

To the victors Cruce, Fessler, Nichols win plum Senate assignments

Four suburban Republican state senators found themselves with improved committee assignments this week as the GOP found itself in a majority for the first time in a decade. The Republican caucus made its committee reassignments in caucus Tuesday after promoting John Engler of Mt. Pleasant from minority to majority leader. Republicans became a 20-18 majority Jan. 31 after winning two special elections to replace Democratic state

senators who had been recalled. Democrats had not completed their committee reassignments at deadline time. SEN. DOUG CRUCE, R-Troy, a freshman in the upper house, found himself the only senator with two chairmanships — Labor and State Affairs. "It turned out real well. I'm excited," said Cruce, who continues as a member of the Commerce Committee. In State Affairs, Cruce will have jurisdiction over a wide variety of legis-

lation, including race track matters. Legislation affecting the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) will go in front of Rick Fessler, R-West Bloomfield, new chairman of the Natural Resources and Transportation committee. Republicans moved jurisdiction over transportation questions out of State Affairs and placed it under Natural Resources. Fessler is a strong proponent of new freeways in Oakland County and critic of public transit subways.

A first-term senator after four terms in the House, Fessler also will be vice-chairman of both the Labor and Judiciary committees.

RUDY NICHOLS, R-Waterford, who won the special election to replace Phillip O. Mastin, won a major plum — a seat on the Appropriations Committee.

The 38-year-old attorney had spent a year in the House before being promoted by voters to the Senate. "It's an

unusual honor for a freshman," said a senior colleague.

Nichols will chair the Appropriations Committee's subcommittee on state police.

Chairing the full Appropriations Committee will be Harry Gast Jr., a former from Berrien County. Gast is in his second Senate term after 10 years in the House.

SOCIAL SERVICES, biggest item in the state budget at 37 percent, will fall under Sen. R. Robert Geake, R-Norville, who becomes chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee's subcommittee on social services.

"It's a major increase in responsibility," said Geake, a senator since 1977 and a legislator since 1973.

Geake will chair the mental health subcommittee and will be vice-chairman of the full Appropriations Committee.

The western Wayne County senator also will sit as a member of the Joint Capital Outlay Committee, a House-Senate panel which approves spending on state buildings.

In a personal plum, Geake will be No. 2 in his choice of a new office. Among Republicans, he is second-ranking in seniority behind Harry DeMaso of Battle Creek.

Bridges posted for reduced loadings

Fourteen bridges in the Oakland County road system are newly posted for reduced road limitations. Richard V. Vogt, chairman of the board of Oakland County Road Commissioners, said the limits being placed on the bridges will affect only heavy duty commercial vehicles. An engineering consulting firm that inspected all 138 county road structures late last year recommended the new postings.

"Most of the structures on our sys-

tem, as elsewhere in the nation, are showing signs of deterioration after serving for 50 to 60 years," said Vogt. "We're taking steps to replace and rehabilitate them as fast as possible, but in the meantime posting is a necessary expedient."

VOGT STRESSED that these and other structures on the Oakland County road system are safe for use as posted. The bridges are:

- Beverly Hills: Lahser, south of 13

- Farmington Hills: 10 Mile west of Inkster; 12 Mile west of Inkster.
- Independence Township: Andersonville west of Airport Road; Andersonville east of Clement.
- Oakland Township: Adams south of Orion.
- Orion: Clarkston north of Kern;

- Nakomis north of Indianwood; Newnan north of Indianwood.
- Troy: John R north of Long Lake.
- Waterford: Cass Lake south of Cass-Elizabeth; Cooley Lake south of Cass-Elizabeth; Elizabeth Lake east of Airport.
- White Lake: Elizabeth Lake west of Union Lake.

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