Lehman Ousted
As a Delegate

Attended Conventions Since '24; De Sapio Wins, Vote Is 284-14

By Tom O'Hara

Herbert H. Lehman, former Governor and Senator, was rejected yesterday as a delegate-at-large to the Democratic National Convention by a vote of 284 to 14 of the Democratic State Committee. By attending the state committee meeting in an often stormy session at the Hotel Biltmore, followed the advice of Carmine G. De Sapio, national committee-man, who sat impressively on the dais, and Michael N. Prendergast, Democratic State Chairman, who presided and was re-elected chairman for another two-year term.

Denial of the honor to go to his party's convention (and Mr. Lehman has attended every one of them since 1924 except for the war year of 1944) placed Mr. De Sapio and Mr. Prendergast in the position of taking on what may be the biggest fight of their public careers. Mr. Lehman missed the 1944 convention, since he was then Director-General of the United National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

Lehman Sees "Arrogance"

On hearing the news, which was not unexpected, Mr. Lehman, who is eighty-two, issued a statement from his home at 820 Park Ave. It read:

"The only thing I'm going to say is that I've urged the state committee to consider the names of Mrs. Roosevelt and Sen. Lehman as delegates and had them (meaning the state committee) inquire as to whether they would be willing to serve as delegates."

Mr. Lehman's partisans forecast a catastrophe to the party as a result of his rejection. James S. Lanigan, newly elected to the state committee from the Village over Mr. De Sapio's opposition, said it would mean the loss of the state in the Presidential election this year, the Mayorality next year and the Governorship in 1962.

John J. B. Shea, a committee-man from the 9th A. D. called on the committee-men to "guts," defy the prevailing sentiment and restore Mr. Lehman. The insurgents, who numbered eleven votes in New York County, had used the device of asking the committee to substitute Mr. Lehman for one Mortimer Feuer, of 270 West End Ave. This was the method by which the committee resoundingly rejected Mr. Lehman.

There was still another attempt to substitute Thomas J. Shanahan, "president" of the Manufacturers Trust Co., for Mr. Lehman but this never got to a vote.

Mr. Shea also lost an attempt to put over Lloyd K. Garrison, a member of the Lehman group, as candidate for State Chairman against Mr. Prendergast.

But the organization steamroller also worked smoothly against other organization opponents. One, Mrs. Eleanor Clark French, was turned down as Democratic State Vice-Chairman. She was replaced by Mrs. Mae Gurevich, of the Bronx, a volunteer who has worked for the women's division for fifteen years. Mrs. French and Mrs. Gurevich are friends and remained so after the changeover yesterday.

Mrs. French issued a blast against Mr. Prendergast only two days ago, accusing him of using "old-fashioned" methods and charging in effect that women are second-class citizens so far as the Democratic organization was concerned.

There was no problem or controversy in selecting the key eleven at-large delegates. They are Mayor Wagner, State Controller Arthur Levitt, Monroe Goldwater, committee counsel; Raymond C. Deering, committee treasurer and a vice-president of the Manufacturers Trust Co., Charles H. Kerrigan, district director of the United Auto Workers, Raymond Corbett, legislative representative of the A. F. L.-C. I. O., Donald C. Bowes, of the Young Democrats, Mrs. Gurevich, Mr. Prendergast, Mr. Shanahan and Edwin L. Weisl Jr., a lawyer.

Mr. De Sapio's post as national committee-man probably will not be decided until the delegation holds its caucus at the convention in Los Angeles. The 114-man delegation, however, will hold what it termed an "official" caucus next week at the Sheraton Ten Eyck in Albany.

Wagner Statement

Despite the fact that Mr. Lehman said recently that Mr. Wagner has been deficient as Mayor and there was a possibility of a fusion against him in 1961, if he is renominated for a third term as Mayor, Mr. Wagner said to reporters at City Hall yesterday:

"The action of the state committee is just another reflection of the shortsightedness and arrogance of the bosses. They have portrayed Mr. Lehman as a "boss" in the old political machine tradition.

As a means of placating Mrs. Roosevelt, the state committee selected Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr., a former Congressman here and a defeated candidate for State Attorney General, as a delegate-at-large from the 17th Congress District. The Democrats listed his address here as 45 E. 66th St.

Leaders Explain

In explaining the reasons for spurning Mr. Lehman Mr. De Sapio and Mr. Prendergast, issued a joint statement prior to the committee session. It read:

"When the state committee determined upon the method of selection of the additional delegates-at-large allotted to New York State by the national committee, its determinations were bitterly denounced by Sen. Lehman and Mrs. Roosevelt."

"The method adopted by the state committee was one recognized by the national committee, and one which had been traditionally used in the State of New York as well as innumerable other states."

"Neither Sen. Lehman nor Mrs. Roosevelt has affirmatively indicated any desire to us to be elected as a delegate-at-large from the State of New York."