

# RAY BAKER: QUIET MAN, TOUGH ISSUES

By TIM RICHARD  
Managing Editor

Now in his fourth term in the State House of Representatives, Raymond L. Baker operates like a Lansing veteran.

The Farmington Republican is chairman of the House committee on conservation and recreation and is also a member of the liquor control, insurance and youth committees.

He works quietly; one rarely reads about him on the wire services or in the daily papers. He is cautious about expressing a personal opinion; his newsletters from Lansing give no hint of the part he must have played in committee work on controversial bills, or of how he voted.

Like many other Republicans elected in whole or in part from Oakland County, Baker can be greatly affected by the deep, serious rift between the conservative "outs" and the moderate "ins" within the party, and he'd like to keep on good terms with all.

A pharmacist by profession, Baker is Michigan-born and raised and loves the outdoors. So we began by asking him about some major conservation matters and then got into other bills on liquor, water pollution and the party structure. Here are the questions and his answers.

## Licenses Hiked

QUESTION: The Legislature has raised the price of resident fishing licenses from \$2 to \$6, established a new trout-salmon stamp at \$3 and will require a license to fish in the Great Lakes. In addition, the House has voted to raise state park annual car permits from \$2 to \$3 and deer licenses from \$5 to \$7.50. Are these related? Why are they all being raised at once?

ANSWER: I would say that many departments—such as Mental Health, and Social Aid and Welfare—have no means of raising funds to support their programs. But I think that the Conservation Department is making some effort to do this. And even though these fees are being raised this year to some degree, the public is still getting a real bargain when it comes to outdoor activities.

"Let me give you an example, this one is important because it's been controversial over the years. Should we charge a license fee for fishing on the Great Lakes? If you go across the river to Ontario, you'll find for a number of years you've had to pay anywhere from \$5 to \$7.50 or \$9 for a license. This is still going on.

"The State of Michigan hasn't charged, yet we've contributed much to our Great Lakes as far as the establishment of better fishing and the protection of fish we already have; for instance, the Langray well control program. Along with the federal government and Canada, along with Wisconsin and other states, we've

contributed an awful lot in that effort to the point where in Lake Superior we're now getting lake trout back again.

"We have encouraged—and spent a lot of money on tourism, and we encourage people to come into the State of Michigan. Many of them come every weekend from Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky and those areas; and they come up and they'll have \$5,000 worth of equipment as far as their car and their trailer are concerned; and if they're coming for a weekend, they'll bring their own groceries and actually spend very little money in the state.

"Now who's really paying for that? We talk about increasing fees, and the average fisherman and sportsman—he's not the one who's really complaining. The ones who are complaining—especially in the Legislature—are ones who are really concerned about the poor guy who's being deprived of something." But actually, as I mentioned earlier, our fees are low in comparison with most states, and we're doing much, much more for the dollar than is exhibited in most other states.

"For instance, our program on the coho salmon, and the chinook which will be planted soon.

"The reason for the fees increase, which is what you want to know, is basically the man who supports these programs (now) is the man who stays home on a weekend with four or five children, taking care of his lawn, trying to keep up his home; he doesn't have all this fancy equipment, yet he's the man who has been paying the bill.

"On raising the license fees for deer hunters, we held many hearings on this, and basically it's the deer hunters who have been asking for this, because, we all recognize that through people and modern transportation, we're losing deer habitat; and, of course, you have to have habitat for the sustenance of the deer herd. And so \$2.50 of this increase would have gone for the continuation and improvement of the deer habitat situation, which, of course, is a long range program."

## Sunday Liquor

QUESTION: On the Sunday liquor issue, the Senate tacked an amendment on one of your House bills; the Senate version would allow some form of Sunday liquor. What do you think of Sunday liquor as a matter of public policy?

REP. BAKER: "Well, of course, I'm not opposed to the principle of trying to tell people whether they should drink on Sunday or whether they shouldn't.

"I am concerned about the bill, because it happens to be my bill that came back from the Senate amended, and it sort of makes me, instead of the father of Sunday liquor, its step-father.

"The bill that was attached to mine is



STATE REP. RAYMOND L. BAKER

supposed to be tacked after the law which Ontario just passed about a year ago. But there's a slight difference: There are some hidden features in this that many of the legislators and, I'm sure, many of the people don't understand.

"In the first place, the Ontario bill says that you can purchase cocktails or highballs on a Sunday with a meal equivalent to 50 per cent of the total check, between certain hours—I think it's 1 and 3, and then from 5 to 9 or something like that.

"This (Senate) bill was copied from that, except that they say 50 per cent of the business done by the man holding the license. And this is (to be) proven by an affidavit which is filed with the State Liquor Control Commission.

"Well, this is a pretty open-ended thing

to say, that all a man has to do is file an affidavit.

"However, the bill that is being offered now says 'food or services.' Now, there's a slight difference there. In other words, you could have a hotel—we have one in Lansing called the Roosevelt Hotel—where they've stopped serving food; it has now become a third or fourth-rate hotel, and you can imagine the type of services they might have to offer. And this could be used as the basis for their liquor volume.

"Or you might have a little bar up north, in an isolated area which caters to the local trade, and he might have groceries on one side, or a gasoline pump out in front. So this can be considered as part of his volume of business."

Baker added that of the mail he had received, the anti-Sunday liquor letters came from both inside and outside the district, but the pro-Sunday liquor letters were entirely from people in the business and outside his district.

"They talk about wanting to give people the right to vote on Sunday liquor—I haven't had one letter from one person writing as an individual inside my district asking for the right to vote on Sunday liquor."

## Pollution Control

QUESTION: Rep. John Bennett (D-Redford) has introduced HB 2369 to authorize the state to borrow up to \$100 million as 25 per cent participation in a total program of \$400 million—with the other three-quarters coming from the federal government—for a water pollution control program. He has complained, somewhat publicly, that the governor and the Conservation Committee which you head are taking little or no interest in his bill. We wondered what your thinking was on this approach to a water pollution control program.

REP. BAKER: "We're in agreement that something needs to be done in the area of pollution, and much work has been done. However, no concrete programs are being offered at the present time. I feel we're going in too many different directions in too many different ways to try to come up with a program which is equitable and can be used throughout the State of Michigan.

"We do have various local cities and townships which have problems when it comes to sewers and sewage disposal...but how do you allocate the money to any local group or government?"

"Also, there's the question of bonding the state is full faith and credit for \$100 million—this is a lot of money, particularly this year, when we're concerned with just meeting our general budget.

"But further than that, the federal government has indicated that by no means are they going to consider giving a matching grant of that kind this year.

"So it's the feeling of most of us in the

Legislature—and this bill didn't get out of committee—that we just aren't in a position to bring out a program that will load the State of Michigan's full faith and credit for \$100 million. We know from the federal government that this money is just not available; we're just fooling ourselves at this particular time."

## The Conservative Wing

QUESTION: Sen. Robert Huber, R-Troy, has organized a "Republican Citizens Committee of Oakland County," a group that appears to be somewhat more conservative than the regular party organization. His committee has announced a rather elaborate organization—an executive director, a board and so forth. How do you, as a member of the Legislature who has to deal with and depend on the party machinery to be elected, see this kind of an organization? What contact have you had with it?

REP. BAKER: "Well, I as a public official haven't really had any contact with that new organization; I'll be real honest.

"In fact, I have taken it on myself to feel I shouldn't become involved. Sen. Huber is a very good friend of mine. I have good friends in the organization which has been established over the years. What effect it's going to have on future elections I don't know.

"It seems that the new group is, perhaps, more conservative than some of the rest that have been longer established, and I think it started back when Gov. Romney failed—saw fit not to support—Sen. Goldwater back in 1964.

"I don't know what's going to result from this. I have found from talking to the other representatives from Oakland County—and, of course, these are the only ones concerned—we're going to take a position of more or less just standing to one side. This doesn't mean we're discharging (ourselves) of our duties to party affiliation.

"I can't speak for any of the others, I'm speaking only for myself. I feel that I'm fairly conservative; in fact, I have always during my campaigns not wanted to be tagged as a 'conservative' or a 'liberal.' I would say that if I were to have a name tagged on me, I would like to be called a 'conservative' because each issue and each problem should be considered on the merit of that problem.

"What's going to happen in the future—I don't know. Various people will have their favorite candidates, and I have felt that I have always acted for the district I represent rather than any one particular group; in fact, I'm sure I have; although I'm a Republican, I feel that my obligation is to all the people in the district. I personally don't want to be drawn into any controversy between two factions."

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