

25 Letters Awarded At Football Dinner

By Bob Atkins
At the annual football banquet honoring Birmingham football players at the Community House last week, Coach Hal Helmer presented 25 varsity letters to members of his team. Receiving awards were co-captains John Anderson and Leon Thurston, Ernie Anderson, Dick Groves, Chuck Dunn, George Campbell, Colin Campbell, Dick Blusman, Chuck Murray and Doc Watson.

Jim Carson, Bruce Smiley, George Burdick, Jack Hardy, Joe Bowen, Stan Boynton, Dick Adams, Drayton McClelland, Logie Clark, Bill Bottcher, Pete Craig, John Bones and Herb Tewillinger.

Michigan Mirror

INTERPRETING THE NEWS
By GENE ALLEMAN

Two "ifs" are being linked to the ascending career of Kim Sigler in public service. Here they are: If a Republican is elected president in November, 1948, and if the president-elect appoints Michigan's senior senator Arthur H. Vandenberg so be secretary of state, Sigler could be appointed by the Michigan governor in 1949 to fill Vandenberg's unexpired term. Political speculation has always thrived at the state capital. Rumors during the four-year administration of Governor Harry F. Kelly had him elevated to the U. S. Senate and to the Michigan State Supreme Court. The same will be true about Governor Sigler. But politics is notoriously fickle, and much COULD happen between 1947 and 1949. In 1944 Kelly polled 1,208,000 votes for governor. In July, 1945, he chose not to run for re-election. Sigler's vote on November 5 was 1,008,878 with a majority of 359,338, the biggest margin of victory since 1928.

Currently, Sigler and the Republicans are riding the crest of popularity. But the hazards ahead are numerous. Nearly 60 per cent of the state representatives and state senators will be new and, hence inexperienced in knowledge of state government. Sigler's so-called "cabinet" will have a new secretary of state, attorney general and auditor general. Hale Brake, state treasurer, becomes the veteran in the political ring—with the exception of Dr. Eugene B. Elliott, state superintendent of public instruction, whose office has always been dissociated from party politics.

In another two years the Sigler administration will be before the bar of public opinion for an accounting. In the meanwhile, the state faces a prospective deficit in state taxes estimated by the acting budget director to be \$70,000,000—the highest amount we have heard yet in recent weeks. If new taxes are imposed as a solution for the constitutional ear-marking of 70 per cent of the sales tax for local governments, what will the voters say about it in November, 1948?

Because of the new leadership at Lansing and the almost unprecedented financial crisis just ahead, the 1947 general session of the state legislature promises to be one of the most interesting in years. The big question is this: How is the State of Michigan going to avert the prospective \$70,000,000 deficit? Here are some of the solutions proposed: flat payroll tax, a flat tax on business gross receipts, revival of taxes on real estate and personal property and imposition of taxes on cigars, beer, and amusements.

If the legislature were to enact a three-mill property tax, such a levy would take priority within the 12-mill property tax limitation. In other words, so proponents argue, property owners in areas covered by a 12-mill limitation would pay the same property taxes as they do now. The constitutional limitation would prevent cutting of a state three-mill levy to the present 10-mill tax.

Lieut. Governor Vernon J. Brown advocates a three-mill tax which would finance the state's educational obligations, such as the University of Michigan, Michigan State College and all the other.

Dr. Eugene B. Elliott, state superintendent of public instruction, opposes a property tax because he believes it would create a hardship in many communities. The state's educational building program is a good illustration of what legislators are up against. The 1946 legislature authorized a \$24,000,000 for needed construction. A sum of \$17,608,000 was appropriated, leaving the remainder to be provided in future sessions.

However, costs are higher. For example: Michigan State College estimates that \$10,000,000 will be needed to complete construction which the legislature has authorized in the amount of \$7,000,000 and for which the legislature made an initial appropriation of \$3,800,000. The same picture is true for the University of Michigan. To speed work, M.S.C. has authorized a 64-hour week with 14 hours overtime wages; U. of M. has a 48-hour week with eight hours overtime.

John A. Perkins, acting budget director, has been holding hearings at Lansing. It's the old, old story of the high cost of living and a resultant need for more funds. Hospitals and institutions which treat mental patients report a need during the next fiscal year of \$22,860,000 as compared with \$18,726,334 actually spent in the past fiscal year (ending June 30, 1946). Budget requests, to date, total \$209,000,000—just \$84,000,000 MORE than was actually spent for the same services in the past fiscal year!

Last week we quoted state officials as estimating the prospective tax deficit at \$25,000,000 to \$45,000,000. Perkins' guess: \$70,000,000. The new budget director is secretary of the University of Michigan's Institute of Government. The Lansing chore is his debut in public office. And now for some current observations: On August 29 we noted: "As we see it, a strong likelihood exists that the state legislature will be forced in 1947 to levy additional taxes, if the bonus proposal and the sales tax amendment are approved at the November election." This still stands. The voters spend the state wisely to the extent when they earmarked 70 per cent of the sales tax for local governments. The ultimate solution of the tax problem is a state constitutional convention. A return of welfare expenses such as Governor Murphy encountered in 1937 and 1938, would accelerate a demand for this remedy. Regardless of what the state legislature may or may not do in 1947, the state's answer will be unpopular. Inflation is unpopular, and legislative troubles are the by-products of today's inflation. You can't win against inflation.

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