

State Capitol News

Curtis, Hruska Emerge Strongmen

LINCOLN—Nebraska political party leaders this week were assessing the results in the general election.

For the republicans the picture was quite rosy as the GOP swept every state and national office. This showed the party machinery was well oiled and that the party's candidates apparently were close to the generally conservative philosophy of the state's citizens.

The picture could hardly help but look somewhat gloomy to the democrats. They carried the major races only in such traditional democratic strongholds as Howard, Sherman and Saline counties. The democratic registration strength in Omaha was not enough to carry to victory a strong candidate, James Hart, in the Second congressional district. Republican Jackson Chase won there.

If ever the democrats had had a good opportunity, this year was it. Many voters were unhappy with the republican administration of the state property tax, a factor which played a part in the primary loss of Gov. Robert Crosby.

Also, the deaths of two Nebraska senators had taken powerful vote-getters off the scene and caused a shuffle of candidates in republican ranks which could have benefited the democrats.

The victories of two relatively young republicans in the senate races, Carl Curtis of Minden and Roman Hruska, boosted to power men who could be exceedingly hard to blast out in coming years. Curtis is 49; Hruska 50. Taking the First congressional district spot is Phil Weaver of Falls City, a man whose well-known name in Nebraska politics should insure him a long tenure if he chooses to keep running and keeps his nose clean.

Having weathered two elections now, Third District Congressman Robert Harrison of Norfolk is getting almost as tight a hold on his seat as veteran Congressman A. L. Miller of Kimball has in the Fourth district.

All of which means the republicans have a lot of office holders who will be difficult to budge in years to come, short of an immense voter dissatisfaction sweeping the party out of power.

To observers the democratic lack of success pointed up its poor organization of recent years. Even with strong candidates such as Hart, James Green of Omaha and Frank Morrison of McCook, the party didn't have the city and county organizations to give strong enough backing.

Since James Quigley of Valentine retired a few years ago as head of the state demos, his boots have been filled with less success by William H. Meier of Minden and by Bernie Boyle, Omaha attorney and native O'Neillite.

Nebraska democrats in yesterday had their day under the guidance of Arthur Mullen, also a native O'Neillite, who helped sweep into office Franklin Delano Roosevelt as president.

Nebraska's voters unshackled the constitution in a few places to allow a start on reform of the state property tax system.

At week's end it appeared that the legislature can take action on:

1. Setting up new standards of assessing tangible property, including real estate. This has been called the "heart" of tax reform.
2. Eliminating part or all taxes on household goods, which take far more assessing time than their worth in tax revenues.

The voters, however, turned down a proposal to allow appointment of tax assessors, apparently feeling this would take away "home rule."

However, a restriction concerning taxes was voted into the constitution. This would insure that if the state legislature ever passes a sales or income tax it must first be used to replace that part of the property tax which supports state government. (This is about 15 percent of the average tax bill.)

There were indications that some groups were going to commence a fight to get this restriction removed. Particularly those who want a sales tax feel that they can't work for such a tax now. If a sales tax were voted in, it would mean the state would have to get along with its special 1.1 mill institutional building fund levy, and other similar special levies.

It might even mean that levies couldn't be made in the counties for the local share of the cost of patients in the mental hospital and the University hospital in Omaha.

Budget Hearings—Governor Crosby this week began hearings on the budgets submitted by the various departments. In the present rather cumbersome budget procedure, Crosby

will then draw up his recommendations for the 1955 legislature. But then when Gov.-Elect Victor Anderson of Lincoln is inaugurated in January he can draw up his own budget. Next the legislature budget committee starts work, holds hearings, and can throw the governors' recommendations in the ash can if it wishes. The legislature itself has the final word when it appropriates money.

Toll Road Difficulties—Members of the Nebraska turnpike authority had a meeting in Denver with Colorado highway commission authorities. Purpose was to talk over possibilities of the two states working together on a toll road, maybe as part of a nationwide turnpike.

Versions seemed to differ about what the reaction was.

State Engineer L. N. Ress told reporters he thought that Colorado officials were indifferent.

Turnpike Authority Chairman Raymond McGrath of Omaha immediately called a special meeting of his group. He told the press that on the contrary, Colorado officials were cordial and had promised to "meet you at the door with whatever kind of road you build."

Ress said he still thought Coloradans were more interested in building a free superhighway, using 60 percent federal and 40 percent state funds. Plans for such a highway across Nebraska are being held up pending a decision on the toll road question.

McGrath said he had come to the conclusion that Nebraska has to think of a toll road clear across the state if it is going to fit into the national picture. Up to now thinking has centered on a Lincoln to Omaha turnpike.

The authority passed a resolution calling for an appropriation by the legislature of money for preliminary studies and court action. So apparently the ultimate battleground for the question of a toll road may well be in the 1955 legislature.

Mental Recommendations—A hard working committee ap-

pointed by Governor Crosby has come in with a report filled with recommendations on how to improve the mental health and mental hospital picture in Nebraska.

The "biggest problem," the committee said, was paying salaries to get highly-trained personnel to get patients cured instead of just keeping the mentally ill at state expense for years. This will cost money, the committee agreed, but said it was sure the citizens of Nebraska wanted best of care for unfortunates.

Shierk Previews 1955 Plymouths

Plymouth Motor corporation is planning on the greatest sales volume in its history during 1955, and is getting off to a fast start by scheduling all-time high production, according to Paul Shierk, manager of the Shierk Motor company in O'Neill and DeSoto-Plymouth dealer here. He recently returned from a preview of the 1955 line of Plymouth cars at Omaha.

With a line of cars featuring all new styling, new high horsepower engines, and many luxury features formerly found only in the most expensive cars, Plymouth has retooled its factory and by mid-November will be producing more than 3,000 cars per day, Shierk explains. They are longer, lower and wider than previous models, and the most powerful cars Plymouth has ever built.

By the end of December, Plymouth expects to have built 160,000 of the new models. That is some 60,000 more than were built during November and December in the peak year of 1953. Plymouth officials pointed out that a week before the first of the new cars came down the assembly line, enthusiastic dealers had ordered more than 150,000 without having seen a single model. The backlog of orders is expected to be more than doubled by the time all dealers have seen the cars.

Plymouth expects to double its 1954 sales during 1955 and to sell nearly 20 percent more cars than



Neubauer to Far East

William L. Neubauer (above), son of Mr. and Mrs. William Neubauer and husband of Mrs. Helen J. Neubauer, all of Page, is serving aboard the radar picket destroyer USS McKean on her second cruise since being recommissioned. The McKean left Long Beach, Calif., August 10 and had six days of training enroute to Pearl Harbor, T.H. Surfboarding, swimming on Wakiki beach and sightseeing tours around the island were arranged before getting underway and westward for Japan. While in the Far East, the ship will visit several places in Japan, the Philippine Islands, Formosa and Hong Kong, B.C.

the record 635,000 units sold during 1953.

Shierk said Plymouth has had the new car under development for three years, and at the same time has been "tooling up" its manpower in pointing for a big sales year in 1955. During the past year the Plymouth organization has increased its number of field representatives from 103 to 291 and has concentrated its sales effort by rearranging its geographical coverage of the country.

Cronin Serves on Two Committees—J. D. Cronin of O'Neill, recently retired president of the Nebraska State Bar association, has been named to serve on two committees of the Nebraska State Bar association, during the new year.

Mr. Cronin is a member of the association's executive council. He has been appointed chairman of the committee on joint conference of lawyers and accountants and will also serve on the committee on the judiciary.

The appointments, which become effective immediately, were made by John J. Wilson of Lincoln, newly-elected president of the association.

Entertains Friends—Ewing—Norman Bomer entertained a group of friends at a party Saturday evening. The occasion was to celebrate his birthday anniversary. After refreshments at the home of his parents, Rev. and Mrs. W. J. Bomer, they all were his guests at the Eldorado theater for the evening.

Attend Fields Rites in Grand Island

LYNCH—Mr. and Mrs. Frank Weedner attended the funeral of Verle J. Fields at Grand Island at 9:30 a.m., Thursday, October 28.

Mr. Fields was district representative of the V. J. Muller company of Norfolk and was well-known in Boyd and Holt counties. He was married to Helen Kayl of Spencer.

Survivors include the widow and one daughter, Mary Catherine.

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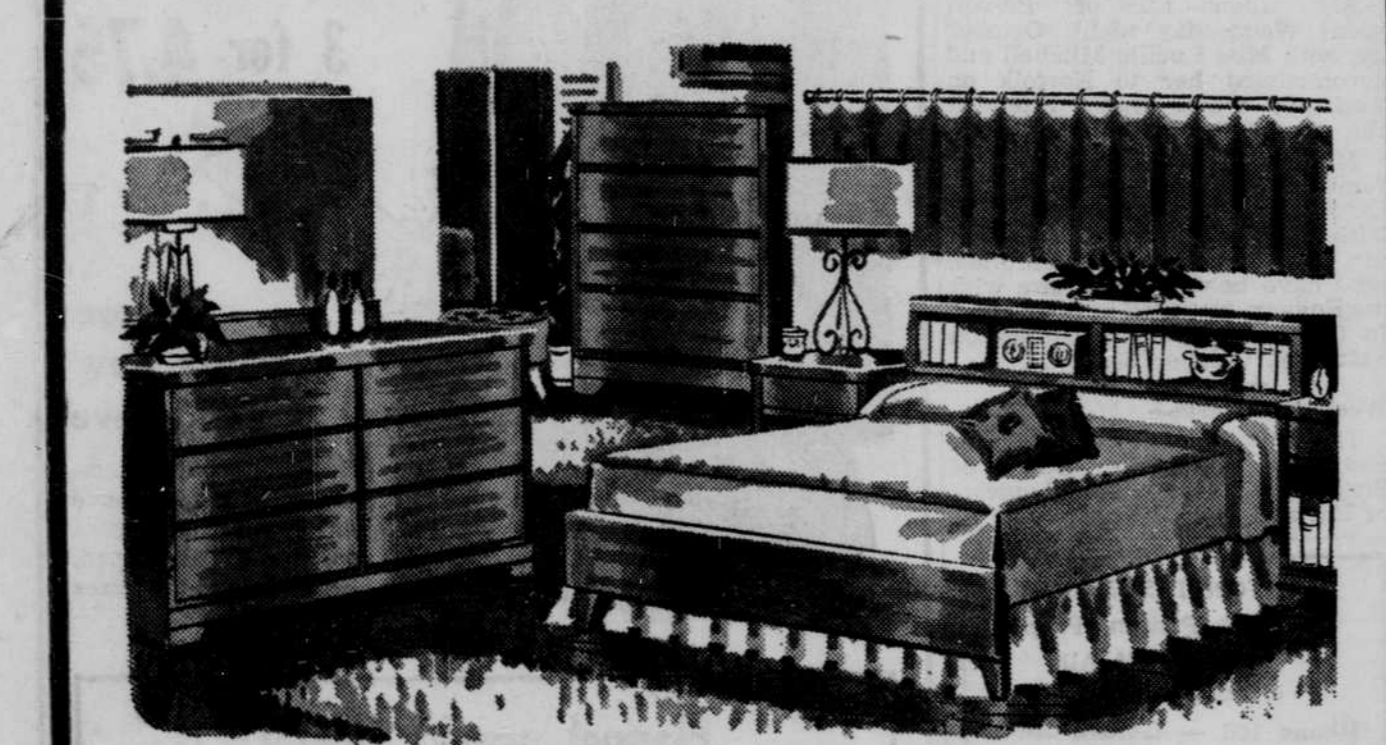
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