

Dem's senate in-fighting lingers

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

In the wake of last week's raucous caucus of Democratic state senators, a deeply divided, scarred majority party remains.

Principal players in Lansing's latest soap opera, Majority Leader William Faust of Westland and William Huffman of Madison Heights—called by some the most powerful man in the senate—agree the wounds run deep. They don't know how long it will take for the wounds to heal and how the senate will be affected in the meantime.

The cleaver that split the 24-member caucus was the on-going battle to change the upper house's operations. Some state senators called it "reform."

Others called it "a powerplay."

In the middle of the fray were Faust, Huffman, Kerry Kammer of Pontiac, freshman Doug Ross of Oak Park and the upper peninsula's powerful Joseph Mack.

KAMMER AND ROSS, with the help of State Sens. Gary Corbin of Clio and John Hertel of Harper Woods, tried to strip Huffman and Mack of their powerful committee leadership positions.

They said Mack, as chairman of the conservation committee, was a thorn in the sides of Michigan's environmentalists. Huffman, whose district includes part of Troy, was cited for his opposition to lobby reform, anti-redlining and consumer legislation.



SEN. WILLIAM FAUST

DOUG ROSS

The reform senators, who like the label "progressive," succeeded in toppling Mack. But Huffman hung on, thanks to Faust's last-second change of heart.

IT IS FAUST'S unexpected vote that is at the root of the Democrats' schism. The Westlander publicly said he would support the reformers, but at the last minute voted against their committee recommendations.

"The scars are relatively deep," said Ross, who represents Southfield, Oak Park and Farmington. "There's a real question," he said, "as to whether Faust can lead the Democrats. You know it's diffi-

cult, once you've lied, to command the respect that leadership demands."

Faust disagreed with Ross' assessment.

He said that while he may have voted against the "progressives," they, too, broke their word. Faust said that the reformers agreed to use education, experience and other factors in determining committee leadership posts, but in the end ignored them.

"They were using political power as a basis for committee assignments. I would have been a hypocrite supporting them. I sat in on their meetings and they were using double standards in making their selections," Faust said.

Ross called Faust's statements "malarky" and a "cover-up." The Oak Park freshman, however, was awarded the chairmanship of the senate's bureaucratic watchdog, the joint administrative rules committee, a post last held by Democratic gubernatorial candidate and former-State Sen. William Fitzgerald.

Ross was also named vice-chairman of the finance committee, the senate's general taxation committee.

"What happened was Faust fully expected the other side to win," Ross said.

"When he saw that it might not happen, he panicked and voted against us."

FOR HUFFMAN, it was a sweet personal victory. He called the efforts to unseat him a United Auto Workers (UAW) plot.

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Judge hears more in sewage plant battle

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

Detroit attorneys and water department officials are back in federal district court today presenting plans they hope will allow the city to retain control of its massive sewage treatment operations.

Last month, Judge John Feikens gave the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department an ultimatum—present an acceptable plan to stop the Jefferson

Avenue sewage plant's pollution of the Detroit River and the Great Lakes or lose control over it.

The contents of Detroit's latest plan have not been made public.

Today's court proceedings are part of a long legal battle involving Detroit, the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and 76 suburban communities that use the Detroit sewage system.

EVEN THOUGH a special, court-appointed monitor said in January that Detroit's treatment plant was meeting federal pollution standards, there is serious doubt that the chronically-mismanaged system can meet stricter standards in the future.

According to the monitor, only 150 million gallons of wastewater of the 600 million gallons that flow into the Jefferson Avenue plant each day receive proper treatment. The rest,

with minimal treatment, is dumped directly into the Detroit River.

Detroit's original plans to bring the plant into compliance with ever-tighter federal guidelines were called "disappointing" by Judge Feikens. He agrees with EPA, DNR and suburban officials and wants a complete timetable of plant and management improvements.

SOME INTERESTED observers say Detroit may present an acceptable plan, but said the water department will be hard pressed to live up to it.

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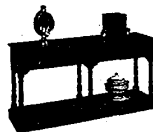
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