

Would-Be Elector Fears Snarl

By W. W. EDGAR
Observer Roving Editor

When William Duffy, the Livonia Republican, was nominated presidential elector for the 19th District at the GOP State Convention last April, he had little idea that he could become a figure in one of the strangest political entanglements that could leave the country with nothing more than an acting president for an indefinite period.

Usually, a presidential elector does nothing more than go to the state capitol, if his party has a majority, and cast the state vote for the candidate -- and his task is finished. It is an honor to cast the actual ballot for the president and usually is a reward for faithful service to the party.

This year it could be different, and Duffy is more than a little disturbed over the problems that could arise should the third party candidate -- George Wallace of Alabama -- make a strong enough showing to deprive either of the top candidates, Vice President Humphrey or Richard Nixon, of a majority and throw the election to the House of Representatives.

"I JUST SHUDDER to think of some of the problems that could arise," he said. "I am keeping my fingers crossed until the returns are in on Nov. 5."

Commenting on the Electoral College, of which he would be a member if Nixon carries the state, Duffy pointed out that an elector is free to vote in any way he chooses when the College meets Dec. 16.

"This is where some of the problems can develop," he said, "and it could be that the Supreme Court would be brought into the picture and the election end up in a court battle."

"The people who take the national polls have said that the Electoral College may not reach a decision -- and if that happens, we are in for what could be a lot of trouble."

He explained that the Electoral College is made up of the same number of representatives and senators as there are in the United States Congress, which brings the total to 538, and to win the presidency a candidate needs 270 of these votes for a clear cut majority.

In the case of Michigan, there are 19 representatives and two senators which entitles the state to 21 votes. If the presidential candidate is Nixon, all 21 of the Republicans -- of whom Duffy is one -- are automatically elected to the Electoral College.

"UP TO NOW," Duffy stated, "it all seems very simple. But with the third party involved in the presidential race some states definitely will cast their votes for Gov. Wallace. And here is where the trouble comes in."

"Candidate Wallace may get just enough votes in the Electoral College to deprive either Nixon or Humphrey from getting the needed majority. If this should happen on Dec. 16, the ballots cast by the presidential electors are then sent to the president of the Senate for the next step."

Here Duffy outlined the procedure that must be followed. On Jan. 6 the president of the Senate will read the results of the Electoral College vote to a joint session of the House and Senate. If there is no clear cut majority the House of Representatives will then vote for a president, from the top three candidates.

HERE DUFFY crossed his fingers and elaborated on the strange process:

"The House can only vote for the president. The Senate, in the meantime, would vote for the vice president, and this voting is limited to a choice of the two top candidates."

YPSILANTI -- A 33-year old hit and run driver will be arraigned on charges of manslaughter in connection with the traffic death of an Eastern Michigan University student. Police said that Richard W. Fry's car sped away from the scene where Gregory Espar was hit. Espar later died as a result of the injuries he suffered in the collision.



REPUBLICAN Bill Duffy and friend.

"Now, here is what could happen," Duffy explained. "If, on Nov. 5, it is determined that neither of the top candidates would have a majority in the Electoral College (and this would be the worst thing that could happen), there possibly would be all kinds of bargaining to get the electors to vote for somebody other than the candidates who were on the ballot, or to switch to one party or another. All sorts of pressure could be brought to bear so that the election would not be thrown into the House of Representatives."

"If no such trading is done and there still is no majority when the Electoral College meets on Dec. 16, we will not have a president -- elect and possibly could not have one for four years."

"And without a president -- elect the country would have no direction or plans on how it will be run and we would have utter chaos."

DUFFY SHUDDERED just at the thought of what could happen.

"The speculation and possibilities seem endless," he stated, and then related a few.

2 Other Electors

Two other 19th District men besides Republican Bill Duffy will be watching Tuesday's election results closely with the hope of being a presidential elector.

Democratic nominee for the Electoral College is Willis Brewer of Sylvan Lake, near Pontiac. American Independent Party (Wallace) electoral nominee is Dr. Julian McGuire of Pontiac.

"There is the possibility that someone, somewhere, will call attention to the fact that under the plan of each state getting one vote, it is against the principle of the 'one man, one vote' decision handed down by the Supreme Court, and ask for an injunction."

"This would carry the election into the Supreme Court and bring about the greatest political entanglement we ever have had."

No wonder the Livonia Republican, who was rewarded by his party by being named a presidential elector, is keeping his fingers crossed -- hoping that one candidate, whoever he is, will get a clear cut majority when the Electoral College meets.

farfetched?



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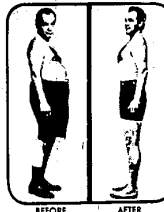
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