

In Prince Georges

Democrats Move Ahead By 6-4 Edge

Prince Georges County Democrats after four lean years forged into a firm lead last night with slightly less than half of the County's 55 precincts reporting.

In an unusually heavy off-year turnout, the once-dominant Democrats were holding a 10-to-6 margin in most races.

County voters gave a similar lead to Democrat Harry C. Byrd over Republican Gov. Theodore R. McKeldin. A native of Crisfield, Byrd was for many years a leading figure in the County as president of the University of Maryland.

The swing toward the Democrats, however, caught up with another County favorite son, Rep. Frank Small, Jr., Clinton Republican, in the race for the Fifth District congressional seat.

Small trailed Democrat Richard Lankford of Anne Arundel County by a 9-to-8 margin.

It was Small's 3000-vote lead in Prince Georges that carried him to victory over Lankford in 1952.

In the race for County and State offices, the Republicans were taking an even more convincing licking than they handed the Democrats in 1950.

In that year, 16 years of Democratic domination ended as the Republicans surged to power on a hard-hitting reform platform.

In the race for State Senator, 46-year-old H. Winship Wheatley of University Park, a former county prosecutor, held a 10-to-7 margin over Republican incumbent John Raymond Fletcher.

The six Democrats running for the House of Delegates were generally holding a 10-to-6 margin over the Republican sextet, three of whom are incumbents. In 1950 the Republicans took four of the six seats.

Leading the slate was Lansdale G. Sasscer, Jr., 28-year-old son of the former Congressman and an Upper Marlboro lawyer.

The other Democrats leading the Delegate contest were Hervey G. Machen, 37-year-old Hyattsville city attorney; C. Phillip Nichols, 31-year-old Laurel real estate man; Carlton R. Sickles, 33-year-old Langley Park attorney; Perry O. Wilkinson of University Park, a Delegate since 1942 who survived the 1950 reversal and is now Speaker Pro Tem of the House; and Ernest A. Loveless, Jr., 31-year-old Clinton attorney.

The Democrats were also headed for a clean sweep of the five County Commissioner seats they lost four years ago.

Leading the race for control of the County government were Jesse S. Baggett, 45, now Mayor of Hyattsville; Lansdale G. Clagett, 43, Upper Marlboro farmer and Judge of the Orphans Court; Frank J. Lastner, 45, Mayor of Greenbelt; A. Preston Perrie, 51-year-old builder who lives in Manchester Estates, and Herbert W. Reichelt, 45-year-old Mayor of Mount Rainier.

The resurgent Democrats were also moving to recapture the States Attorney's and Sheriff's offices, which figured prominently in the Republicans' anti-corruption theme in 1950.

Republican Carlyle J. Lancaster was losing to his old Catholic University classmate, Democrat Blair H. Smith, a Mount Rainier lawyer.

Sheriff Ellis G. Duley, Jr., former assistant sheriff who inherited the top spot when Republican leader Carlton G. Beall was appointed United States Marshal for the District, trailed Democrat J. Lee Ball, 53-year-old Lanham insurance agent.

Democrat W. Waverly Webb, the incumbent, held a commanding 2-to-1 lead over John B. Lauer in the contest for Clerk of the Circuit Court.

Charles Edwin Callow, a Democrat, lead incumbent county treasurer Julia B. McKay.

County voters also gave a resounding endorsement to a proposed State Constitutional amendment which would give more home rule to incorporated towns. The county has 28 such towns, more than any other county in the state.