

Milliken On Suburban Issues

Acting Governor Fields Tough Ones

By TIM RICHARD

One of Bill Milliken's friends once said he was just a good-looking, easy-going guy who couldn't really fight.

Milliken, though, 45, still has the boyish good looks of a movie star, but there are a few new wrinkles around the eyes since he has more frequently been acting governor of Michigan.

Yale-educated, president of the family's department store based in Traverse City, an Army Air Force combat veteran of World War II (purple heart with two oak leaf clusters), Rotarian, Boy Scout council president, William G. Milliken has been getting the battles of his life in Michigan now that Gov. George Romney is campaigning in other states for the Republican presidential nomination.

Milliken was elected in 1960 and 1962 to the State Senate, became floor leader in 1963 and, under the new constitution, was elected lieutenant governor in 1964 on the ticket with Romney.

When Romney was campaigning in Viet Nam, it fell to Gov. Milliken — that is the proper way to address him in such circumstance — to try to get passage of an open housing bill during the December special session.

Milliken got the brunt of conservative Republican Sen. George Kuhn's criticism about the administration's interest in open housing.

The acting governor was in Plymouth last week to address a Jaycees meeting, and we asked him some pointed questions about issues of annexation, housing and taxation that are pretty controversial in suburbia. He took them on.

Annexation

Q. Keeping in mind that the area you're in is about half township and half city, and that they have annexation problems, we noticed in Gov. Romney's State of the State message that the Boundary Commission proposal was missing this year. (The



AS ACTING GOVERNOR, Milliken signed a bill pushed by State Sen. George Kuhn (standing) establishing arbitration procedures for highway right-of-way disputes, but at other times the conservative Kuhn has been at bitter odds with the Romney-Milliken Administration.

Boundary Commission would decide the governmental sense of annexation, consolidation and new city incorporation petitions before putting them on the ballot.) Is the administration of which you are a part still in favor of this proposal?

MILLIKEN: "Yes, the administration is in favor of a Boundary Commission."

"As a matter of fact, it's my understanding that Sen. Milton

Zaagman (R-Grand Rapids) will once again be introducing this bill. I think without any question it will have the support of the administration."

"The Zaagman proposal, if similar to the one presented last year, will make it easier for annexation to occur. I think this is important under certain controlled conditions, because we're facing the need to improve our public services, our sewage, our

other facilities. Annexation, in some instances in the past, has been almost impossible of achievement."

"This bill, through setting up proper safeguards and proper machinery, will make that possible, and I think that is in the public interest."

'Obsession'

Q. Sen. George Kuhn, whose district you are now in, sent you a letter last month accusing you and the administration of having an "obsession" with open housing and having a lack of interest in better riot control and police laws. Will you comment?

MILLIKEN: "Well, I don't agree at all with the choice of words — 'obsession.'"

"It is true that Sen. Kuhn wrote me to that effect and requested that the administration become, as he said, I think, more active in the field of law enforcement and crime prevention."

"I replied to Sen. Kuhn to the effect that this administration is vitally interested in law enforcement in this state and the prevention of crime."

"I have recently received the Governor's Crime Commission report, and in that report many specific recommendations have been made which are now incorporated in the governor's State of the State message."

"We're concerned about crime and the problems of riots. This session (of the Legislature) will indicate the extent of that concern."

"But at the same time, it is important that all of us have a balanced approach to that problem. It's important, in my judgment, that we have open housing legislation in this state, and that we move along the lines of correcting social injustices that do occur."

"My point to him — and I repeat of here — is that we need a balanced approach which acknowledges the importance of both areas — open housing, crime prevention and control, and equal justice for all people."



MILLIKEN'S PORTRAIT — There are a few more wrinkles around the eyes now.

Q. Several suburban state representatives in our circulation area have listed as one of the prime reasons for the open housing bill defeat in December the fact that Gov. Romney was not in the state. This reflects two ways — on Gov. Romney for not being here and on you personally, as acting governor in his absence. What is your reaction to the criticism that not everything was done to pass that bill?

MILLIKEN: "My reaction is this: 'The governor enlarged the special session to include the open housing issue. The governor has made his position clear from the very beginning.'"

"And without any question at all, everything was done that could be done to achieve open housing in this state during that special session."

"And I might add that the predictions earlier were that the bill would be overwhelmed. That was

not true. The measure received 47 of the necessary 56 votes. We felt it represented a tremendous achievement."

"We'll be successful in the regular session."

Strategy

Q. You're a former member of the State Senate, and one representative out this way (Democrat John Bennett of Redford) suggested that things might have gone better for open housing had the bill gone to the Senate because the House members were afraid of it until they knew what the Senate would do. Have you any reply?

MILLIKEN: "It's always easy, of course, to look back and to decide that, had a certain course of action been taken, the result might have been different."

"I can only say that, in our best judgment at the time, the House was the place to begin the action."

Commuter Tax

Q. Sen. Kuhn has proposed that the income tax limitation on cities — he was thinking of Detroit, although it would apply to all cities — be raised to two per cent on a quid pro quo basis: In exchange, the commuter tax — that is, the half per cent on non-residents working in the city — would be eliminated. Can you comment for the administration or for yourself on this proposal?

MILLIKEN: "Yes, I think we need to think more and more in terms of areas, and there's no question that suburban communities are vitally affected by the quality of life and the economic activity which goes on in the City of Detroit."

"It just seems to me it is not unreasonable that the present arrangement (tax on commuters) be continued, and that it would be unreasonable to adopt the proposal of Sen. Kuhn to place a disproportionate burden on those individuals within the city and absolve the persons who live outside the city who commute and regularly use its facilities — it would absolve them of some of any real responsibility for progress or for future development in that area."

public affairs



CITY HONORS ITS OWN — Farmington Mayor Wilbur V. Brotherton presents a plaque to Delos Hamlin from the city thanking him for his work as the city's representative on the county board.



TOWNSHIP HONORS — Farmington Township Supervisor Curtis H. Hall presents a plaque to Delos Hamlin from Farmington Township expressing its appreciation for Hamlin's work as a member of the county board.

New Social Security

Medicare Payments Made Simpler

(Editor's Note: This is the third in a series of articles by Sam P. Test, Social Security District Manager in the Detroit-Northwest Office, telling what the Social Security Amendments of 1967 mean to you and your family.)

When Medicare first started on July 1, 1966, there were two ways for older people to get their doctor bills paid under the program.

The first called for the doctor's agreeing to claim the 80 per cent payment direct from Medicare, by filling out a very simple one-page application form. The other required that the beneficiary first pay the bill and then apply for the medi-

cure payment, with or without the help of the doctor.

DURING the first year and a half of Medicare, about half of the claims for doctor bills were paid directly by the doctors, while the beneficiaries had to apply, after paying the bill, in about half the cases.

The system worked well enough—almost \$1.3 billion was paid in benefits under it—but not without hardship to those older people who could raise the money to pay the bill only by borrowing or by depriving themselves of necessities while waiting for the Medicare payment to come in.

Now Congress has changed all this to eliminate the neces-

sity for the beneficiary's paying the bill first. In cases where the doctor decides not to make the claim himself,

Beginning Jan. 1, all the beneficiary needs is an itemized bill—not an itemized, receipted bill as in the past.

OF COURSE, the assignment-to-the-doctor method is still the simplest method for all concerned. It requires the use of only a single sheet of paper (the "Request for Payments" form), with no attachments or enclosures that might become separated from the claims form and delay a payment.

Also it has blanks for all of the kinds of information needed to pay a claim, thus further

preventing "write-backs" for missing data without which a claim cannot be paid.

Under this method, the doctor agrees to accept the "reasonable charges" determined by the carrier, as his full charge, and the basis of the 80 per cent payment made to him.

The patient is responsible for the other 20 per cent, plus any part of the \$50 annual deductible that might be remaining.

But even if the doctor decides to accept an assignment, it can be to his advantage to use the "Request for Payments" form in lieu of his standard receipted bill in the case of Medicare beneficiaries.

Experience has shown that payments can be processed much faster when the form is used.

THIS, IN TURN, will result in the beneficiary's receiving his Medicare check sooner, with his proceeds passed along that much sooner to the attending doctor.

All the doctor's office needs to do is complete Part II of the standard form. That will serve as the itemized bill which the patient can send in, to claim his payment.

As before, Medicare pays \$4 out of every \$5, after the first \$50 medical bills in a year.

Increase Exemptions -Tierney

State Rep. James Tierney (D-Grand Rapids) has joined forces with Rep. Joyce Symons (D-Allen Park) in an attempt to bring more tax relief to the qualified senior citizens of Michigan.

They have introduced a bill in the Legislature to increase the present exemption on real estate taxes by 50 per cent or from \$10,000 to \$15,000 of state equalized valuation.

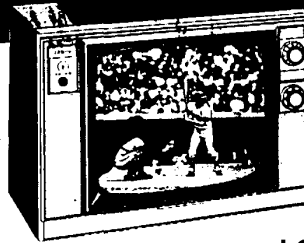
"When the new constitution was adopted," Rep. Tierney explained, "it called for the assessment of property at 50 per cent of its true cash value. That was in 1963, but the law now has worked a hardship on many of the retirees, and the bill we introduced would bring relief."

At present, all property owned by persons over 65 years that is valued at \$20,000 or less is eligible for the exemption. This means that the seniors get an exemption for \$10,000.

With the increase in values and the new assessment, the case has taken a different twist, and the \$10,000 figure, according to Tierney, has worked too many hardships.

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