

editorial opinion

Business helps itself by joining Chamber

Together business can...

That should be the theme for this year's Farmington Chamber of Commerce membership drive. The past Monday, the chamber kicked off its drive by sponsoring a breakfast at which U.S. Rep. William Brothman, D-Detroit, was the speaker.

His presence at that meeting is a symbol of what the Farmington Chamber is all about. It has an honest concern to keep business persons informed on issues which effect them.

The Farmington Chamber has a proven record of accomplishment. Area businesses are fortunate in having the kind of representation they do from their chamber. Not all chambers are as good as the Farmington branch.

Unfortunately, a lot of business persons turn their backs on the chamber when it comes knocking. The

usual question is: "What can the chamber do for me?"

The answer is simple: a chamber is only as good as the members make it. And this chamber's leadership is composed of a group of strong-willed, community-minded persons.

Farmington and Farmington Hills would be less than what they are without past chamber actions. Key streets have been widened and paved. Opening businesses in this area has been made easier by the chamber clearing the way of bureaucratic red tape.

Presently, the downtown Farmington area is going through a renaissance of its own. New stores are moving in. Facades on the front of buildings are being redone. Stores are being remodeled.

It's a spirit of renewal you can feel as you walk about town.

We can make this a more attractive shopping area. We can make this a better community in which to work, live and play. Government and businesses in these sister cities can work together to solve problems.

But strength is in numbers, and the chamber needs more members. Like any other organization, it needs the collective wisdom of many business persons.

Sure, the men and women who serve on the chamber board have done a good job throughout the years. But after a while they get tired of carrying the load.

They need new ideas and fresh labor to make Farmington and Farmington Hills have an even better business climate.

Too many business persons in this area would rather sit back and complain about the real or imagined government interventions which they believe hinder their businesses. Such negative attitudes serve only to hamper business growth.

So don't hide when you can be out in the community making it better and building a climate where you can improve your firm's profits.

Don't hesitate. Pick up your phone and call the Farmington Chamber's Executive Director Ed Lane at 474-3440. Tell him you want to find out more about the chamber. Tell him about the good ideas you've got. Tell him you can.

STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

N-plant protest to spawn 'public power' politicking

This weekend we will get Chapter Two of the nuclear power political controversy.

Chapter One was the labeling of what happened at Three Mile Island. To the enemies of nuclear power, it was a "nuclear disaster," "nuclear catastrophe" or "nuclear crisis."

From a technical point of view, it's difficult to justify calling Three Mile Island a disaster, catastrophe or crisis.

No one was killed. No one was injured. Pregnant women and small children were moved out, though how much more dangerous the radiation was to them than to others is unclear.

But the enemies of nuclear power are not dealing with this from a technical point of view. They're dealing with it from a political point of view.

IN MICHIGAN, we'll observe Chapter Two this weekend. The anti-nuclear people are going to have a march to a Consumers Power Co. nuclear plant in Midland.

Something called the Huron Alliance is making the arrangements. As we get into the list of sponsoring agencies, we see such familiar names as Americans for Democratic Action, PIRGIM, NOW, Interfaith groups.

Now you would guess that persons of all political stripes might be concerned about any real dangers emanating from a plant that makes electricity by nuclear power, but your guess would be wrong.

The anti-nuclear forces, as near as I can tell, are coming from the political left. And when the rhetoric begins to flow, their real enemy will turn out to be not nuclear power, but nuclear power in the hands of a stockholder-owned utility.

"A profit-motivated economy." "Ever-increasing profits." "Public safety versus private profit." "Profit ahead of safety." Those are the buzz-words.

The theme will be that nuclear power is too dangerous a tool to trust in the hands of private enterprise. We are likely to see a renewal of the "public power" movement. To translate, substitute the word "government" for public.

Two YEARS ago, there was a public power initiative petition in circulation. The circulators were doing a land-office business because everyone was sure of the power companies at the time, but the movement had stalled.

Auto companies are all privately owned, water systems are all government-owned, but electric power is a mixture. At one time, many Michigan towns had city-owned electric systems, but today the generation of electricity is dominated by three private companies.

There are reasons, as you read the lines and between the lines of Michigan history.

A city-owned plant can take care of a city, but when urbanization sprawls beyond city limits, then something larger than a city government is needed to do the job.

Since Michigan hasn't been smart enough to es-



Establish regional governments, a regional corporation such as Detroit Edison and Consumers Power had to be the answer.

In the early years, much of Michigan's power was generated at dams on such rivers as the Kalamazoo and the AuSable. Again, it was the kind of job that was too big for a city, and there were no regional governments.

But there are folks who dislike private enterprise — profit hungry corporations, as they call them. We shall be hearing from those folks for awhile. The event at Three Mile Island was just what they were waiting for.



'Ability to pay' zaps the middle class

Once a year the federal government forces us to reflect on the job it is doing and how it is financing its efforts.

For many of us, this time came last weekend when we were finalizing our federal income tax returns.

Back in 1913, the 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, providing: "The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several states, and without regard to any census or enumeration."

When it was proposed, it was to be a flat 1 percent tax on everyone's income to raise enough money to run the government. It was to be a fair tax equally on everyone's income.

Through the years, the 1 percent was not enough, so the tax was increased, not by a vote of the people but by their elected representatives in Congress.

SOMEWHERE ALONG the line, the social thinking entered the government's tax philosophy. As taxes got higher and higher, people began to complain, so they introduced a "graduated" income tax rate based on "ability to pay."

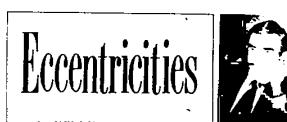
Now we all know that people with higher incomes don't get any more service from the government, but we do know that there are more voters with lower incomes; therefore, this new philosophy pleased more voters.

We also know that Congress would have been under much more pressure to hold down spending if the majority of voters were being in their view, heavily taxed.

The socialistic philosophy is that government should give to the people according to their needs and charge the people according to their ability to pay. The democratic philosophy is that all persons should be treated equally and the majority should rule.

It might be unrealistic to think that all persons should contribute equally to their government, but it always seems strange to me that the people who promoted "one person, one vote" for equality in picking our U.S. representatives and state legislators, and equality of rights for all people, were the promoters of taxation based on "ability to pay."

THE TAX PHILOSOPHY has brought us to the point that now there are more people supported by



tax dollars than there are people employed in the private sector.

Government employees, active duty military

personnel and those on social security or welfare number 80.6 million, with only 71.6 million persons found within non-governmental workers.

If we continue this direction, eventually we won't have anyone left to pay taxes.

The irony of the ability-to-pay theory is that the poor pay very little for the support of their government, yet benefit the most; and the wealthy, benefiting from tax advice, also pay a small percentage of their incomes toward governmental operations.

The middle-class working people bear the burden of supporting the government, and in return they probably get the most hassle and least help from the government.



Purify the party primary

While it only may be spring of 1979, even the casual political enthusiast can feel the presidential election spirit lurking in the shadows.

In Michigan, the traditional signal is the antics of State Democratic Chairman Morley Winograd.

At his worst a political gadfly, Winograd's better side shines when battling for the preservation of a sound political party system — a target of much undeserved public scorn these days.

Winograd has given the state Legislature until Oct. 1 to clean up the open primary political mess. Asking the slow-moving legislators to act so quickly is about like goading the tortoise into winning the Boston Marathon.

But with any luck, Winograd should prevail.

THIS BEEF is that he's sick and tired of having Michigan's Democratic presidential primary bushwhacked by crossovers.

Winograd wants voters to declare their party affiliation. He feels serious enough about it to have drafted a plan for selecting national convention delegates through a series of state caucuses in April and May of 1980, rather than waiting to do it through the May primary.

Opponents are screaming foul. Opponents, in this case, are mostly Republicans.

OPEN GOVERNMENT is an important concept, but an examination of the record shows that real openness has suffered because of Michigan's present primary system. And it has been the more conservative Republicans who have benefited.

Take a look at the 1972 presidential primary.

Recall that George Wallace swept the Democratic primary, garnering more than 809,000 votes against George McGovern's 425,000 and Hubert Humphrey's 249,000.

This was a classic case of Republicans ignoring their primary, in which Richard Nixon faced underdog Paul McCloskey, and muddying the Democratic primary.

In 1976, Republicans didn't have the luxury of playing in the other kid's backyard. A death struggle was going on between President Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan.

That year's Democratic primary totals showed that the majority of votes were divided between Jimmy Carter, 307,559 and Morris Udall's 305,134.

On the GOP side that year, Ford garnered 690,000 votes to Reagan's 364,000.

The total Republican vote for the 1972 GOP state presidential primary was only 330,000. Either a lot of Michigan voters decided to change parties between 1972 and 1976 or somebody was playing games and causing havoc in the other guy's camp.

It obviously was the latter.

STRONG PARTY politics is an important part of American government. It gives the voters a chance to affiliate themselves with a philosophy — a style of running government.

If voters are unsure of the candidates, they should at least have the confidence of a party vote.

Just ask disgruntled Democrats who are choking on the less-than-Democratic policies of the present chief executive.

Winograd definitely deserves support on this primary reform.

The bottle bill is working; our landscape is cleaner — but beer prices are a crime

A Division of
Suburban Communications
Corporation

Farmington Observer
Successor of the Farmington Enterprise

Steve Barnaby
Editor

2332 Farmington Rd.
Farmington, MI 48336

(313) 477-5450

John Reddy, General Mgr.

Thomas A. Riordan, Executive Editor

George J. Hagan, Advertising Director, Fred J. Wright, Circulation Director