

Spread party money around

By TIM RICHARD

At the podium, James Burdick of Southfield, unsuccessful Republican candidate in the 17th Congressional District last November, was nominating William F. McLaughlin for a fifth term as GOP state chairman.

In the Cobo Hall audience, Brian Kidston of Plymouth, unsuccessful Republican candidate in the 37th State House District last November, had a frown creasing his usually merry face, and he was wearing a red badge supporting F. Robert Edwards for state chairman.

McLaughlin of Northville won with 818 votes, but Kidston and the other 689 delegates who supported Edwards at Saturday's state convention sent McLaughlin and Gov. William G. Milliken a message:

"Don't cream off party funds for the top of the ticket; spend more money and energy trying to elect Republicans to other offices."

McLaughlin and Milliken indicated they got the message.

BURDICK'S NOMINATING speech was evidence the message was getting through.

The young suburban lawyer's words were picked carefully. "You know I did a super job in being re-elected (in 1974). His reelection was a result of work by Bill McLaughlin and the district chairman around the state."

"I don't know if he (Milliken) could have done it without Bill McLaughlin."

"The first person who came to my aid," said ex-candidate Burdick, "was Bill McLaughlin. He was there himself. He should have the opportunity of working with the party and the people."

And thus did a candidate, who got massive help and money from the party organization, pay tribute to the leaders who aided his uphill battle in a normally Democratic district that includes northwest Detroit, Redford, Farmington and Southfield.

KIDSTON DIDN'T make any speeches. "They write off whole dis-

tricts," he said of the party leadership which gave him practically no money and let him raise what little he could himself.

"There was no help, no support at all. I don't have \$5,000 or \$6,000 to spend on a campaign," said the Plymouth School District administrator who lost to Democratic conservative Tom Brown of Westland in the western Wayne County district.

Kidston had an affinity for Edwards, who was a state representative from the Flint area for several terms before being beaten in 1976.

"Last time the union went after him. The president (Garter) wound up his campaign there. Milliken is fine, but if he loses, that's it. We gotta get the courts because we got shafted last time," he said.

Kidston referred to the legislative appointment question decided by the Democratic-controlled Michigan Supreme Court.

OVER IN Burdick's own 17th District, Rhys Lewis, a sometime Redford Township trustee, was also supporting Edwards. "I get tired of working for the top of the ticket. If the governor would come around and put his arm around our local candidates for state representative, that would be enough," said Lewis.

Then Lewis put his finger on another sore spot—Jerry Roe. McLaughlin's right-hand man in the party organization. "Roe's not tending to business. They're not responsive to local races."

A few feet away, State Rep. W.V. (Sandy) Brotherton of Farmington was wearing no buttons supporting anyone for state chairman.

"I hardly know McLaughlin, even though I've been an Oakland County commissioner and I'm now a second term legislator. I'm a little fish, but I'm one of only 40 or 50 Republicans in the legislature."

Brotherton said McLaughlin had shaken his hand maybe once or twice in Brotherton's career as a partisan.

A Plymouth delegate recalled the United Republican Fund of the 1960s. A single fund-raising effort aided all candidates, who submitted their budgets to fund administrators.

The fund was discontinued, and now all GOP candidates are canvassing the same contributors for money. "I used to give \$300 a year to the fund. Now I give \$100 to my congressman and forget the rest of the ticket," said the delegate, who wore no button for any chairman candidate.

VIRTUALLY ALL party leaders in the suburbs were supporting McLaughlin. One pointed out that by pumping funds in districts where chances of success were marginally best, Republican Robert Law of Livonia had upset Democratic State Rep. John Markes in the 38th House District.

When Edwards appeared to be dangerously close to victory the night prior to the convention, Sen. Robert Griffin's staff and Milliken's trusted

political operative, Keith Molin, went to local caucuses and put heat on to re-elect McLaughlin.

But if Edwards lost the chairmanship, his message got through. His slick literature pointed out that since McLaughlin became chairman in 1969, the GOP had lost four congressional seats, six state senate seats and 11 state house seats in Michigan.

Milliken himself, speaking to the convention, indicated to delegates the Edwards message was clear: "I want you to know that this governor is listening to you," the governor said to thunderous applause.

And McLaughlin taking the podium after his narrow victory, said, "I know I've heard everything, you've said." And he promised to work to win everything in 1978 "from the governor's office right down to the townships."

City, Westland and Canton in western Wayne County—31-19 for McLaughlin.

17th District—49-22 for McLaughlin. 18th District (Troy and eastern Oakland and part of Macomb County)—42-30 for Edwards. After being won once by a Republican after redistricting in 1972 the 18th elected a Democrat in 1974 and 1976.

19th District—Bill Broomfield's loyalists in western Oakland County stuck with McLaughlin, 69-35.

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