

# Wayne County Tackles Knotty Home Rule Issue

Wayne County's 130-member board of supervisors will decide whether to place before the voters the issue of charter home rule as the pioneer development of local government.

The powerful Committee of 99 recommended the move to the board last week.

"I don't know how the board will react, but there has been some favorable comment," said Board Chairman Mel Ravitz. The committee also urged changes in a 1966 state law empowering counties to make the move to give county charter commissioners more leeway in determining which offices, if any, will be abolished.

Some early opposition has developed in Oberlin, but strong voices are being heard favoring the county charter.

**THE PRIME SPONSOR** of the 1966 act was former Senator Terry Trout (D-Romulus), former suburban spokesman on the State Board of Equalization, a former Wayne County Board of Supervisors bellwether and a township official.

Other sponsors included Senators John McCauley, Roger E. Craig, John T. Bowman, Sander M. Levin and two O'Brien from Oakland County, all suburban legislators.

Detractors were Senators Raymond D. Dzandzel, George S. Fitzgerald (Grosse Pointe, really), Charles F. Youngblood, Jr., and Michael O'Brien.

Lawmakers looked at it as a suburban bill designed to aid the suburbs.

And so the act was passed. Under its provisions, the board of supervisors may by a majority place the issue before the voters in an election. In Wayne county it would go on the general election next fall.

If they fail, the issue can be placed on the ballot by petitions bearing the valid signature of 5 per cent of the registered voters in the county.

Cleared by either means by the board, the issue will go on the next primary or general election ballot following within

the next 90 days. The Wayne county deadline would be next August.

**THE ELECTION** would be whether to elect a charter commission of 25 to 35 members in Wayne county. Charter commission candidates must be qualified electors in his charter district for six months.

The districts would be determined by the county apportionment commission, and the election would be on a partisan basis. The commission is composed of the county clerk, the county treasurer, prosecutor, and the county chairman of the two major political parties.

The apportionment commission has 30 days to carve out the single-member districts "as nearly of equal population as practicable."

In this case, the county can get the latest population count under a contract with the United States Census Bureau, rather than use 1960 figures.

The commission, after it is elected, will have 180 days to come up with a county charter. All the general and committee meetings will be open to the public.

The act then sets down a series of elements which a county charter must contain.

And this is where the jump is likely to come.

The state law requires a county executive, similar to a city manager, but unlike him elected at large. The county

commissioners--the new legislative body--would be elected for terms concurrent with those of state representatives with a maximum of 35 in Wayne county. It provides for the partisan election of a sheriff, a prosecutor, a county clerk, treasurer, recorder of deeds and election commissioner, and the board of county road commissioners--or the merger of these offices as authorized by law.

**COMMITTEE** of 99 spokesmen want more discretion of the county in handling the offices, with the power to abolish one or more if local conditions dictate.

County employees would continue under present pension and other fringe benefits.

The committee also wants services offered generally to the county's subdivisions to be provided in cost and that the county be empowered to establish service standards in all communities.

Optional with the counties in handling the offices of corporation counsel (county attorney for civil matters), a public defender, auditor general, and other necessary boards, commissions and agencies.

One concession made by the legislature and which the committee wants to change is the provision that the county cannot offer a service inside a

local unit of government without approval of the local legislative body.

**THE CHARTER** would not be effective until it had been approved as to form by the attorney general and governor and the officers named in the charter are elected or appointed.

Voters, then, will get at least three shots at the idea--whether to elect a charter commission, the election itself, and the final approval of the charter.

Complicating the procedure is the State Court of Appeals decision last week which ruled one-man-one vote apportionment unconstitutional for counties.

**THE COURT** upheld the 1963 state constitution which said each township shall have one representative (the supervisor) on the county legislative body.

Until the court hassle is decided--if it ever is in later decisions--and until the legislature changes the law to meet Committee of 99 objections, final adoption of charter home rule in Wayne county must be considered far in the distance.

## Caste Tradition Is Maintained

India's caste system still plays a key part in marriages, even among the urban middle and upper classes, a sociological study has revealed.

H. C. Upreti of Rajasthan University, in New Delhi, said his study of classified matrimonial advertisements failed to turn up a single case of a woman who would consider marrying outside her caste.

## Named Fair Judge

William J. Pintel, biology instructor at Schoolcraft College, has been selected as a hostess judge for the Detroit Metropolitan Science Fair to be held at Cobo Hall, Detroit, in April.

## Traffic Violators Are Accident Prone

Michigan drivers convicted more than once for a traffic violation are more likely to have accidents than those without convictions.

The comparison is emphasized in a report to the Michigan State Safety Commission by a University of Michigan Highway Safety Research Institute research team.

For violators aged 20 to 25, speeding convictions are especially significant, the researchers noted. Those with speeding convictions had twice as many accidents as young drivers with no convictions. But--contrary to common belief--young drivers without convictions had no more accidents than other age groups.

**THE HSRI** researchers reported preliminary results of a project aimed at predicting through mathematics who is likely to have an accident. Their initial study involved the driving records of 1,071 Michigan drivers.

Predicting accidents would open the way for preventive action if the groups of problem drivers can be identified.

Groups probably can be spotted quickly and automatically with the new U-M computer program to examine driving records, said HSRI researchers Lyle Filkins and William L. Carlson.

The advantage of the computer program lies in its ability to detect and automatically

sort out single factors that can predict accident experience, plus its ability to spot intersections of factors which reveal little by themselves but much in combination.

The computer can sort out some of the complexities of the problem; some combinations are strong predictors while others are not.

**FOR EXAMPLE**, one such interaction showed that convicted drivers with chauffeur's licenses (commercial drivers) had twice as many accidents as did those with the same number of convictions but with regular licenses.

"The most significant single identifier of all of these prob-

lem drivers is the total number of convictions," Carlson told the Safety Commission. "Those drivers who didn't have any convictions over the 6 1/2 year period we studied had only a third of the number of accidents of the average driver in Michigan."

Some of their findings so far:

- 322 drivers with two or more convictions averaged an accident every eight years.
- 243 drivers with only one conviction or none averaged one accident for every 15 years of driving.
- The average for 506 drivers with no convictions was only one accident for each 39 years of driving.

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