

Election Notes

Much attention has been given the fact that Governor **McKeldin** is the first Republican in the State's history to have been given a second term. But farsighted Democrats are probably already looking ahead to 1958 with a feeling of glee. The reason is clear enough. Mr. **McKeldin** is without doubt the Republican party's best vote-getter in Maryland. But he cannot run for a third term at the State House four years hence.

In 1948 an amendment was written into the State Constitution which bars a third consecutive term. Mr. McKeldin is the first governor to which this amendment will apply. If Mr. William Preston Lane, Jr., had been re-elected it would have applied to him this year.

It is also interesting to note on this score that from the very beginning of the State Maryland has taken a stand against long continuance in office. Up until 1864 there were restrictions relative to consecutive terms. Then the former restrictions were removed in favor of a declaration against "long continuance."

During the years which followed, Maryland had one-term governors until the coming of Albert C. Ritchie in 1919. Mr. Ritchie was elected to four consecutive terms. He was followed by Harry W. Nice, one term; Herbert R. O'Connor, two terms; Mr. Lane, one term, and now Mr. **McKeldin**, two terms. As was noted above it was during the Lane administration that the bar against three consecutive terms was raised.

When the new Legislature convenes in January it will have among its members at least one Negro—Truly Hatchett, Delegate from Baltimore's Fourth district. Mr. Hatchett will be the first Negro to sit in the House of Delegates and he may be the first Negro to sit in the Legislature.

The "may" depends on the official outcome of the senatorial and another House election in the Fourth district. The incumbent Senator Bernard S. Melnicove was the winner by a small margin on the basis of the police count. The race was so close that a shift of a few hundred votes could elect Harry A. Cole, a Negro and a Republican.

There is a sidelight here which calls for attention. There was a third man in this district's race for State Senate—Calvin A. Douglass, also a Negro. Mr. Douglass ran as an independent. It is possible that the end result will show that if Mr. Douglass had not run and if his votes had gone to Mr. Cole, the Negroes would have had their first member of the State Senate in the State's history.

But in any event the House will have Mr. Hatchett. The official count may also show that a second Negro—Emory H. Cole—has been elected in the Fourth district. Mr. Cole is in a very close race with Milton F. H. Saul.

Twelve years ago Maryland's full delegation to Congress—two senators and six representatives—was Democratic. Then a trend set in in favor of the Republicans. First a House member, then another House member.

When the election was over two years ago the Republicans found themselves with two senators and four of the seven House seats. (The number of House seats was raised from six to seven that year.) Now the wheel of fortune may be turned.

The Republicans still have two senators. But the defeat of Representative Small in the Fifth (Southern Maryland) district gives the Democrats four of the seven House seats. The new Democratic representative will be Richard E. Lankford, of Annapolis.

There has been another reversal in trends. For a few years the Republicans have been bettering their minority position in the State Legislature. For example, in 1946 the Republicans made a notable gain in Montgomery county. Four years later they not only held that gain but made strides in

Prince Georges county. Some few months ago there were indications that the Republicans might make gains in Baltimore county. But it did not turn out that way. The Democrats remain entrenched in Baltimore county's seats in the Legislature. In addition they have won back some of the seats they had lost in Montgomery and Prince Georges counties. The change of trend thus suggested is important because these three counties are the largest in the State. E.V.B.