

# Political Polls: Is There Any Truth in Them?

Capitol News Service

SACRAMENTO — What's the truth about public opinion polls? The answer to this question is being sought by the assembly elections and reapportionment committee in a series of hearings, no doubt designed to minimize the effect of polls on elections.

The chairman of this committee is Assemblyman Jack R. Fenton, a Democrat from Montebello. The public opinion polls right at the present time aren't going so good for the Democrats, as the

candidates in almost every instance from this party find themselves behind the eight ball.

The one exception is Alan Cranston, Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate, running against Republican nominee Max Rafferty. Cranston has forged ahead, so far as the polls are concerned, with Rafferty trailing by a few points.

However, the current polls have nothing to do with Fenton's hearings, which the chairman says are being held to uncover "some of the

uses and abuses of public opinion political polls."

"The public," he declared, "and many members of the legislature have recently become very concerned with the reliability of polls and their effect on the outcome of elections."

"One of the purposes of our hearings is to examine some of the sources of apprehension."

"Recent controversies surrounding some of the more prominent national polls have raised some serious questions about the reliability of polling information."

With increasing frequency, the public and legislators are asking such questions as 'are the polls really honest' or 'is it true that a candidate can buy a favorable poll?'"

Fenton's committee has written itself a large order in that it hopes to determine what legislative involvement is necessary to insure that California citizens get accurate, objective and reliable polls, and polling information.

It has been observed over a span of years that political polls are sometimes correct, and sometimes away off base. Distrust of the polls as an accurate harbinger of election results began with this writer a good many years ago, when the Literary Digest muffed a national election, and shortly afterward, folded its tents to be seen on the news-stands no more.

Actually, polls are no more than a gimmick, as they provide no more than the opinion of a few people as to the outcome of an election. The law of averages says they have to be right some of the time, and contrary-wise, wrong some of the time.

But in any case, poll-taking regulation by the legislature, which seems to be the goal toward which the committee is working, has no place in the activities of government, for the simple reason that it's nobody's business if a poll-taker wants to ask an opinion, compute the results, and publish those opinions.

If the poll-taker is publishing a dishonest result, then it would seem to be a case for prosecution by the district attorney on grounds of fraud rather than the establishment of another bureaucracy to regulate the enterprise, at more costs to the taxpayer.

It would be a sorry state of affairs if decisions of the electorate were guided by the opinions of a few people, expressed at random without a background of thought and analysis.

Your Right to Know Is the Key to All Your Liberties

## -Comment and Opinion-

TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1968

### Elect Fred Fredericks

An energetic young Torrance Realtor has challenged the incumbent Assemblyman in the 67th District and could be on his way to beating the registration odds against him with an upset victory in November.

Republican Fred Fredericks, who was born in Los Angeles 34 years ago and who has lived in the Torrance-Gardena area most of his life, is challenging Assemblyman Larry Townsend, Torrance Democrat, who was elected to the Assembly two years ago on the retirement of veteran legislator Clayton Dills.

Several events in the past year have led us to believe that the interests of residents and voters of the 67th District would be better served by the election of Fredericks.

Frankly, we have been disappointed in some of the associations attributed to Townsend.

Principally, this newspaper along with a number of his constituents was dismayed early last summer to learn that the incumbent Assemblyman has associated himself with the spokesman for large Southern California rubbish interests in the formation of a \$100,000 advertising and

public relations corporation. We have some reservations about this being the proper role for a full-time legislator.

We have no such reservations about recommending to the voters of the 67th District Mr. Fred Fredericks. He is accustomed to the role of leadership dating from his student days at El Camino College when he was student body president. He has since been president of the Gardena Board of Realtors and has held top offices in the Kiwanis Club, Chamber of Commerce, and the Jaycees.

His leadership was recognized by the city of Gardena in 1965 when he was named Gardena's Outstanding Young Man of the Year.

His activities have ranged from Little League to Girl Scouts, from the Republican State Central Committee to the Hawthorne Elks.

Mr. Fredericks has energy, direction, and vision.

Because we think he offers an outstanding opportunity for the 67th District to obtain responsible representation, we recommend that Fred Fredericks be elected November 5.

### 'Yes' on Proposition 9

For the first time in decades, the California voter will have an opportunity November 5 to initiate a real property tax relief program in ballot Proposition 9. This newspaper suggests a "Yes" vote.

Major opposition to Proposition 9, which would set a 1 per cent ceiling on all property taxes, comes from elected officials on all levels of government. And rightfully so for it is their lack of legislative imagination and their flair for spending which has caused property tax rates to soar in recent years.

Already, legislative leaders in the state have threatened voters with huge boosts in state sales and income taxes if Proposition 9 is approved. Yet, few have bothered to mention tax sources which have gone untapped because of strong lobbies in Sacramento.

Proposition 9 is a well thought out

program for tax relief over a five-year period providing a 20 per cent reduction per year. It would ultimately provide for a 1 per cent property tax on assessed valuation cutting the property owners burden in half.

In simple terms, it would shift the burden for costs of government from the small segment of property owners to all residents of the state. This can hardly be called "unfair."

The use of property taxes, under Proposition 9, would be limited to only those functions directly connected with service to property. Education and welfare costs would be eliminated.

Without the stable fund provided by property owners, perhaps state departments would be a little more discreet in wasteful spending.

The property owner in this state deserves a break—and Proposition 9 offers just that.

### 'No' on Proposition 1A

Proposition 1A, the state legislature's hasty attempt to combat Proposition 9, is nothing more than a property tax relief hoax and this newspaper suggests a "no" vote.

Any legislation enacted in haste—and in fear—does not deserve voter support.

Proposition 1A promises a little bit of everything and provides a little less than anything. It is called a property tax relief program—yet provides mainly for the rentor.

It offers a direct cash payment of \$70 to the property owner (which would hardly dent the average bill) and then, in coming years, provides for a \$750 exemption in assessed valuation—which could easily be chewed up by higher tax rates or assessed valuations.

Rentors, on the other hand, would receive sizeable reduction in state in-

come taxes through doubling present exemptions. The household belongings tax would be eliminated. And all would be financed through a current surplus of funds gained in past taxing programs.

Proponents claim that Proposition 1A does not create the need for additional or substitute taxes. Yet it proposes to cut the state income tax, business inventory tax and completely eliminate another tax — without any plan to replenish the "surplus" fund.

The property owner, as in the past, will end up financing a program for rentors.

Proposition 1A also provides that all future initiatives will have to be approved by the legislature before being laced on the ballot. This would take away a basic right of every citizen for grass roots government.

A "No" vote is strongly suggested.

### Who Needs Campaign Workers—



WILLIAM HOGAN

### He Watched Television For Seven Days, Nights

There is something masochistic about the idea behind a book called "Seven Glorious Days, Seven Filled Nights." It is an account of one man's struggle to survive a week watching American commercial television. Basically it is a silly idea. Yet this gimmick book is often very funny as the author describes in deadpan fashion just about every-

thing he watched on six New York channels (educational TV was excluded) over a battery of sets (20-inch color to 3-inch Sonys) between April 22 and 29, 1967.

Charles Sopkin, a journalist and editor, got the idea from Fred W. Friendly, former head of CBS news, who in a critical book on television suggested one way

for; or a roller derby match; or Lew Ayres interning under the great Dr. Gillespie; or second-rate news broadcasts — "doorman and janitors on strike in Queens, former King Saud of Saudi Arabia urging his brethren to revolt against his half-brother, King Faisal."

Sopkin was often close to exhaustion during this "Friendly Experiment." He admits to waking up with a stunning headache and the taste of death in his mouth. He liked the spontaneity of the late night talk shows, and occasionally a commercial would be fascinating. But his mental processes dulled to the point where he appeared to be worrying too much over how old a woman Joan Crawford really is.

For all its grotesqueries and the author's ironic point of view, this is less than a hopeful book. Sopkin concludes that the networks have neither managerial talent nor the sensibility to perceive quality. It is his belief that there is no way — no inclination, for that matter — to make commercial television better when the statistical norm remains a housewife with less than a high school education.

### Quote

"I remember when college students would go to the administration building to be kicked out of school. But now things have changed and students go there to kick out the president." — Duane C. Griggs, The New London (Iowa) Journal.

"This committee will do everything in its power to prevent election of (Hubert) Humphrey and (Alan) Cranston, due to their support of the (Caesar) Chavez move, which is unwanted and unnecessary both as concerns workers and farmers." — State Sen. Hugh M. Burns, on the grape boycott.

"Proposition 9 would effectively destroy local government, would vitally weaken, if not destroy, the state's water plan, would seriously injure the state's credit, and would not only fail to provide an overall tax relief to the bulk of our citizens, but worse, would result in a substantial increase in the amount most Californians would have to pay for state and local government." — State Finance Director Caspar W. Weinberger.

### HERB CAEN SAYS:

## A Hairless 007 Marks Birthday

Man on the move: Screenstar Sean Connery, minus his hairpiece, flew in here, dined at the Empress of China with a couple of boys, and flew out on the 11 p.m. plane, explaining it all in one sentence: "It's my birthday, and I could NOT see celebrating it in Los Angeles!" Welcome to the club . . . Only one burning question mark stands between Maria Callas and a '69 date with the S.F. Opera: Can she still sing? (Aw, who cares as long as she sells tickets) . . . I. Magnin is no longer using its ultra-expensive gift boxes (for furs) ordered years ago by Grover Magnin, and illustrated by the French artist, Jean Dumand. M. Dumand's subject — two prowling blackpanthers — has lost its original innocence . . . Fetching sign on a Peninsula loan company: "We Offer Month-to-Month Resuscitation."

Now then, where were we: While the late great Mrs. A. B. Spreckels was lying in state at the Legion of Honor, a Gray Line tour arrived! The guide, at first taken aback, rallied bravely with "Now here, folks, we have a waxen image of Mrs. Adolph Spreckels, who gave this beautiful museum to the city." Snapped a museum guard, testily: "That is not a waxen image of Mrs. Spreckels — that IS Mrs. Spreckels, waiting for her funeral!"

Before I forget: The aforementioned Mr. Allen was browsing in a Carmel bookstore with a lady acquaintance, who pointed at a book titled "Call Girl" and smiled: "That's what I've always wanted to be!" Jay: "I'm afraid there isn't a helluva demand for call girls in their late forties" . . . Woody Allen wrapped up his "Take the Money and Run" but not before he had a run-in with the Musicians Union. For a hillside scene featuring Woody as a 15-year-old cellist, he used a Marin high school band — and the union raised its customary hell: "Use our guys or we throw a picket line around the set." Fortunately, the scene was completed before this happened, but can't you see those Local Sixers out there in their knee-pants and beanies?

People are not talking about: Pat Nixon's real first name (10 points if you know it's Thelma) . . . City Hall's devilish cleverness: All Muni employees must take their flu and tetanus shots on a Friday — so they can't take the next day off, claiming a bad reaction . . . Shanghai Chow at 133 Geary, which isn't a new restaurant featuring Red Chinese food (it's an invisible reweaving place, so how can you tell it's there?) . . . The startlingly inept Disney version of "Winnie the Pooh" in the Sunday comics — especially the rendering of dear old Pooh-Bear into a simpering Hollywood phony. A bear that bears no resemblance to the original.

Vignette: Marvelous Matthew Kelly, at the wheel of his mint condition '33 Rolls-Royce drophead, was driving along Bayshore with his son, Michael, not unaware that the other motorist were gazing at his magnificent equipage. "But imagine what it was like when his car was new," mused Matthew. "Can't you just see it rolling through the English countryside, with the peasants standing at attention and tugging respectfully at their forelocks?" . . . "Yeah," muttered Michael, looking around uncomfortably, "and now they just think we're a couple of fairy decorators."

Other voices, other rumors: Trader Vic's "South Seas Cookbook," out only a couple of months, has already sold close to 100,000 copies, and the Trader is now sitting on a \$5000 advance from Doubleday for a Mexican cookbook. Meanwhile, Old Vic, the world's greatest Francophile, may have to top whistling "Dixie" and learn the Marseillaise: Conrad Hilton wants him to put a Vic's Vapo-Rib in the Paris Heeltone . . . Panther pause: "I guess they all agree that black is beautiful," grinned Photographer Craig Sharp at a cocktail party where all our best ladies were dressed, as usual, in their dumb little black dresses (and down to the knees, yet).

### Press-Herald

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Published Each

Wednesday and Friday

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Torrance, Calif. 90510