

# As Tisch blusters, majority quiet



Tim Richard

## You name it, state voters will reject it

To a gambler, the political odds are pretty grim. Your chances of getting a tax proposal passed by Michigan voters are slender.

From 1972-81, voters have passed only three of 17 money plans offered them, a batting average of .176.

In that campaign, self-styled tax-cutting champ Robert Tisch offered to debate Gov. William Milliken. Tisch volunteered to represent "the people."

The fact is that Milliken (4-0) has the longest tenure in the executive office in Michigan history. Tisch has never offered his name outside Shiawassee County, but the two tax plans bearing his name were rejected by voters. So much for Tisch (0-2) as the voice of "the people."

THE FACT is that Michigan voters have cared little for any of the money issues placed before them. They:

- Passed the 1972 lottery plan with a 73 percent yes vote.
- Rejected a 1972 plan to limit property taxes and shift to a state-support plan that would have included a higher income tax, 42 percent yes.
- Rejected a 1972 plan to remove the ban on a graduated income tax, 31 percent yes.
- Rejected a 1972 bond issue for Vietnam veterans benefits, 48 percent yes.
- Rejected a 1974 plan to limit use of the motor-tel tax, 49 percent yes.
- Approved in 1974 lifting the sales tax on food and drugs, 55.5 percent yes.
- Rejected in 1974 a state transportation bond issue, 42 percent yes.
- Rejected in 1976 the Headlee I tax-limitation amendment, 43 percent yes.
- Rejected in 1976 a plan to permit a graduated income tax, 28 percent yes.
- Approved in 1978 the Headlee II tax-limitation amendment, 53 percent yes.
- Rejected in 1978 a voucher plan of state aid to private schools, 25 percent yes.
- Rejected in 1978 the Tisch I property-tax cut, 37 percent yes.
- Rejected in 1980 the Smith-Bullard plan to replace the property tax as a source of school funding with an income tax, 21 percent yes.
- Rejected in 1980 the "coalition" plan to reduce property taxes and replace part of the revenue with a sales-tax increase, 26 percent yes.
- Rejected in 1980 the Tisch II property-tax cut, 34 percent yes.
- Rejected in 1980 an increase of 0.1 percent in the income tax to pay for prison construction, 37 percent yes.
- Rejected in 1981 a property-tax cut to be replaced in part by a sales-tax increase.

### WHAT DO YOU make of it?

Despite the Tisch tirade, somewhere between 20 and 30 percent of the voters want a graduated income and a shift of tax effort to the income tax. This group didn't want even the modest \$250-million cut in state expenditures that was proposed, even though Tisch and his hired PR counselors portrayed him as the champion who beat Proposal A.

A hard-core group of 40 percent is against everything and for a tax cut.

A group of 30 to 40 percent is in the middle and doesn't know what to make of it all. They seem to want to hold the line on taxes, but aren't sure yet how to do it.



discover  
Michigan  
Bill Stockwell

Did you know that if the rivers of our state were joined together in one straight line, such a river would extend 36,000 miles? Michigan's shoreline touching the Great Lakes would extend twice as far as the Atlantic shoreline from Maine to southern Florida. We are rightly called "The Great Lake State."

Take a ride up to Lansing these days and you'll see one governor and a whole pack of state legislators collectively scratching their heads.

Once again, Michigan taxpayers have rejected a tax proposal that would have offered some relief to property owners.

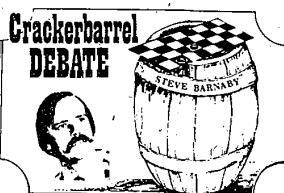
Political leaders are befuddled. They should be ashamed of themselves for catering to the baser political grumblings of this state's malcontents.

For years, we've heard about this alleged nationwide tax revolt. After all, Californians did it, so the rest of the country must want to make the same stupid mistake. Right? Wrong — dead wrong.

Proposal A's defeat demonstrates that a majority of taxpayers are responsible enough to reject tax schemes sculpted to satiate the masses.

Thank the Almighty, come November 1982 the next Tisch-type plot to emasculate state government also will face defeat at the polls. Hopefully, that will bring down the curtain, at least in Michigan, on all this gobbledygook about tax revolt.

The worst part about Proposal A's defeat is that for the next 16 months, we're all going to have to listen to the Shiawassee drain commissioner goggle on and on about how "the people" (whatever that means) are fed up with government waste.

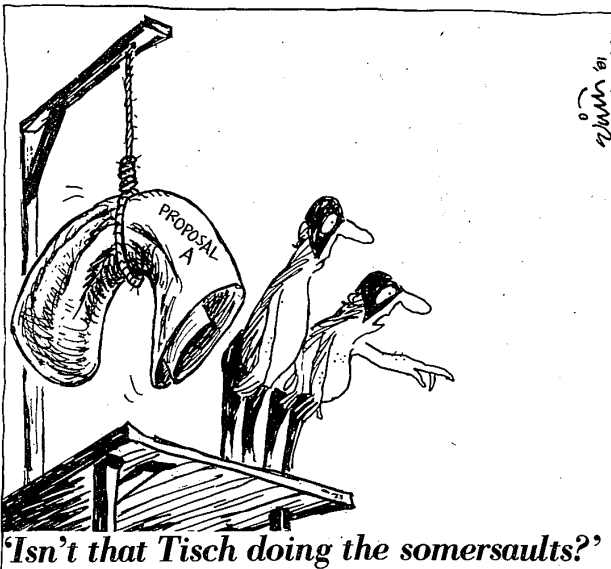


BUT THE REAL story on government waste is just beginning to be told. And by the time it comes unraveled, nobody in his or her right mind will want to kowtow to the likes of Robert Tisch.

Last week was a grim reminder of what a combination of timid political leaders and an uneducated electorate can cost.

For years, a number of state institutions have been neglected because of lack of sufficient and responsible financing. Our state prisons are a prime example.

The result: riots that will cost the taxpayer more than a million dollars. And still the problem of overcrowded prisons with understaffed, untrained guards is with us.



'Isn't that Tisch doing the somersaults?'

## Workers, players robots

If coming events cast their shadows before them as some folks would have us believe, we are headed for a generation of robots and what will be left for human hands and minds to do may be a question.

One sign came the other evening when a science scene on the tube showed a robot welder moving along the assembly line at an automobile plant, doing work that man has done ever since the late Henry Ford introduced mass production of the old Model T.

Before that, The Stroller had been given a surprise while on a visit to one of our larger plants where he was shown the mechanics of the stock room. Small trucks moved about and stopped here and there to deposit material. There was not a human hand in sight.

Yet, the general manager, in his office, could command it to change direction and increase the number of pieces to add to the stockpile. It was almost unbelievable.

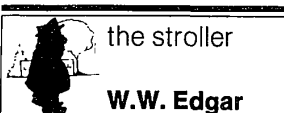
A BIG SURPRISE came recently when the Detroit Tigers tried to make robots out of their pitchers.

Under this system a coach, sitting on the bench, gave the signal of what type of pitch to give the batter. The pitcher became nothing more than a robot, for he was denied the right to select his own type of pitch, no matter how well he knew the batter.

The odd part is that the scheme worked for all but one pitcher. He protested and was given the right to select his own pitches.

For some time, the robot system has been used in football. For years, the quarterback, even in the smallest school league, called the signals. He scanned the defense and then gave the numbers that started the play in the direction he wanted.

Then came the day when coaches, fearful of their jobs in many cases, started calling plays from the sidelines. Now, it is taken for granted that the quarterback seldom calls the play. True, he may change the play at the line of scrimmage, but the



coach had sent in the play.

ONE COACH, when asked by The Stroller why he insisted on calling the plays and making a robot out of his quarterback, answered, "My job depends on the number of games we win, and I am not going to let any young player take over the right to call them. I am not that much of a gambler."

It wasn't always this way in college football. There was a time when the coach was denied a right to call play from the sidelines. But shrewd old coaches like "Greasy" Neale at the University of West Virginia, and later at Yale, beat the rule by wearing a yellow cap and bright yellow shoes.

These were easily detected from the sidelines. So, he'd lift his foot in kicking fashion to signal a play or twist his cap. He got away with it for years.

In those days, the game was supposed to teach leadership and help to prepare a player for life after graduation. But the almighty dollar has changed all that — at least in sport.

The game no longer belongs to the players. They have become robots performing before crowded stadia around the land.

The same is true along assembly lines in auto plants. They claim now that the robot welder does a better and faster job than humans and that means more suitable numbers at the bottom line.

So, all signs point to the possibility that we are developing a generation of robots.

"The people" beef the elected officials respond. Contrary to what the Tisch malcontents say, the politicians are responding with an unseemly lack of courage.

Now political leaders are being told to cut the budget even more, yet maintain services — at least those services that please the chronic complainers.

But Michigan isn't alone in its burden of irresponsible political leadership urged on by an uninformed, but vocal, minority. The nation has a president whose budget policies will spell only trouble down the line for all of us.

"Cut social programs until it hurts" seems to be the motto.

IT'S TIME FOR the majority to stand up and bring our political leaders back into line.

They are only responding to the voices they hear. And those voices are talking irresponsibly.

Enough of this tax cut nonsense. It's time to get back to governing ourselves in a responsible manner.

It's time to take hold of events before they take hold of us and we lose control to a desperate anarchy.



Nick Sharkey

## Platitudes won't cure economy

The sun beamed across Orchard Lake as Lt. Gov. James Brickley began to speak. It was a Wednesday morning breakfast during last week's celebration of Michigan Week for the greater West Bloomfield area.

It couldn't have been an easy speech for Brickley to give since it was the morning after Proposal A had failed by a 3-1 margin. These are troubled times for Michigan's leaders. They are trying to come to grips with rising taxpayers' expectations in a shrinking economy.

Despite the setback, his talk was upbeat — in tune with the spirit of Michigan Week. Brickley talked of the great diversity of people, land and areas of the state. He even praised the Michigan weather on this bright, warm Wednesday morning.

One guest at my table cynically remarked, "Isn't that typical of a politician? He's trying to take credit for good weather."

IT'S EASY to be cynical today about Michigan and its political leaders. Taxpayers are frustrated, yet they continually reject every tax proposal put before them. The auto industry is in turmoil, and the state is reeling from an over-dependence on one industry.

Yet, Brickley was trying to do a little cheerleading during Michigan Week and remind us all of the assets of the state.

His remarks were appropriate for a week designed to honor Michigan and the achievements of local persons in building their communities. As a "naturalized" Michigan resident of 10 years, perhaps I view the state differently from many lifelong residents.

I find the celebration of Michigan Week delightful and a necessary pause from the typical doom and gloom of recent Michigan news.

But I am also apprehensive about the state's ability to come to grips with its real problem — an overdependence on the automobile industry. Most Michigan residents appear convinced that auto sales will someday return to the levels of 1978-79.

"If we can only hold out a little longer, everything will be all right," seems to be the reasoning.

THE AUTO industry is never going to recover fully. It's as simple as that.

The obvious answer is that the state must turn its attention to attracting and keeping other industries. There's no secret here — it's something that state leaders have known for many years.

Now another group is starting that promises to combine the strengths of the state legislature, labor and colleges.

U.S. Rep. Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, is trying to get the state's key decision makers together to hammer out an agenda for Michigan's economy. It's easy to be cynical and lump this new effort with all those that have been unsuccessful. But what are the alternatives?

I, along with concerned persons in this state, wish this group well. It's time for Michigan to put up or shut up. Muzzling platitudes about diversification of the economy while keeping our fingers crossed for a rebound of the auto industry will not work.

It's time for this state to get over its collective inferiority complex about the glamor of the sun-belt states. Yes, Michigan Week reminded us that this is a great state. But it won't stay great because of a dream or a wish.

It's time for my adopted state to roll up its sleeves and begin charting a course for the 1980s.