, chairman of the Ingham County Republican Party, has high hopes.

Credited with introducing the word (pronounced si-ti-zee-shun), Stearns explains the obvious, that it's a combination of "citizen" and "politician."

He says the new term is an attempt to name those who are "increasingly taking a responsibility for the direction which this country is going."

Just plain "citizen" won't work, because that denotes "one who has an allegiance and duty to the government

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