

Workers' comp reformers satisfied with solution

By TIM RICHARD

The end of a six-year stalemate on workers' compensation reform was summed up by state Rep. W.V. Brotherton in two words: "Everyone's relieved," said the Farmington Republican.

"Rep. William Keith even had praise for the restraint shown by business and union lobbyists. 'It's one thing to say, Legislators, you do it.' But that's difficult when everyone is coming down on you. Here's a case where the people involved stepped up to their responsibilities," said the Garden City Democrat.

The Michigan Legislature, with the barest handful of dissenting votes, last week passed a revised workers' compensation law. It 1) raises benefits to injured workers and 2) curbs what business had considered some of the worst abuses — particularly "double dipping" by retirees.

"I THINK we dealt with probably the most serious issue facing employment and the business climate in this state," said Senate Majority Leader William Faust, D-Westland.

Faust was part of the so-called "quadrant" of legislative leaders who

hammered out a compromise with Republican Gov. William G. Milliken to end the stalemate in the final weeks of the legislative session. Their five-man press conference was a virtual love-in.

"Neither side gets everything they want," said Milliken.

"The governor... really was a catalyst in getting this thing done," said Senate Republican Leader Robert VanderLaan of Kentwood.

"A major breakthrough," said House Speaker Bobby Crim, D-Davison.

"Five people of moderation met in good faith and acted in good faith," said House Republican Leader William Bryant of Grosse Pointe.

TO BROTHERTON, the most significant achievement was the solution of the retiree problem. Michigan has been almost alone in allowing retired workers to collect both a pension and workers' compensation, which is supposed to

replace lost wages.

The new law, he said, creates the "rebuttable presumption that an employee who has terminated active employment and is receiving either a government or private pension has not suffered a loss of earnings or earnings capacity."

Added Brotherton: "There still is a way a retiree can collect, but now there's a big hurdle."

Benefits to retirees have cost the \$1 billion workers comp system \$100 million a year. Business spokesmen generally pointed the finger at this "abuse" as a chief reason Michigan has had difficulties luring new industry during the last decade.

TO KEITH, the most noteworthy feature was the increase in benefits.

"I have one constituent who became eligible for workers' compensation in 1972. There have been no increases in his compensation in that period of time," said Keith.

"He worked inside water towers, scaling and painting, and developed a lung condition that is a form of em-

physema. His benefit is \$80 a week. He's in his middle 40s and has two children in school. His wife is working."

The act is still imperfect, Keith allowed. "There are so many court interpretations of qualifying that needed to be addressed. I don't know that they are addressed."

BROTHERTON saw a long list of advantages to the new law.

"It stops the really rapid rise in costs. There are some savings for small businesses, more so than for large ones. A lot of claims affected the smaller guy, maybe because he couldn't fight it."

"It provides mechanisms for improvements, such as making it easier

paid out of the general fund, with \$29 million appropriated for fiscal 1981-2."

HE ISSUED a warning to business: "A whole new set of guidelines will have to be tested in court. The big companies will have to fight to establish case law. If they roll over and play dead, and settle out of court, it will hurt all businesses."

The new law takes effect Jan. 1, 1982. Benefits for workers injured after it takes effect would rise to as much as 80 percent of the state's average weekly wage, now \$13.45. Thus, a disabled worker now can receive a maximum of \$210 a week, but under the new law he would get \$282.

A mandatory minimum benefit required by the present law is eliminated. Employers considered this minimum a major flaw because some low-wage workers get more in benefits than they earned in wages.

Employers also won a provision that a worker would have to file for benefits within two years of an on-the-job injury or two years of learning of an occupational disease (cancer or black lung).

NOW OPEN AT LOEHMANN'S HUNTERS SQUARE A NEW CONCEPT—A NEW STORE

Quality Furs
Everyday Low Prices

We have been designing & manufacturing furs for four generations. We can offer you exceptional values and give you fine quality and personal service. Come in and see us today. All merchandise can be exchanged after Christmas.

CHECK OUR
AFFORDABLE FUR PRICES
FIRST!!

Robert
Fur Fair

Fourteen Mile Rd. and Orchard Lake Rd
Farmington Hills, MI. 48018 855-3636

FOR ALL THE MEN ON YOUR LIST.



SWEATERS OF TIMELESS TRADITION—
Crewneck—Made expressly for us of rich 100% shetland. Washable, a fine value and a gift that will surely please. **\$22.50**
V-neck—Also made for us of fine-gauge lambswool. Perfect weight even under jackets. **\$29.50**



Redwood & Ross 241 Merrill Street
Birmingham

Almas Gallery of Oriental Rugs

Large Selection of New & Old Oriental Rugs
Sell • Buy • Trade
Cleaning • Appraisals • Repairing

223 S. Woodward Business & Residence
Birmingham, MI 48011 (313) 644-7311

Smiley Brothers

A TRUSTED NAME IN MUSIC

The finest keyboard products available!

- Baldwin pianos & organs
- Young Chang grands & consoles
- Hammond & Allen organs
- Seibel harpsichords
- Marantz-Piaacorder
- Select used instruments
- "Memory" pianos

Dearborn, Telegraph & Ford, 278-1324

Rochester at 1440 N. Rock, Rd. 452-4009

Birmingham at 1010 N. Hunter, MI. 7-1177.

practicality

What makes for a more appreciated gift? Visit our multitude of unusual and well-designed gifts for everyone on your gift list.

Pasta Making Demonstration! On Friday, December 19 from 1 to 3, Mrs. Gladys Patti will be putting the great Simac Pasta Maker through its paces, here at the store. Don't miss it.

orthogonality

Great Gift:
Locally Handmade
Wool Caps in
Favorite Basic
Colors. Very
warm.



Great Gift: Imported
Leather Handbags
from Europe. A
perennial
favorite.
Many styles
to choose
from.



Great Gift: For
the serious cook.
Choose from our
wide selection of
fine quality Tom-
mer Knives. Indi-
vidual or boxed
gift sets.

135 S. Woodward Ave., Birmingham • Birmingham • 642-1450
Open every day and most nights 'til Christmas

orthogonality

135 S. Woodward in downtown
Christmas-by Birmingham

Fine Furniture Since 1917

Visit Our Pennsylvania House Gallery

Save \$88 at Stewart-Glenn

An Outstanding Buy
just in time for the holidays



This beautiful rocker is crafted by one of the most esteemed makers of Early American reproductions. Constructed of hard wood, it is beautifully finished in antique pine.

The back panel is decorated to match the spindle and rung strappings in antique gold. A perfect gift and the price will never be lower.

But Hurry, only 24 in stock.

Reg. \$187

Sale \$99

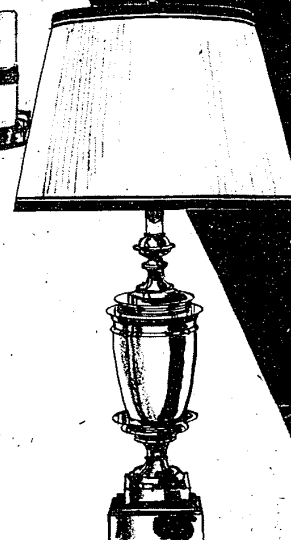
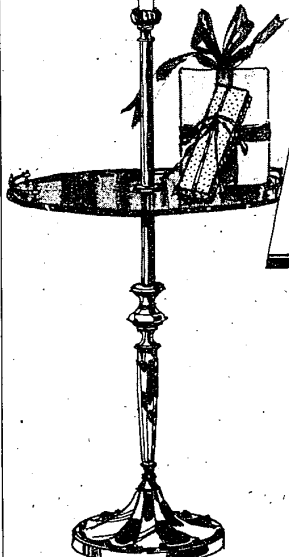
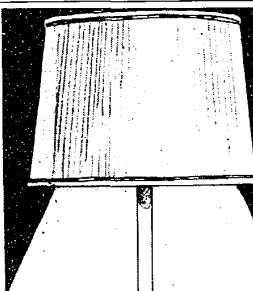
STEWART-GLENN CO.
"YOUR FULL SERVICE STORE"
has no extra charge for:
• Careful Inspection & Set-Up
• Courteous Delivery Service
• Generous Storewide Parking

Stewart-Glenn
135 S. Woodward, BLOOMFIELD HILLS
MI 48304 • 272-4348
Monday, Tuesday, Friday, 10-9 p.m.

Ask our Interior Designers
to help you with your
decorating problems.
Use our 4 Pay Plan
(no interest)
or use your VISA
or Master Charge

Introducing Stiffel's new 1981 collection of classic lamps

Now available at Hudson's Eastland, Northland and Oakland only. Timeless designs with all the quality and beauty you've come to associate with the name Stiffel. We show but two from a wide selection. 32" table lamp in distressed bright old brass finish. \$215. Floor-lamp lamp. 54 1/2" high, in bright old brass finish. \$320. Come see how they'll light up your decor—and your life. \$10 charge for delivery.



HUDSON'S