

This Is The Week That

By Don Hoenschell

There was a story in a metropolitan Detroit paper before what has become an almost annual crisis with labor which closed down the state's biggest newspapers, that should give nightmares to everybody out here.

It was done by Larry Green so believe it.

The story quoted Mayor Jerry Cavanagh to the effect that any suburb not practicing open housing might get to thinking right if it was tinkering with its water contract with Detroit.

There was mention here a few months ago that the political vagaries of Detroit would make it better for the suburbs under contract if a water authority were established.

As of now, the Detroit Water Board is appointed by the mayor of the city. Detroit residents, naturally, are in the majority with a minority representation given the suburbs.

BUT THE MAYOR can force the suburbs—as he has in the past—to nominate a board member to his liking. In practice, then, whoever is mayor of Detroit can shut off our water (no pun here, folks).

Legislators and others pooh-poohed the water authority idea. That was before Cavanagh mentioned open housing.

In Cavanagh we trust, but figure a Huey Long or some body in the mayor's office with a real axe to grind, politically or philosophically—or just vindictive through sheer cussedness.

Love my water, love me. That kind of thing.

Detroit now provides water to more than one-third of Michigan's population. And the number of customers is growing every year. It now stands at 66 separate municipal jurisdictions.

THE FIRST EFFORTS in Lansing were to place all municipal water systems under the Michigan Public Service Commission, a condition not accepted by Michigan Bell Telephone Co., Consumers Power Co., Detroit Edison Co., the buses and railroads and trucks, among others.

The commission fixes rates, holds hearings on increases and decrees, enforces standards, blocks contraband cigarettes (for example) at the state borders and performs other functions.

For reasons too tiring to bore you with, it would be a little much to toss municipal water systems into this melnstrom of bureaucracy.

So the proposal still stands—a southeastern Michigan water authority to handle a commodity we can't live without to establish and review rates and standards of service, exercise a veto over bond issues for construction and, in general, represent the consumer.

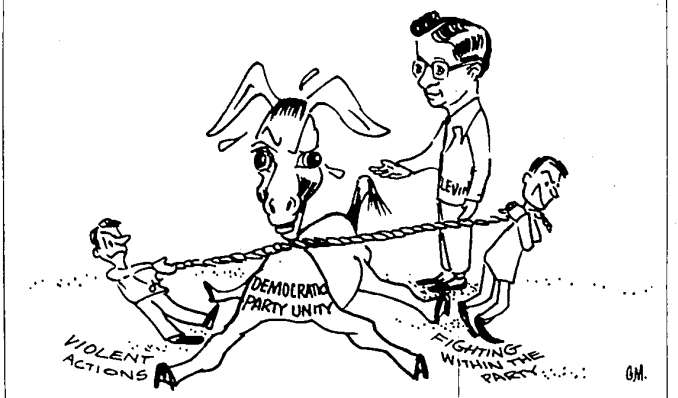
There should be experts and citizens on this panel, organized only to represent the people who pay the bill. Detroit wouldn't lose. The only gain is that a broader-based authority would be in charge of the water.

The suburbs are now fighting the recent increase in rates imposed by Detroit. An authority might find the increases to be entirely justified. Probably would.

But whether or not, the fellow living with his water bill in Livonia, Farmington, Plymouth Township, or wherever else, would know the decision would not be the whim of the head guy in Detroit.

Suburbanites don't get mad about things like this, since they've put Detroit behind them. But they won't like shaving some morning without water.

"YOU'LL NEVER GET HIM ON HIS FEET THAT WAY..."



Random Reactions On Rouge Report

Random reactions to our stories of last Wednesday and Sunday about pollution in the Middle Rouge River.

BURROUGHS CORP. in Plymouth Township was reportedly miffed because no mention was made of the expense and efforts it's engaged in to combat its situation.

Burroughs was one of four companies intensively studied by the state Water Resources Commission. Our articles were based almost entirely on the WRC's 50-page report.

No mention was made in the WRC report of Burroughs' corrective action, although the WRC did mention other firms' corrective actions.

Both the company and the state agency have been invited to respond.

A LADY in Livonia called to tell us about the mess along Bell Creek between Hubbard and Farmington roads. Her observations were sharp:

We have a society which stresses personal neatness and hygiene—a person sticks a gum wrapper in his pocket until he finds a basket. In America he throws it on the street.

Attitudes toward the cleanliness of one's environment can be changed. The Chinese have proved this with their wars on sparrows, insects and other pests. The Chinese may not be able to feed all their people, but you have to give them credit for that kind of environmental improvement.

WE HAD A 50-mile hike during the Kennedy Administration, but that lasted a few months and died when John F. Kennedy died.

We had a highway beautification fad in the early part of the Johnson Administration, but that died with LBJ's plummeting popularity. (In Greenwich Village, though, you can get buttons that say: "Beautiful America—Sterilize the Johnsons." But that's probably politically motivated.)

The Rouge problem involves more than just pollution, which is currently getting national attention. The Rouge problem involves stink, chemicals, weeds and trash, too.

Let's hope that the river-cleaning movement isn't tied to Chinese-style government or a politician's temporary popularity. Let's hope it goes deeper.

—Tim Richard

IN PLYMOUTH, the Jaycees

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Black Eye For Black Power

The elections of the Nation's first major-city mayors in Cleveland and Gary are not Negro victories. They were victories FOR the Negro, and because of this, are victories for the entire community.

It took white votes—a great many white votes—in addition to Negro votes to make Carl B. Stokes and Richard G. Hatcher the first of their race to win the top elective job in their respective cities.

In Boston, where Negroes are a much smaller minority than in Cleveland or Gary, white voters decisively rejected a white mayoral candidate who pitched her bid for office on a reactionary racial basis.

This is the answer to "Black Power," with its cry of separation from, if not outright war against the "white establishment." This is democracy's answer.

November 7, 1967, should make it clear to all which route—riots and revolts or constructive politics and cooperation—will eventually lead to equal citizenship and equal opportunity for all Americans.

—Reprint from Pontiac Press

Observation Point

By Philip H. Power, Publisher

On the Public Affairs page of this edition, you will find a story out of Lansing that Michigan Democrats have elected Sander Levin their new state chairman.

Levin is a state senator. He's from Berkeley, which is in suburban Oakland County. He is a labor lawyer who was educated at Harvard and at the University of Chicago. He has a reputation as one of the most thoughtful and able men in the party, and he has gained the respect of almost everyone who has worked with (and against) him in the state legislature.

He's got a lot going for him. And he'll need it.

IT'S NO SECRET that the Michigan Democratic Party has come upon evil days in recent times.

Some people claim that the rot set in way back in the late 1950's even during the hey-day of former Gov. G. Mennen Williams, and that the big victory in the 1964 election merely covered it up.

Others say that the 1966 debacle, which saw the party lose five freshmen Congressmen and drop control of both houses of the state legislature, was the real tip-off. Regardless of how you slice it, though, the party that was once looked on as the best organized, most effectively led in the nation has lost a lot of ground. The current rumor in Washington is that the Michigan party is even in worse shape than California's.

That's going a long way.

OF COURSE, everyone knows the party has been squabbling over Viet Nam, Zolton Ferency, the now resigned state chairman, has been sore at President Johnson for some time, and he has made no bones about it. A group called the Concerned Democrats has split off from the regular party, and is now exploring whether or not to run peace candidates next fall in addition to supporting the bid of Sen. Eugene McCarthy to deny the President the democratic nomination.

Published figures indicate that the party's debt is presently \$110,878. The proposed 1968 budget is only a little more than

twice this, \$289,112 in all, and this in turn is some \$40,112 out of balance.

Family fights are troublesome enough, but when the family is badly in the red they can be devastating.

BUT THE FIGHTS aren't only over Viet Nam.

The once coherent leadership structure of the party has been badly fractured since the departure of Williams and his old state chairman, Neil Staebler.

In place of a party leadership unified by commitment to a central program, what developed was all too close to a series of feudal princes, each jealously preserving his own domain, resentful of any intrusion and suspicious of all outsiders.

WHILE ALL THIS was going on, Michigan Republicans continued to surge behind George Romney. Money poured in, (although it's now pouring out to finance Romney's bid for the presidential nomination.)

Republican organizers started work in the previously anti-democratic areas of Wayne County: The first groups to offer help to those displaced by the Detroit riots were Republican clubs here in Observerland.

Republicans also managed to tone down some of the more notable stone-age members of their party, and they adopted reasonable party platforms.

SO LEVIN HAS a lot to do.

As he put it, "Are we going to solve our problems by debate, discussion, dissent and then decision? Or are we going to solve them by violent words and violent actions?"

He is a reasonable person, and he isn't expected to blow the party's credibility by making over-partisan statements in public.

Levin is talking about holding a series of state-wide issue conferences. About hiring a full-time public relations guy. About getting some field staff. About raising some money.

About pulling the party back together.

He might just do it.

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