

Local Jobs 'Incompatible'

County Politics Upset

Political plans of some suburban officials have been upset by a new ruling from Atty. Gen. Frank J. Kelley.

Kelley last week ruled that township supervisors and city councilmen may not serve simultaneously on county boards of supervisors.

Kelley's ruling allows those who are already doing so to finish their terms. But they may not wear two governmental caps when the new county boards, apportioned on a one-man, one-vote basis, take over next year.

LIVONIA'S MAYOR Harvey Moelke, who now serves on the Wayne County board and would like to run from the new district, is uncertain whether Kelley's ruling applies to him, as an executive. Kelley mentioned only councilmen. Moelke will study Kelley's opinion carefully.

If it would mean resigning as mayor to serve on the county board, Moelke won't make the bid but will serve in his Livonia post.

Livonia Councilmen Edward Milligan and Peter Ventura also serve on the county board. Their plans are unknown.

Redford Township Supervisor Aldrick Bellaire is unaffected. He hadn't planned to run for the new 26-member reapportioned Wayne County board.

The same is true for Farmington Township Supervisor Curtis Hall. He was thrown into the same Oakland County district as Delos Hamlin, the city's appointed representative to the county board and the board's chairman for 13 years.

Hamlin will run for the county board. He hasn't been directly before any group of voters since his consistent election to the Farmington City Commission up to the mid-1950's.

PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP Supervisor John McEwen is undecided. He'd like to run for the county board, but his township is in the same district with big Livonia, and a Livonia resident has an immediate advantage.

Plymouth City Commissioner Arch Valtier is also undecided for just about the same reasons.

Carl Pursell, head man at the Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, has no local governmental office, so he is helped by the fact that some of his potential rivals are hamstrung. He's a probably county board candidate.

Also added the same way is another potential Plymouth candidate, James Brown, a chemical engineer.

ATTY. GEN. KELLEY'S ruling has the force of law until either the Legislature or a court overrules him.

He based his ruling on a Supreme Court decision upholding one-man, one-vote reapportionment.

Under the 1963 constitution, which allowed malapportioned county boards, city councilmen and township supervisors could serve on the county board.

But Kelley said that when the Supreme Court upheld reapportionment, it had the effect of killing the entire constitutional section that allowed officials to wear both local and county hats.

"THERE ARE NO longer any provisions of the constitution or of a statute either permitting or prohibiting the same person from holding both of the offices," Kelley said, adding:

"In the absence of such authority, the common law rule of incompatibility of offices is applicable."

Kelley further ruled that a city or township official could run for the county board, but he would have to give up his local job if elected.

KELLEY'S RULING represents a different philosophy from what has prevailed in Michigan since 1837.

The county board has traditionally been viewed as a sort of council of governments; hence, each municipal unit was to be represented.

The reapportionment law passed by the Legislature in 1966 took a slightly different view. It said that county boards should be reapportioned into single-member districts with the understanding that two or more cities and/or townships would often have to be lumped into a single district.

Kelley went a step further and ruled in effect that the county was entitled to have supervisors who were legally divorced from their local units of government.

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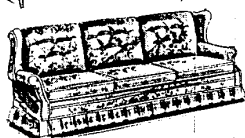
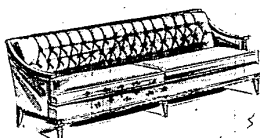


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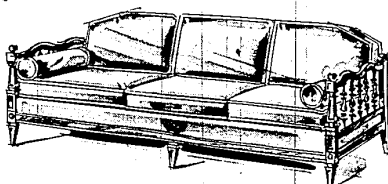
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