

Democrats Quickly Pick Taylor as House Speaker

House Democrats took **just 12 minutes** yesterday to pick Allegany County's **Casper Taylor** to succeed R. Clayton Mitchell as speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates. No one challenged the 19-year House veteran, and the vote was unanimous. Taylor will be formally elected by the full House when the 1994 session convenes Jan. 12, but endorsement of the Democrat Caucus assures election by the overwhelmingly Democratic House. In a brief speech after his selection, Taylor said his priorities will be strengthening criminal laws, balancing the needs of the environment and business, holding down the spiraling cost of health care and holding the line on government spending. Maryland faces budget deficits of \$40 million this year and \$70 million next year because of the lingering effects of the recession, Taylor said. He offered a friendly hand to Republicans, but warned that Democrats will fight back if the GOP takes a partisan approach during the 1994 session.