

Circumstances call for a new state political party

THE TIME HAS arrived in Michigan for a new political party.

"Preposterous," you say.

Well, think again.

Last week, you may recall, I noted how it was becoming an uncomfortable habit in this state to deny opportunity to those politicians who seek change through compromise.

More and more, political ideologues are triumphing at the polls. Compromise, a truly admirable quality, has become denigrated by those on the left and the right of the political spectrum who fear change.

And while under normal circumstances the hope of developing a third political party is unrealistic, these are anything but normal circumstances for our state.

Although economic conditions could be worse in

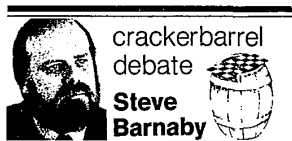
Michigan, it's hard for hundreds of thousands who have been out of work for endless months to imagine how.

Meanwhile, election by election, political extremists are walking away from the polls with the victories. Legislators and executive leaders are being thrown out just when we need them the most.

A new political party could be part of the answer in solving this crisis.

NOW I'M NOT talking about a one-dimensional political movement campaigning for its special interest. I'm talking about a viable political party made up of persons willing to deal with a number of issues in a pragmatic way.

A look at South American politics demonstrates the dangers we face. Sure, I know, Michigan politicians aren't about to gun down each other in the street.



But in the Latin American countries, those willing to use compromise to solve political problems have been eliminated. All that remains are the political extremes, which insist problems must be solved their way or no way at all. Hence, deadlock and a lack of resolution and a lot of revolution.

Michigan voters are doing the same thing through

the ballot box. Those willing to turn away from narrow political ideology are being eliminated from public life.

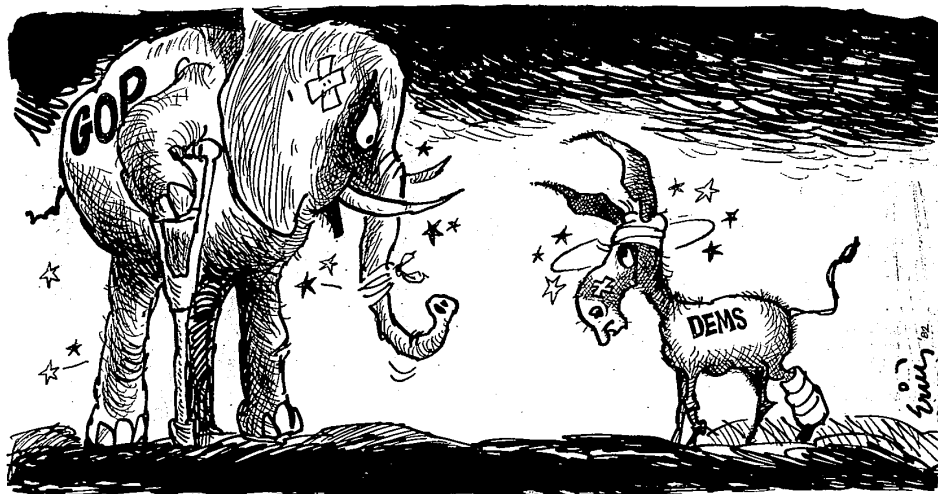
Unwisely, labor and business have become pitted against each other in deadly battle. Calm voices, reasonable thinkers are becoming more difficult to find.

A new political party — it's a wonderful idea — especially on the state level. In Minnesota, it spawned one of America's great political leaders — Hubert Humphrey.

RESOURCES — whether it be oil, water or political talent — are sinful to waste. We should stop driving out good politicians.

The political process in Michigan must be brought back to the center if we are to solve our problems. A new political party could be the answer.

'You had a rough primary, too!'



The slump cycle started with Ford

DURING A HEATED discussion at a dinner party the other evening, in which each diner attempted to explain what caused the present economic slump, an elderly gent across the aisle leaned over and said, "You fellows are too young to remember the real start."

He paused for a moment, awaiting questions, then with a grim smile he said, "The man who started it is long dead. It was Henry Ford, the man who helped put the world on wheels."

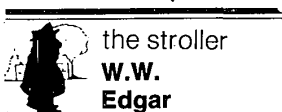
This was a strange twist in looking for the causes of the slump, and the old gent was asked to explain.

"WHEN MR. Ford decided to pay his workers \$5 a day in 1914 and invited workers from all over the country to come to Detroit, he drew an army of people to start the assembly line.

"There were people of all classes and from all parts. It was a move no one ever had dreamed — paying a man \$5 a day.

"With this swelling of the population, Detroit became a capital of labor. These workers planted their roots here, and their offspring helped make Detroit the fifth-largest city in the country.

"This was fine until 'hard times' came along.



Then Detroit and Michigan, with this influx of workers, had the largest unemployment lists."

This explanation certainly was novel. But he was not finished.

"SURE, WE'VE had depressions since the Ford assembly line came into being. But with the start Old Henry gave labor, the auto plants grew. Then, when the wars came — World War I and II — Detroit became the arsenal of democracy.

"Why? Because we had the skilled workers available to turn out the implements of war.

"Gen. Knudsen, who gave Detroit the title of 'the arsenal of democracy,' was an alumnus of the Ford system, and folks again flocked here to help in the war effort. It was just that simple."

August vacations: everyone's idea

AUGUST VACATIONS. I hate them. They're nightmares. Highways are clogged. Motels and hotels are over-booked. Restaurants are crowded with hungry eaters. Amusement parks have wall-to-wall people.

Every year I vow to never take another August vacation. Then I take one.

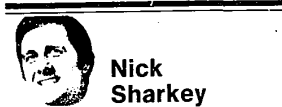
Why do I end up on vacation every August? That's simple to answer: schedules. There's usually no other time for the family to get away.

LIKE MANY suburbanites, we find our summers are a time of loading and unloading children out of station wagons. Summer school, baseball practices and games, swimming lessons and tennis classes all require that a schedule be followed.

Modern parents also don't take a back seat when it comes to having summer fun. They play in golf leagues, coach baseball and attend evening classes.

The end of summer is being squeezed by the early children sitting in classrooms at the end of August? What happened to that fine old tradition of school beginning after Labor Day?

In my family, it usually comes down to finding



one week in late August that has few vacation conflicts. This year, even that week was not perfect. Baseball season ended on Sunday. Football practice started on Monday — the first day of the scheduled vacation. Football practice had to give.

THIS YEAR'S vacation got off to a rocky start when it was delayed half a day by an important business meeting. Finally, after a long afternoon of driving, we arrived at the destination. But through a mix-up, our reservations for the first night had been cancelled.

With the exception of losing a wallet when a canoe tipped over, it was a smooth vacation from that point.

Vacations are a time for trying something different. This year, it was a waterslide, a foot-long

WITH ALL these workers on the assembly lines, it was an open invitation to the unions to organize them, he pointed out. That's what brought about the United Auto Workers.

"And don't overlook the fact that when the late Walter Reuther organized the men, he had to get the highest wages possible as a showpiece when he attempted to organize the rest of the country's auto workers."

The old man pointed out that it would be a strange thing if the workers at headquarters were not the highest paid of all the auto workers. So, again, with the big money, Detroit became a magnet.

"The same thing happened when the depression hit again. The welfare recipients in Detroit and Michigan became the best paid. So, folks again came to Detroit and Michigan and put us on the top line of unemployment compensation."

With a sort of satisfied look, the old gent turned to his dinner with the reminder:

"Don't forget. It was Henry Ford's offer of \$5 per day in 1914 that set the stage for what is happening today."

Coney Island hotdog and liver for dinner. The first round of golf for the summer was played. There was time to read a new book.

All the folks you meet while on vacation are either on vacation themselves or just getting back from a vacation.

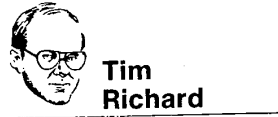
People talk about vacations a lot in August. "I love to take vacations at a quiet, secluded place," one woman said. "But my husband prefers to go to a lively, active city like New York. Where do you like to go?"

You get much advice from people at this time of the year about where to take next year's vacation. Lake Erie, northern Michigan, Niagara Falls and even Buffalo, N.Y., were recommended to me this year.

BUT VACATIONS must come to an end. Looming over the shoulder are a return to work and the beginning of another school year.

Returning to work in August means calling business associates on the phone and finding (guess what) most are on vacation. Many cohorts at work are also missing because they are on vacation.

Ah, vacations in August. I hate them. Next year, I vow there will be no vacation in August for me.



Great Lakes states get ball rolling

WHEN I LAST wrote about Nick Thomas, the Birmingham resident was promoting a project called the Great Lakes Economic Policies Council, working out of Cleveland State University.

The idea was that Michigan isn't alone in suffering from a drain of federal tax dollars, jobs and capital. In the same boat with Michigan are the seven other Great Lakes states — Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York.

What has been going on is "economic bloodletting," in the words of retired University of Michigan business economist J. Phillip Wernette. Federal budget policies have drained billions from the Great Lakes states and pumped them into the so-called "Sun Belt" states.

On top of that, many of those states that produce natural gas, oil and uranium are taxing the day-lights out of those commodities. At a time when Gov. William Milliken is cutting the Michigan state budget by hundreds of millions, the energy-rich states are arguing about what to do with the hundreds of millions they are raking in from those so-called severance taxes.

BUT THIS was supposed to be about the Great Lakes Economic Policies Council.

"Thought you would like to know it is now under way," Thomas wrote me a few weeks ago. "While a few Detroit powers and Cleveland promoters got a little upset over the fact that you broke the story, the fact remains that your exposure did contribute to southeast Michigan leaders becoming aware and more supportive."

What happened is that in spring, business leaders got together with four U.S. senators and 16 U.S. representatives for a roundtable discussion on the region's economic ills and what could be done to remedy them.

Among the political names either organizing it or speaking were Sen. John Glenn, D-Ohio, Rep. Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, and Rep. Robert Edgar, D-Pa, the latter being a co-chair of the Northeast/Midwest congressional coalition.

THE CONFEREES looked at four main issues:

- Industrial revenue bonds. While the tax laws that make such investment lures possible are under attack, the Great Lakes folks would like to keep this tool, perhaps cleaning up what may have been some abuses.

- Capital financing for public improvements. The Reagan administration, with its strong western orientation, has been less than keen on grants for water, sewage treatment, airports, highways and public transit.

- Defense spending policies. President Reagan is boosting spending here, but the nice question is whether the Great Lakes states will get any of that money or only the privilege of shipping our tax dollars to other states.

- Clean Air Act. Many Great Lakes industrialists see the act as being tough on them.

A Buffalo chamber of commerce official summed it up: "We accomplished exactly what we set out to do — to touch base with members of Congress in order to tell them who we are, what our problems are, and what needs to be done."

STAFF MEMBERS of the Great Lakes Economic Policies Council are making contacts with congressional offices to look out for the region's interests.

The moral of the story, ag-in, is that Michigan does not suffer in isolation. The hand of the federal government is not neutral between regions.

Adds Thomas: "All Ohio candidates for governor have endorsed the concept and also have indicated the need for the governors to work closely together. You might want to put a spur under the saddle of your candidates."

What do you think, Messrs Blanchard, Headlee and Jacobs?