

Shall We Rewrite Our Constitution?

Background Material for Discussion this Month by Our Community Farm Bureau Discussion Groups

By NORMAN K. WAGGONER, Research and Education

Does the Constitution, which was written forty years ago, still serve the needs of Michigan people? If not, can it be modernized by amendment, or should it be done in a Constitutional convention, at which time a new Constitution would be written?

This is a question which you, and all the rest of the voters in Michigan, are going to decide this fall. The question is an important one, and far reaching in its effect. It is one that demands our careful consideration so that we may never look back and say: "I wish I had voted different."

Why is a Constitutional revision being asked? It was written into the Constitution that this question should appear on the ballot in 1926, and that it would automatically be placed on the ballot every 16 years thereafter, and at any other time that the legislature votes to place it on the ballot.

In 1946, Governor Sigler began talking of a "horse-and-buggy" Constitution, one which was written in 1908, and has since become a patch work of amendments. In 1947, at the request of the governor, the legislature placed the question of a Constitutional revision on the ballot. Then in 1948, the governor asked the legislature to take this question off the ballot. This request as defeated by a narrow margin in the Senate. The question is: "Why did the governor wish to change his demand for a Constitutional revision?"

What has been our experience in the past in voting on this matter? When the question was put to the people on November 3, 1942, 408,188 voted in favor of a new Constitution, 468,506 voted "no". On the surface, it appears that this vote was quite close, and had 1942 not been a war year very likely the vote would have been somewhat different. It appears that if 30,000 of those who voted against revision had voted for it, the request would have carried. That was not the case.

The vote was not that close because, at present, the law requires a majority of those voting at the election, not a majority of those voting on the question. In 1942, for example, there were 1,226,000 votes cast, which means that it would require a vote of 613,000 to carry the proposal. The election experience has been that many people, voting at the general election, vote only for candidates and not on amendments. This may be the reason behind the governor's request to have this amendment taken off the ballot.

Frequently, the question is asked: "What are some of the probable changes that might be made, if a new Constitution would be written?" There is no way of knowing exactly what changes would be written into the new Constitution. However, there is some reason to believe that consideration might be given the following:

- (1) Elimination of township government, especially the minor officers.
 - (2) Probably redistrict the state for legislative purposes.
 - (3) Provide for annual sessions of the legislature.
 - (4) Liberalization of elimination of the 15-mill tax limitation amendment.
 - (5) Increase the term of office of the governor and some of the county officials from two to four years. It has been felt that a two-year term was too short for a governor to be effective in the state. During the last forty years, only 5 governors held office for more than one term.
 - (6) That school elections be held every two years at the fall general election.
 - (7) Provision might be made in the new Constitution for the governor to appoint some of the state officials, as Attorney General, Secretary of State, and State Treasurer.
 - (8) The legislature might be given power to levy a graduated income tax for state purposes.
 - (9) That no power be granted to suspend the right of trial by jury.
 - (10) That the jury system be revised so that the verdict may be reached in civil cases by less than unanimous vote.
- These are only some of the probable changes which may be written into the new Constitution, but very likely there are some of the issues which will be given consideration.
- Those who want a new Constitution say:
- (1) Governor Sigler has said that both the governor and legislators should be given more power for the efficient operation of the state. The 42 amendments, and numerous restrictions, and provisions which earmark over 70% of the state's revenue are all valid reasons why the people should vote next November for a calling of a Constitutional convention.
- (2) The governor, in his message to the special session of the legislature last January, said: "If Michigan is to maintain its outstanding position as one of the great enterprising states of the nation, it must get its governmental house in order that it might meet the keen competition of the future."
- (3) Just one of the many evi-

would make a total of 96. These would be paid \$1,000 each for their services plus the same mileage as is paid to the members of the legislature and, of course, there would be printing costs, hall rent, and other miscellaneous expenses.

(5) The holding of such a Constitutional convention, and the process of rewriting the state Constitution, would result in considerable confusion throughout the state.

(6) With the adoption of a new Constitution, we throw out valuable court decisions that have accumulated over the years, and now serve as valuable guide posts along the paths of justice.

(7) In the event that a new Constitution is written, it will have to be adopted by the voting public, very few of whom would have the time to analyze the whole document.

For these reasons, it is felt that Michigan's Constitution might better be modernized through the process of amendment.

No attempt is made here to influence the thinking of the voters on this vital issue, however, every effort is made to present both sides of the matter, such that everyone can intelligently discuss, and decide for himself.

Shall our state Constitution be rewritten?

PRECAUTIONS WILL PREVENT FARM FIRES

By FRED W. ROTH
MSC Farm Safety Engineer

During the winter months, most dwelling house fires start from defective or over heated chimneys and smokepipes. This is a good time to check your chimneys, smokepipes and heating plants. Whether you burn coal, wood, oil or gas, these precautions will help protect your home from loss by fire.

1. Chimneys and heating systems should be cleaned at least once a year. Inspect for holes or leaks and make necessary repairs.
2. Unused chimney openings should be sealed with cement or tight metal stops.
3. Be sure stove pipes, furnace and boiler pipes have a clearance of 18 inches from wood surfaces or protection is provided by insulation.
4. Be sure there is plenty of room between the top of the furnace and the ceiling and that the furnace top is covered with a layer of sand.
5. Do not allow trash to accumulate around the heating plant or chimney.
6. Use metal containers for ashes.
7. Replace all pipes that show rust and corrosion.
8. Tighten all connections and see that the drafts work properly.
9. There should be a manhole or door to every attic in which there is a chimney to make the inspection of chimney as easy as possible.
10. Do not force and over heat the furnace in extremely cold weather.

FARM BUREAUS PROPOSE 4-CO. HEALTH UNIT

A proposed four county health unit for Gratiot, Ionia and Clinton Counties was recently endorsed by the women's association meetings in Gratiot County.

The proposed health unit would provide each county with a sanitarium, 3 nurses, a clerk and an office. One supervisor has been suggested to head the four county unit. A drive for the adoption of the plan is being pushed in the other three counties by Farm Bureau groups. Representatives of these groups are to meet with a committee to consider the plan.

Other members attending the meeting will be three supervisors from each county board, committeemen favoring single county units, together with a representative from the state health department.

1,000 ATTEND TUSCOLA PICNIC; HEAR GOV. SIGLER

Old time horse drawn buggies, a 1914 Cadillac convertible, and a group of rough riders of a Boots and Saddle Club paraded through the main street of Caro to launch the 1948 Tuscola County Farm Bureau picnic.

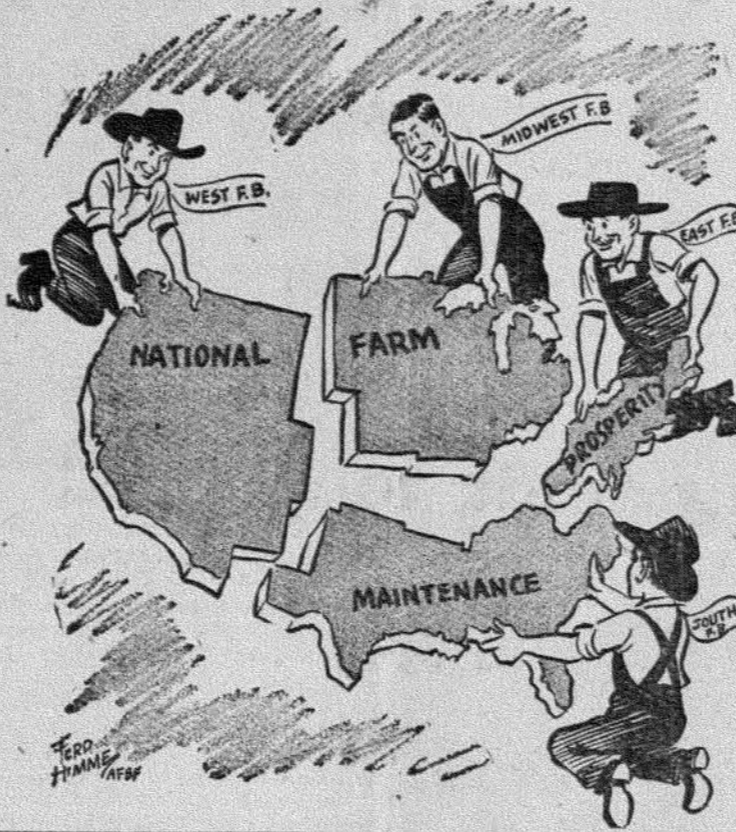
Governor Kim Sigler opened the afternoon's festivities with a short talk concerning "The Farmer's Part in Good Government." He spoke to a crowd estimated at 1,000.

The Governor emphasized the evils of machine politics in government, stressing that graft and corruption were largely responsible for the financial problems that confront the legislature today.

Two 9-men teams participated in a tug-of-war in front of the grandstand. The winning team members were awarded with ice cream cones for their efforts.

Morris Montague won first place in the tractor-trailer driving contest. Jack Decker of Pigeon took first in the horse pulling contest. Richard Deming won by a length

EACH ONE HAS A PART IN IT . . .



in the quarter mile pony race. Games and sports events filled the day. Reid Kirk of Fairgrove won a deep freeze unit given by the Tuscola County Farm Bureau.

Young grass in the spring may range as high as 20 to 40 per cent protein content.

The annual loss of soil fertility through erosion and leaching is estimated to be about seven times the amount used by crops.

This year it is especially important to do a good job of feeding lambs and of keeping death losses down.

81 ATTEND FIRST OF 3 JR. FARM BUREAU CAMPS

Eighty-one campers from 21 counties attended the Chief Noon Day Camp at Yankee Springs, July 29 through July 31. This was the first of three Junior Farm Bureau summer camps.

Emphasis was placed on the development of leadership abilities and program planning for the coming year. Several new features were added this year to the camp program.

County organization directors, from several of the surrounding counties, acted as counselors to the various camp groups. In addition, each of the Farm Bureau district representatives in the southern part of the state assisted in the camp work.

Due to considerable interest in chicken barbecues throughout the past year, a short course on the subject was held in conjunction with the camp. On Monday night, July 26, the camp undertook to solve various problem assignments in connection with the chicken barbecues, and met with huge success.

The next training camp will be held August 22 through the 25th at Camp Greilick, for the northern half of the state. Camp Greilick is located 12 miles southeast of Traverse City.

The Junior Farm Bureau's third, and final camp, will be the all-

state camp at Waldenwoods August 29 through September 4. This camp will journey to Amherst, Massachusetts, for a two-day field trip to participate in the program of the American Institute of Cooperation. This group will present a pageant depicting the evolution of the farm family in the machine age. The trip will be made by bus.

Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Hennink are the directors of the camps. Marjorie Kline is the pianist; Barbara Colister, secretary; and Ruth Parsons is in charge of public relations.

Other staff members, consisting of COD's and district representatives, are: Kenneth Baur, COD, Tuscola county; Leona Algoe, COD, Clinton county; Mr. and Mrs. Harold Buttrick, COD, Kent county; Dexter D. Beaver, COD, Barry & Ionia counties; Herman Hawelison, COD, Washtenaw & Wayne

counties; Allen Hall, COD, Sanilac; J. Herbert Kinsey, COD, St. Joseph; E. S. Lister, COD, Hillsdale; Glenn Worgess, COD, Lapeer; Chas. Openthaler, district representative for District 5; Francis Bust, Dist. 2; Norman Stanton, Dist. 4; Melvin Larson, Dist. 10; Dick Nelson, Dist. 1; and Eldon Smith, Dist. 6.

As soon as public service ceases to be the chief business of the citizens and they would rather serve with their money than with their persons, the state is not far from its fall.—Rousseau.

Improved farm living conditions and greater financial security testify to the benefits the farmers themselves have received from their program.

A good fire extinguisher is a must in the kitchen and barn.

AGENTS WANTED

The Insurance Department of the Michigan State Farm Bureau has many openings for agents to represent the State Farm Insurance Companies in Michigan. We would appreciate hearing from any of our Michigan Farm News readers if they are interested in talking the proposition over with one of our managers. It would be very helpful to us if any of our readers would suggest the names of likely agent prospects in their nearby cities and towns. The remuneration is good. This is a particularly good time to start. Address your inquiry to

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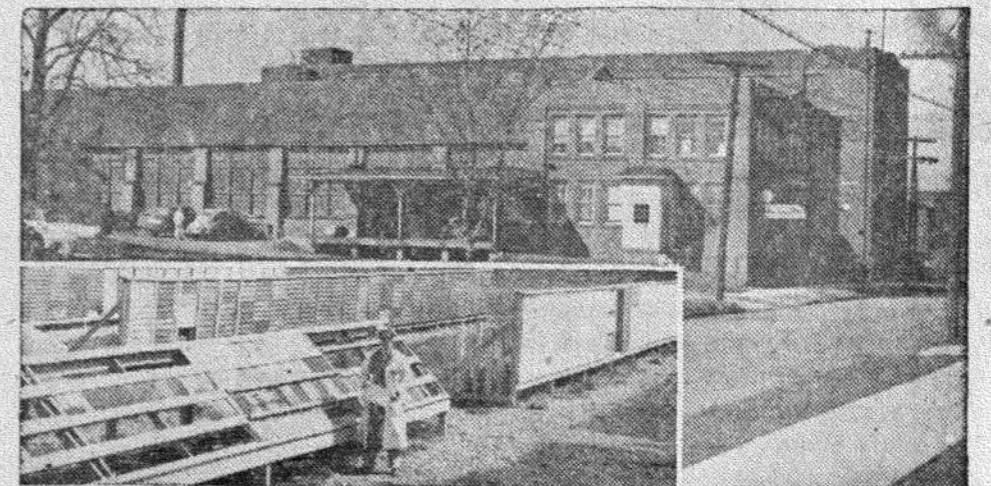
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756 etal and Masonry, Reg. \$5.21, Now \$4.14 per gal.

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