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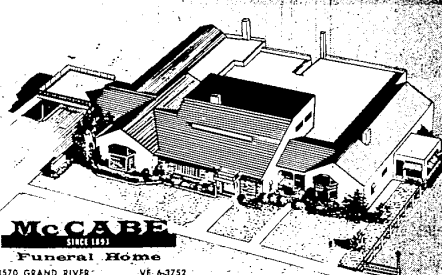
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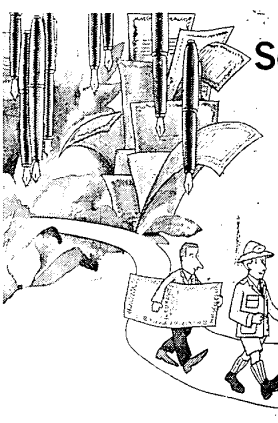
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FARMINGTON DEMOCRATS caucus at the 19th District Oakland convention to pick delegates to next weekend's state convention. Allen Sipher (right) presides. UAW leader Harold Julian is at left, and the only man in the room with a coat is Fred L. Harris, 19th District candidate for Congress. (Observer photo)

Oakland 19th Dems Pick

By TIM RICHARD

Billie S. Farnum has the almost solid backing of his home base, the 19th Congressional District-Oakland delegation, in his fight for the Democratic nomination for secretary of state.

Farnum, of Drayton Plains, got "favorite son" backing in a voice vote at last Saturday's 19th-Oakland Democratic convention. Democrats will nominate the man they hope will succeed James Hare at a state convention in Grand Rapids next weekend.

There were a handful of "nays" in the voice vote endorsing Farnum.

IN A RELATED matter, the district convention rejected 45-29 a resolution urging the next secretary of state candidate to "abandon the branch managers system (of selling license plates) and institute a new system devoid of the present evils."

There was some uncertainty as to what Farnum's position would be on the branch manager system, and different delegates quoted Farnum on both sides of the fence.

One who wasn't uncertain, however, was Gerald Grace, manager of the Farmington SS branch office. Grace told the delegates:

"If it is evil, I'm not aware of it. The party people haven't been aware of it, and they've been willing to take evil money for years," he said, referring to the heavy contributions that branch managers, Hare's appointees, have made to Democratic coffers until this year.

"And what system are they (proponents of the resolution) going to have to take its place?" Grace wanted to know.

Favoring the reform resolution was another Farmington area Democrat, Alan Sultan, a law professor at the University of Detroit.

Sultan criticized opponents as being more concerned with the party interest than with the public interest. He noted that New York state, as one example, has a mail system of selling plates that avoids the long lines and cash-on-the-barrel system of Michigan.

FARNUM appeared briefly at the opening of the convention before the branch managers issue was raised.

The resolution supporting him noted that he began his career in the United Auto Workers union in the shops of Pontiac. After getting into politics, he was a deputy secretary of state in Lansing, then state auditor general and finally 19th District congressman for one term before being defeated in 1966.

With only two negative votes, the delegates passed a resolution asking that "at least one student from each university be elected by the students of each said university to sit and vote with the governing boards" of the university.

The effect would be to add a ninth member to the elected boards of the University of Michigan, Wayne State University and Michigan State University.

At this weekend's state convention, candidates will be nominated for lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, State Board of Education, the boards of the three big universities and the State Supreme Court.


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