

Watson Begins Campaign For Property Tax Limit

County Assessor Phil Watson opened the campaign to enact a 1 per cent property tax limit on the November ballot with a blast at what he called "hysterical scare tactics" by the opponents of the measure.

The Los Angeles assessor said he has anticipated opposition, but the "hysterical tone and cynicism of the opponents' statements have been appalling."

"Members of the legislature threaten homeowners with a state property tax at the same time they're voting property tax exemptions for the motion picture industry, and trying to figure out a way to exempt inventories for the businessmen," Watson said.

"BUT I DON'T think the people are going to be

frightened," he continued. "They know from sad experience that the legislature is long on promises of tax relief and awfully short on performance — until they forced to do something."

Meeting with newsmen for the first time since the initiative qualified on June 27, for the fall election, Watson pointed out that the petition-gathering drive had been as successful in the rural areas as in the major cities of the state. "I think this response indicates the temper of the people and the fact that the property tax, statewide, is the most onerous tax we have," he said.

"When the initiative passes, the legislature will have to find substitute taxes and can no longer ask people to

pay their taxes with broken promises."

THE WATSON initiative would put a 1 per cent-of-market value ceiling on the property-related services and phases out schools and welfare from the property tax over the next five years. By July 1, 1973, education and welfare would have to be financed completely by the state.

It qualified in only 10 weeks with almost 559,000 valid signatures out of more than 750,000 collected.

Principal opposition so far has come from the California Taxpayers Association, which, Watson said, is an organization made up of the major businesses and industries of the state.

'Big Dip' Continues Successful Operation

Victoria Park's new swimming pool, opened in August, 1967, continues to be the most popular in the county's "Operation Big Dip" free swim-instruction program, Supervisor Kenneth Hahn has announced.

Attendance in the morning lessons at the Victoria pool, 190th and Avalon, totaled 1,499 the week of July 8 to 12. Registration for the second two-week cycle of free swim lessons at Victoria totaled 390.

Hahn initiated "Operation Big Dip" three years ago to give every youngster a chance to learn to swim under the watchful eyes of

lifeguards during the hot summer.

Total attendance at the swim classes at 30 pools last week was 16,644, an average of about three lessons each for the 5,205 youngsters who signed up.

That brought the total attendance for the first month of "Operation Big Dip" to 64,344.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 1968

PRESS-HERALD A-11

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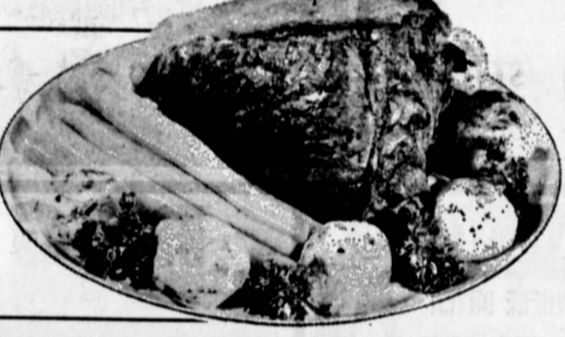
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