

Disagree On Stadium

Reps Split 4-3 On Hotel Tax

By KATHY MORAN

Detroit's domed stadium is one step closer to reality, but Observerland's site representatives split on their support for it.

A bill to levy a five per cent tax on hotel and motel bills in Wayne County passed the House 59 to 39 last week (56 votes are needed for passage).

The split in the House was mirrored in Observerland where four representatives voted for the bill, three opposed it and one didn't vote.

IN SUPPORT of the tax were Reps. James DeFebaugh (R-Birmingham), John Bennett (D-Redford Township), Thomas Brown (D-Westland), and Marvin Stempien (D-Livonia).

Opposing it were Reps. Raymond Baker (R-Farmington), James Tierney (D-Garden City), and Richard Young (D-DeARBorn Heights).

Rep. Joseph Forbes (D-Oak Park) did not vote. The hotel-motel tax is expected to bring in \$2 million a year if it gets final approval in the Legislature.

THE WAYNE County Stadium Authority estimates it will need \$13.5 million a year to pay off the revenue bonds to finance construction.

Since the stadium is expected to bring in \$9 million a year, the authority still needs \$2.5 million to finance the building. The balance could be paid by an increase in the state's share of racing revenue, off-track betting, or dog racing — all possibilities under consideration.

Reps. Bennett and Young were the only local legislators that could be reached for comment over the holidays.

BENNETT SAID he voted for the tax because the stadium will bring business

into Detroit, thus increasing state revenues.

"I think the stadium will act as a catalyst, bringing more business into Detroit and generating more revenue for the state," he said. "It will also create additional job opportunities — and Detroit has a 10 per cent rate of unemployment."

"It is not a tax on the people in Wayne County. It is a tax on the people who use the hotels and motels in the county of Wayne. These are transient people, most of them come in from out of state."

The tax was vigorously opposed by Myra Wolfgang, secretary-treasurer of Local 705 of the Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Employers Union, who argued that it would cripple an industry which is ailing already.

Last minute opposition came from the AFL-CIO. YOUNG SAID he opposed it

because if the stadium fails to generate enough revenue to cover its \$9 million share of the expense, the residents in Wayne County will have to make up the balance.

"If the expectations of the Stadium Authority are not met, it becomes the obligation of the county," Young said. "If the purpose is to solve

some of the social problems existing in Detroit, I don't think Wayne County should get stuck with it (the bill)."

Young pointed to Cobo Hall and Olympia stadium as examples of facilities that are used at less than capacity.

"I think it is unfair to the hotel and motel operators that the tax is on them and not

throughout the state," Young added. The total cost of the stadium is projected at \$126 million. It would be ready for use in December in 1974 with completion scheduled for April of 1975.

The stadium has already won approval by the Wayne County Commissioners.

Chorus To Give 4 Concerts

The Livonia Civic Chorus has scheduled four concerts and a Christmas party for the month of December.

The chorus will be heard at 8:30 p.m., Dec. 9, at Presbyterian Village; Dec. 12, at Kenwood Church of Christ, Merriam and Eight Mile; Dec. 16, at Westland Center; and Dec. 19, at Greenfield Village.

The Christmas party for members will be held Dec. 18. New committee heads have been appointed for the year. They are as follows: Joyce Winter, choreography; Joann Benedict, costumes; Barbara Barone, makeup; Lou Ann Leville, coordinator; Pat Renaud, assistant coordinator; Phil Meyer, sets; Bob Pomponi and Joe Kline, program; John Gilechrist; publicity; Bill Hill and Bruce Sachs, tickets; Terry Michaels, stage management; and Dennis Turcotte, advertising.



DEBUN CHAUDHURI, one of India's leading sitar players, and his group will perform at Schoolcraft College tonight (Dec. 1). His performance will be in the Waterman Campus Center, 18600 Haggerty Road, Livonia, at 8. Admission is \$1 for students and \$2 for the general public, with tickets on sale at the door. Debun performs concerts and teaches instrumental music at Delhi University and the Bharatya Kala Kendra in New Delhi.

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