

Oakland's Redistricting Query: When?

By FRED DELANO

Veterans of the 87-member Oakland County Board of Supervisors have conceded that the death-knell has sounded for their group as presently constituted. The question no longer is whether there will be re-apportionment, but when.

This was made abundantly clear in remarks by David Levinson, of Birmingham, when he was accorded the role of temporary chairman during last week's 1968 organizational meeting.

Levinson openly referred to the likelihood of this being the final year of the supervisors' ancient format, and his lead was followed by several other members when they became engaged in debate over the election of a chairman pro tem.

ALL THEIR remarks took cognizance of a recent United States Supreme Court ruling upholding the "one-man, one-vote" principle in the structure of county legislative bodies.

The decision brings to a head the argument over constitutionality of 1966 Michigan legislation providing for reorganization of county boards. The State Supreme Court has ruled that act invalid because it fails to provide that every supervisor shall have at least one member of the board of supervisors, though now this decision seems to have been superseded by the verdict from Washington.

In fact, only last Thursday, the State Court of Appeals officially sided with the "one-man, one-vote" philosophy of the nation's highest court and ruled that county board districts must be formed on the basis of population, not geography. A reversal of the State Supreme Court's earlier contrary position has been asked by Atty. Gen. Frank Kelley.

UNDER THE PLAN formulated by the Oakland County Apportionment Commission last year, the county would be divided into 27 districts, and each was supposed to elect its representative to the board this coming November. No longer would any members be apportioned.

Joseph R. Farnham, county Republican chairman, challenged the plan in a suit before the Court of Appeals, charging that the geographical pattern of the 27 districts was created "for obvious political advantage."

Farnham was the lone Republican on the commission. Its other four members were Democrats.

While the Court of Appeals has made its position clear on the legality of reapportionment, it still hasn't taken a stand on Farnham's demand that there be a revision of Oakland County districts because of what the GOP chairman termed "gerrymandering."

Meanwhile, the present 87-member board has selected DeLoe Hamlin of Farmington to its 13th consecutive term as chairman. He is in his 25th year as the city of Farmington's appointed supervisor, and his seniority is exceeded only by Levinson's 35 years on the board.

Here's That Man Again



Suburbs To Miss Detroit Tax Hike

Suburban commuters will be spared if Detroit raises its city income tax this year. The State Senate last week gave 29 to 7 approval to a bill granting the city authority to raise its income tax from the present one per cent on residents to two per cent. But a Senate committee knocked out a provision that would have allowed raising the

tax on commuter incomes from a half to a full per cent. All Observerland senators—George Kuhn, R-West Bloomfield, N. Lorraine Beebe, R-DeARBorn, and William Faust, D-Westland—voted in favor.

The bill now heads for the House. Gov. Romney is backing it.

The bill would only give Detroit authority to raise its income tax. Whether the tax would actually be raised, and how much, is up to the Detroit Common Council.

An aide to Mayor Cavanagh said he may ask for half of the extra one per cent. Detroit's fiscal year will begin July 1.

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public affairs

Rebuilding The City: Role Of Suburbia

Suburbanites who have thought about it are mostly convinced that they have some stake in what happens to the inner city and, specifically, to the Negro. Curfews and taxes have convinced them they can't leave the city behind at 5 p.m.

But what can suburbanites really do about it?

Kent Mathewson provided some answers in a speech in Bloomfield Hills a few weeks ago. His thoughts took on added importance during last week's tension and civil unrest.

Mathewson is president of the Metropolitan Fund, Inc., which has greatly aided the work of the South-eastern Michigan Council of Governments (CMGO), and he is coordinator of the New Detroit Committee. Here are excerpts from his talk:

The disorder showed that a small but disturbing number of Americans are even becoming disillusioned with the non-productive results of non-violence...

WHAT SPANNED and nurtured this process of disillusion? The answer—reduced to a single, simple word—is dignity.

At first, the rioters in Detroit were identified as the "have-nots"—the people with nothing to lose, the riff-raff. There is some evidence to indicate that that view was oversimplified.

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first in our history to pass a fair housing ordinance by a vote of the citizens' (Birmingham followed on April 1.)

We will begin with state and local government, urging that the governor of Michigan, the mayor of Detroit and the elected officials throughout our region stand up to the problem and take the kind of action possible only at their individual governmental levels.

We have ideas, certainly—ideas like an urban crisis corps of college students, whirlwind tours of suburban population centers, but we are urging that they themselves initiate the thought and action.

WE WILL WORK with our church organizations. The religious community of Detroit has a notable history of involvement in the racial problem and already has some strong, specific programs in the beginning stages.

One such program is an innovative concept involving a series of suburban action centers, staffed and financed by an interfaith group, and designed to provide basis for action in combating institutional racism in the suburbs.

In addition, we will suggest that some interfaith cooperation produce a series of worship days set aside to treat the several facets of racial prejudice, so that the entire church-going community might be exposed, within a given week to treatment of an individual topic.

We will also suggest that organized church youth groups be formed into an "urban crisis corps" and directed to a spring and summer of meaningful involvement—learning about the problems first, then designing their own programs for making positive contributions. We will help coordinate to avoid duplication.

We plan a massive work plan with what we call the "middle leadership"—the elected heads of volunteer organizations who are on a first-name communicative basis with their memberships. Men and women from groups like the League of Women Voters, the Jaycees, the Kiwanis, Rotarians, American Legion, and many many others.

We will establish a structure for reaching down to the individual groups spread across our suburbs to suggest programs and coordinate effort.

WE WILL SUGGEST, for instance, that

each interested group send a man or delegation to meet with a similar inner city organization, to provide a view of life from the inside out.

We will suggest that such groups look for specific programs of help—educational, cultural, and social—to reach the children with the problems. Such a group might sponsor an essay contest on human rights or arrange a "cultural exchange" with an inner city school.

In the field of education, we will form a team of educational specialists to prepare a plan of action to reach the suburban school children with this message of crisis.

We will suggest to all of the school systems that they institute a teacher exchange program swapping teachers between inner city and suburban schools for a day or week. The idea germination in such a process could be of inestimable value.

A group of Negro and white citizens have created an International Afro-American Museum within a large house trailer. It has been a source of pride for many black people who have visited it. We will send it, and hopefully others like it, into the suburbs to expose the white community to a proud black culture.

We will, in short, become a burr on the conscience of our white neighbors. We will mount an intensive effort to communicate to the white citizen this sense of crisis, this message of dignity for all men...

WHILE THERE IS much that must be done and decided by those who live in the city, it is up to the white suburban voter and white out-state legislator to breathe funds and taxes back into our flaking core cities.

It is up to those who live "outside of town" to narrow the income gap and revise the zoning laws that peg the inner city resident behind invisible walls of prejudice and despair.

It is up to the suburbanite who works in the city to examine the possibility of regional taxation to give the unseen children below the expressway the same American opportunities that his own children enjoy...

If we don't become our brother's brother, we will soon have to become our brother's keeper.

Parochialism Far From Dead, Draws Study

By TIM RICHARD

State Sen. Anthony Stamm hopes that a joint committee of the Michigan Legislature will be able to take a long look at the problem of aid to parochial schools.

Stamm, chairman of the Senate Education Committee, wants to see an interim committee formed after this session's adjournment to study the politically hot issue.

The study may even include a trip to take a look at European systems. "The whole concept is so new that we weren't equipped to arrive at a decision in this session," the Kalamazoo Republican said last week in an interview on the Senate floor.

THE BILL proposed by Sen. George Fitzgerald and Reps. Thomas Brown and Bob Traxler and strongly supported by religious groups, would give \$21 million the first year in direct aid to parents of students attending non-public schools. All but a few of these are in church-related schools.

Stamm said he asked Attorney Gen. Frank Kelley's office for an opinion on the constitutionality of aid to non-public schools.

But in an apparent mix-up, the Observer Newspapers

learned, Kelley's office has dropped the matter because neither the House nor Senate committees studying the bill have reported it out by deadline time, and the bill is technically dead for the year.

But to Stamm, the issue is anything but dead. He has a program of study in mind for the legislature.

THE STUDY program goes like this:

1. How far can the state go in supporting non-public schools? Here is where Kelley's opinion is needed.

2. Are public schools in a position to absorb parochial students if the parochial schools close up shop? What would it cost for more teachers? What kinds of additional physical facilities would be needed?

3. Will the parochial schools in fact close up shop if they don't get some public money? "They're closing now," says Stamm, adding that the financial troubles extend not only to the Catholic schools but to Lutheran and Christian Reformed schools as well. Seventh-day Adventists, however, seem to want no part of public aid.

4. What are other states doing? Stamm said no state seems to have the kind of aid

program proposed in Michigan, although a couple offer textbook aid to non-public schools. "What are other countries doing?" Canada, Great Britain, France and the Netherlands have systems of aid to non-public schools, Stamm says the interim committee ought to study "one or two" of those countries "to see what effect the aid has had on both the public and the private schools."

STAMM TAKES an analytical approach to the question.

"The non-public schools are performing a distinct public service. They have good personnel, and they perform a number of social welfare programs," he says.

"We've had non-public schools longer than public schools, I've both that have kept our system of education what it is," he adds.

A first term legislator, Stamm is no stranger to constitutional and school money questions.

He was a delegate to a 1961-2 Constitutional Convention and served more than two decades as Kalamazoo County clerk, during which he took part in the decision-making of the Tax Allocation Board.

He has also taught political science at Western Michigan University.

School Of Religion Seen As Pattern Of Future

What will happen to parochial school buildings if churches, for lack of funds or any other reason, quit operating their schools?

One indication is the experience of Our Lady Queen of All Saints, a Catholic parish in suburban Fraser. The suburb was growing too fast for the four-grade elementary school to take even a fifth of the Catholic children there.

So two years ago, Queen of All Saints abandoned its elementary school program and instead started a School of Religion. There was considerable opposition within the parish, but the decision stuck.

ALL CHILDREN now attend the public schools. Under Michigan's released time law, the children may leave the public school twice a week for religious instruction. Ninth-graders have a choice of attending either Friday morning or Monday evening.

The high school students, one Sunday a month, attend a four-hour session that consists of a panel presentation, discussion and mass.

At the same time, Queen of All Saints School of Religion made a step toward what many consider a gap in Catholic education—adult

instruction. Examples: a 10-week evening dialogue course for women on their role in the modern world, a three-week course on the pros and cons of the Vietnam war, special Lenten courses.

THE SCHOOLS' teaching staff consists of four nuns and three lay persons. The School of Religion, now near the end of its second year of operation, costs about one-fourth of the expense of running an elementary school.

Tuition of \$5 a student annually brings in about \$5,000, and the parish's regular contributions bring in the other \$35,000 of the cost.

The parish, headed by Right Rev. Ferdinand DeCoudres, would rather be able to run its own schools. But it considers the School of Religion as better than no Catholic school at all, better to serve the overwhelming majority of parish children through the released time law than to serve only a tiny minority full time.

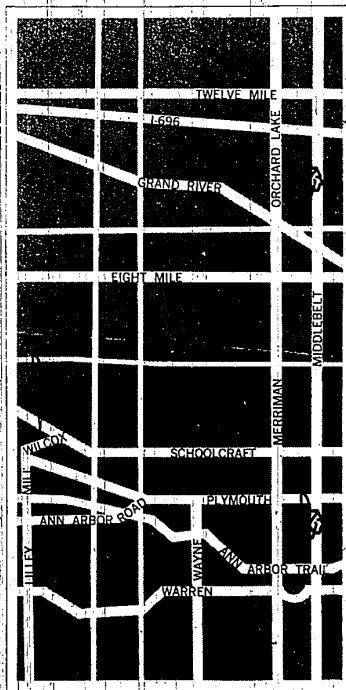
Such a School of Religion—called a "catholic center"—may become the pattern if more Catholic schools close up shop for lack of funds.

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