

# Michigan Mirror

NON-PARTISAN STATE NEWS LETTER

**LANSING**—The primary next month is Echlin's of the American belief, prevalent since the days of Andrew Jackson, that a popular election is a certain cure for all ills of government.

Nine persons seek party nomination for governor. Twenty are those who aspire for the lieutenant governor position on the ballot.

Compared with the previous record of 130 aspirants for state jobs, this year's political crop brought 240—an all-time high for Michigan. In Wayne county the primary ballots, blanket-size, will contain 569 candidates, and prompted one metropolitan daily newspaper to wonder what was worse—a boss-ridden convention in which states were fixed in "smoke filled back rooms" or a confusing primary ballot containing so many names that a voter was inclined to throw up his hands in utter helplessness.

It was the old-time party boss, who hand-picked the candidates for state contract reasons, that brought the party convention into being and inspired the popular movement for selection of candidates by popular vote. Now, the other extreme is developing—a primary ballot of blanket size containing 569 candidates in one sheet. As the Detroit Times' commentator wailed, "we merely jumped from the frying pan over to an equally hot griddle."

Democracy will have a tough test right at home!

**A Compromise**

And yet Michigan's system for selecting state nominees is a compromise between the primary election for all candidates and a convention for the same purpose.

Only two states, Rhode Island and Connecticut, retain the convention system of making nominations for all state offices. Utah in 1937, and New Mexico in 1938 adopted the primary plan, while both Rhode Island and Connecticut have bi-partisan state commissions which are studying the problem.

While many state primaries select all state nominees, Michigan limits its primary to the offices of governor, lieutenant governor, highway commissioner, superintendent of public instruction, and members of the state legislature. Following the primary election each party holds a convention to select, officially by delegates, the nominees for secretary of state, state treasurer, auditor general, and attorney general. As the highway commissioner and superintendent of public instruction are chosen at off-year elections, the 1940 primary will offer two chief state positions—governor and lieutenant governor—in addition to the United States senate nomination.

But even the lists for these positions are formidable. They place a heavy load on the intelligence of the voter, let alone an assumption that he is willing and ready to investigate the merits of each aspirant and to act accordingly.

Imagine the popular dismay if there were four more rows of candidates on the primary ballot for the remaining four positions! Yes, it could be worse.

**Dickinson's Rival**

In the apparent belief that 1940 is a "Republican year" and that a popular pendulum will carry all party nominees to victory, seven Michigan men are contesting for the Republican nomination for the governorship. Luren D. Dickinson, seeking reelection after six terms as lieutenant governor, is opposed by State Treasurer Dan Dancel, Attorney General Thomas Read, and State Tax Chairman Melville E. McPherson—all from the official family at Lansing. Others are O. L. Smith, Detroit attorney; Ernest T. Conner, former state senator from Grand Rapids; and Charles Renaud, Detroit perfume manufacturer.

Petitions of Roscoe Conklin Fitch of Ludington, former newspaperman, have been held invalid.

Murray D. Van Wagener, state highway commissioner, drew a last-minute opponent for the Democratic nomination for governor in Eugene I. Van Antwerp, member

of the Detroit city council. Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg of Grand Rapids is also practically unopposed politically speaking. His only opponent for the Republican nomination is Bowen Gover, a Detroit salesman who ran three years ago for three offices, all at the same time.

Democratic candidates for the gubernatorial seat are five in number: Ralph W. Liddy, common pleas judge; Frank Fitzgerald, attorney; and Sid A. Erwin, assistant prosecutor—all from Detroit, and Michael J. Hart of Saginaw, former congressman, and Louis B. Ward of Pontiac.

**Lieutenant Governor**

Not in many a moon have so many people had the same idea at the same time—running for lieutenant governor. The woods are full of aspirants.

Ten Democrats and nine Republicans are among the official hopefuls.

Republicans—Horace T. Barnaby, Grand Rapids; Ken E. H. Eaton, Plymouth; Sen. Felix H. Flynn, Cadillac; the Rev. R. N. Helms, Cass; Eugene C. Keyes, Dearborn; Arthur E. Moore, Melvindale; George W. Schullich, Detroit; James Thompson, Jackson; and Arthur E. Wood, Detroit.

Democrats—Horace T. Barnaby, Grand Rapids; Frank Berka, Detroit; Edward T. Kane, Algonac; Sen. David Martin, Flint; Frank Murray and James Murphy, Detroit; Arthur C. E. Strom, Detroit; Charles J. Rudzowski, Algonac; and Anthony J. Wilkowski, Hamtramck.

The sudden death of Frank Fitzgerald elevated "straw" candidate Luren D. Dickinson into national prominence as governor of Michigan. The large lists for this office prompted Stuart P. Levy, editor of Adrian Telegram, to comment approvingly at the increased interest of the village, talking with Governor Dickinson, if re-elected, is mathematically more likely to die in office than any other Michigan politician. The logic is irrefutable.

**Short Ballot**

One obvious remedy for the overburdened primary is an appointive system for many offices and a resultant short ballot for those to be elected.

Theodore Roosevelt, speaking at the Ohio constitutional convention in 1912, said, "You cannot get good service from the public servant if you cannot see him, and there is no more effective way of hiding him than by mixing him with a multitude of others so that they are none of them important enough to catch the eye of the average work-a-day citizen."

A form of the short ballot is the commission or city manager form for municipal government whereby fewer persons are elected and all are held responsible by the voters.

Imposing evidence can be cited to the belief that the public's ability to discriminate among candidates to select wisely is in inverse ratio to the number of choices they are required to make. The longer the ballot lists, the less intelligently the public should be expected to act.

Some authorities go so far as to advocate the appointment by the governor of secretary of state, state treasurer, attorney general and possibly the auditor general. Prof. Austin P. Macdonald, University of California, is of the opinion that the auditor general should be elective "for it is necessary to maintain his independence."

One immediate result of the flood of primary candidates was a movement launched by Emerson R. Boyles, following his appointment to the state supreme court, to have the State Bar of Michigan prepare amendments to the law making a felony the writing of false names on primary petitions. Harry F. Kelly, secretary of state, ordered the name of Roscoe Conklin Fitch withheld from primary election ballots on the ground that petition signatures had been gathered for a previous campaign.

## Retiring 'Y' Head Lauds Miss Roehm

By MRS. ERIE LAYTON GATES

Retiring Metropolitan General Secretary of the Detroit Y. W. C. A.

Miss Carol M. Roehm, the Metropolitan General Secretary-elect of the Young Women's Christian Association of Detroit, comes to the Detroit Association, on Sept. 9, from a position in the admissions department of Rockford College, located in Rockford, Ill. For many months Miss Roehm has been travelling in the interests of the Detroit Association, on the splendid opportunities

offered by a smaller woman's college. Her travels have taken her from Texas to Minnesota and from Ohio to Colorado. She has been addressing the senior classes in High Schools, both large and small. This has given her a splendid opportunity to know the young prospective college girl at first hand, and High School girls find her most approachable, always flocking around her asking for advice as to their chosen vocations, and often mentioning that she is a "good pal" for she can talk their language and understand their aspirations.

**Interested Many Years**

Miss Roehm has for many years been deeply interested in young women holding jobs in business positions and in the way they spend their leisure time. Because of this interest she has held the chairmanship of the Business and

Professional Girls Department which grew under her leadership. Many times large groups of business girls held their business meetings and social gatherings in the Roehm home in Bloomfield Hills, on the porch and in the apple orchard, in the early evenings of spring and summer and fall.

She is well acquainted with these young women, knowing them by name, and their problems are of absorbing interest to her. She appeals to them because she has a happy disposition and enjoys with them their pleasures.

When the Board of Directors began the selection of my successor and asked for suggestions from our leaders, girls as well as women, the Business and Industrial girls wrote letters mentioning Miss Roehm's interest in employed girls and asking that her name be given consideration for the position of Metropolitan General Secretary. I mention this to show that our girls do feel that they have a real part in Association life in the Y. W. C. A.

With whole-hearted approval from the leading women of the Board, Miss Roehm was elected unanimously, and, although the offer was a surprise to her, she gave it serious consideration and after a few weeks accepted the position of Metropolitan General Secretary.

**Miss Roehm's Reply**

Her reply to the Board reveals the spirit in which she undertakes the work before her—

"It is with humility and eagerness that I accept the position of Metropolitan General Secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association of Detroit. I look forward to resuming a place in the

life of the Association which has for so long been a primary interest to me.

"The confidence and trust which the Board placed in me are deeply appreciated. I have been grateful for their expressions of support. Together may we go forward into the uncertain days of the future moulding an Association to meet the demands of that future and holding fast to our belief in the importance of human personality and the democratic Christian way of life."

Miss Roehm has a deep spiritual insight which has been rooted all her life in the Episcopal Church and is revealed constantly in her every day life. She has a social point of view that will carry her far in her efforts to make life better for young women in this city. I have great confidence in her native ability as a leader; in her

honesty of purpose; in her directness of approach to social problems; and in her practical skill in dealing with human relations.

She comes to our Association equipped through study and experience in both local and national work and will bring to us fresh, clear thinking and devoted service."

**NIGHT AT CAMP**

Sleeping beneath the stars in the deep, unobscured sleep of dawn; waking to find star shadows in the sky and the silvered dimness of the clouded moon; to hear the slow sure rhythm of the waves that catch the little stones along the shore; to gaze in wonder out upon white foam blow lightly past; To look as far away as eye can reach across an endless stretch of deep blue water.

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