

# GOP charmer scrutinizes 17th

By TIM RICHARD

Guy VanderJagt, often called the "best orator in the House," was doing more than charming 17th Congressional District Republicans as an after-dinner speaker last week.

He was studying them.

VanderJagt is more than a seventh-term congressman from Michigan's northern lower peninsula. He is chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee — the group which helps Republican candidates, especially in "target" areas.

WILL THE 17TH — which includes northwest Detroit, Redford Township, Farmington and Southfield — be targeted in 1980 as it was (unsuccessfully) in 1976?

"One of the reasons I'm here is to look it over," he answered. "The 17th has not been ruled out."

"There are three or so which will be targeted in Michigan. A lot will depend on who the nominee is and whether the Democratic presidential nominee is Kennedy or Carter."

He didn't elaborate. When VanderJagt was elected, he was part of then-Gov. George Romney's "class of '66" — a Michigan congressional delegation that was 12-7 Republican. Today it is 13-6 Democratic.

THE 17TH has been Democratic since it was drastically reorganized in 1972 following the census. For one-term veteran Martha Griffiths and for the next three terms, young William Brodhead have been elected.

After Brodhead coasted in in 1974 over the slender campaign of the late Kenneth C. Gallagher, Republicans targeted the district in 1976. They poured \$250,000 — about double the amount it usually takes to win — behind the effort of James Burdick, a young attorney with a political "name."

They hardly dented Brodhead. Compared to Gallagher's 29 percent of the vote in 1974, Burdick got less than 35 percent in 1976.

In 1978 Brodhead was unopposed. Another easy run in 1980 would allow him to build up a bankroll and a reputation for a run for governor in 1982. Brodhead is known to be thinking about it.

THE OCCASION at which VanderJagt spoke was the ninth annual Eisenhower dinner in the Red Oaks clubhouse, Farmington Hills.

Winston T. Churchill, treasurer of the 17th, said attendance was about 200, some 50 percent better than in even 1978, which was an election year.

VanderJagt said in an interview there's a "good grass roots feeling" in Michigan GOP circles. He attributed it to the leadership of State Chairman Mel Larsen, who is com-

mitted to winning back legislative and congressional seats that have been chipped off by Democrats since 1968.

"I found Mel Larsen at a Republican picnic in Kaleva in my district. You know where that is? That's way out of the way. I hardly get there myself," said VanderJagt, referring to a backwoods village in Manistee County.

VANDERJAGT'S speech was about 1980's second (after the presidency) national election — the Congress.

"If you think this Congress did a good job, vote Democratic. If not, vote Republican," he said.

He said the nation is "over-regulated, over-interfered with and over-taxed."

"This Congress is spending money like drunken sailors. A bunch of drunken sailors in San Diego almost strung me up for saying that. They felt insulted at being compared to congressmen."

"At least drunken sailors spend their own money."

VanderJagt emphasized that the nation's inflation ills would not be blamed on the White House alone. "We've changed presidents six times in 56 years, but not once did we change the (party in control of) Congress."

"Wake up, America. Change the direction of Congress and the economy."

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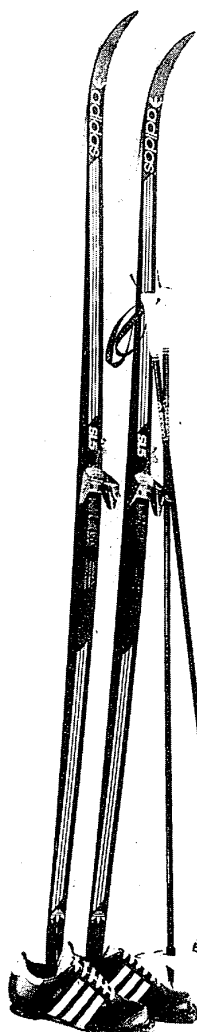
REP. GUY VANDERJAGT

Studying the 17th

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