

Will voters reject GOP kingmaker politics?

By ED SALZMAN

It may turn out that 1982 will be an election year in which June primary candidates play supporting roles to an overriding political issue: Will voters tolerate a return to machine politics in the state's Republican Party?

Many Californians undoubtedly do not know or remember that just a generation ago virtually all GOP candidates for major statewide office were hand-selected by the owners of three newspapers — the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Oakland Tribune*. That publishers' alliance crumbled in 1958 when an era of Republican dominance came to an end, thanks in part to the ambitions of William F. Knowland, ironically a member of one of the ruling newspaper families.

The new GOP would-be kingmakers are a group of powerful Southern California businessmen who have formed a "screening" group for GOP candidates for senator and governor. Several members of this group are considered members of President Reagan's "kitchen cabinet." Others have been brought into the organization because of their positions within the party or because of their general stature. Among the members are industrialist Justin Dart, oilman Henry Salvatori, Republican finance chairman David Murdock and former President Jerry Ford. Dart and other members of the Reagan "kitchen cabinet" have been supporting Lieutenant Governor Mike Curb for years, and they have been trying to pave an easy path to the governor's office for the former Hollywood music man. The group has been influential in moving Mayor Pete Wilson of San Diego into the Senate race, a step that could hurt Curb more than it helps him. And the organization has been conducting formal interviews with Senate candidates before selecting one as the favorite for the nomination. Because of his shift, Wilson supposedly has the inside track for the endorsement, although it could go to Congressman Barry Goldwater Jr.

A huge bankroll

The political-machine issue can hardly be avoided in the race between Curb and Attorney General George Deukmejian for Jerry Brown's job. Thanks in part to the help from the Dart group, Curb has amassed a huge campaign bankroll. Money will be his biggest — and perhaps only — asset as the campaign gets into the woo-the-voters stage. Curb has no record to spread before the public, nor does he have a sharply defined favorable image to market. He won the lieutenant governor's job in 1978 because he was running against an opponent (Mervyn Dymally) who had been portrayed as a villain by some major newspapers.

A few months ago, Curb had a large lead in the polls — especially when matched against both Deukmejian and Wilson. But a poll taken in August by the Mervin Field organization showed the young lieutenant governor and Deukmejian running neck and neck. Perhaps more significantly, a poll of party sophisticates taken by the *Los Angeles Times* showed a marked preference for The Duke.

The Republican side of the governor's race could become vicious. Curb has already reacted to the polls by reorganizing his campaign (and by seeking to buttress ties to the Reagan White House). Both Curb and Deukmejian have indicated in the past a willingness to go for an opponent's jugular. And that may be the only way Curb can win the primary. The pollsters claim that Deukmejian has an image that is almost negative-free. He has a long record as a solid Republican member of the Legislature, with emphasis on law-and-order issues. He has been a rock-hard conservative as attorney general and has attacked Governor Brown and the Democrats on the state Supreme Court at every opportunity. Deukmejian may be dull, but he knows government and can offer something tangible to the voters. Curb has indicated that he will try to cut Deukmejian down by painting the attorney general as a moderate. That would leave Curb as the only true conservative in the race. And he'll have barrels of money to use in selling that theme. Will the public buy it in the face of Deukmejian's reputation among party regulars? Will there be resentment against a small band of self-appointed leaders trying to make decisions for the rank-and-file registered GOP voter?

Without an incumbent in the governor's race, it is surprising that there are not more major candidates. Wonder of wonders, it appears that Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles will get a free ride through the Democratic primary. State Controller Ken Cory has acted at times as though he would run, but it now appears that any challenge to Bradley would be foolish. A fool is something Cory is not. Bet on him running for re-election as controller.

Field's California Poll shows that Bradley would demolish Cory or any other possible Democratic contender on the horizon. Surveys by Field and others also give Bradley a strong lead over Curb or Deukmejian in a November runoff. But those polls are generally discounted by professionals because the race undoubtedly will get close as the election nears.

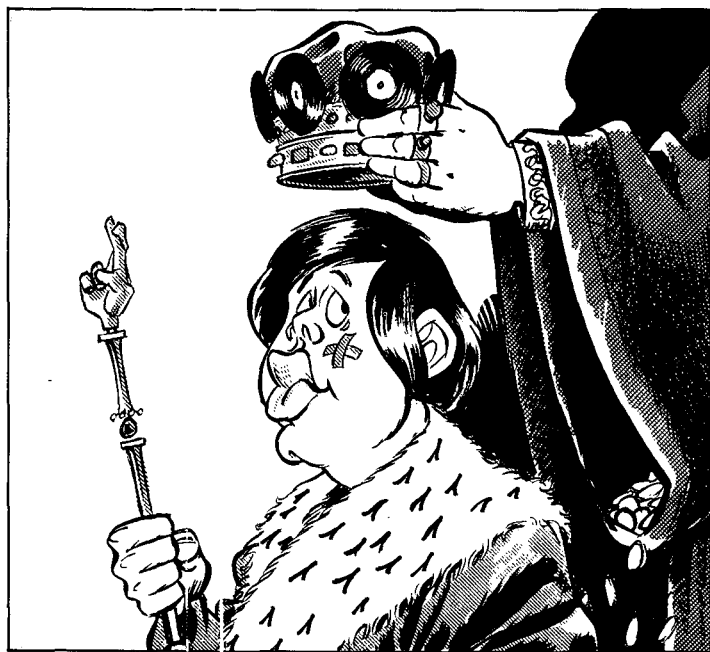
Most Democrats think Bradley will be stronger against Curb than Deukmejian. Bradley's electoral record in Los Angeles shows that he is extraordinarily popular, even among Republicans, despite (or because of) a generally cautious approach to controversial issues. He has a smart campaign adviser in David Garth of New York, and he is riding high after an easy re-election victory. Yet, there is nervous-

ness among Democrats over a Bradley-Deukmejian match-up. The Duke can exploit the law-and-order issue. He will be the beneficiary of any racist vote, even though he is far above the fanning of any fire of bigotry.

A Senate stampede

There is the general feeling that 1982 might be another Republican year, and the party will try to heal any wounds from the primary — with Dr. Reagan heading the medical team.

In any event, the outlook for the governor's race is remarkably simple — a free ride for Democrat Bradley and a head-to-head race on the Republican side. Deukmejian apparently will run as an independent, while Curb may head a slate that includes candidates for several other offices. The danger for Curb would be additional public awareness of the presence of machine politics in the Republican Party.



The Senate race, by contrast, still looks like a stampede by all the animals in the political zoo. Jerry Brown would love the luxury of a Bradley-type primary, but he won't get it. Politicians love to attack the weak, and the polls make it look as if Brown is ripe for plucking by the scavengers of the political world. Mayor Daniel Whitehurst of Fresno was the first to enter the race. Former Assembly Speaker Leo McCarthy was attempting to raise enough money for the race, and others were also circling overhead, including Supervisor Kenny Hahn of Los Angeles (who has run for the Senate twice before). In any event, the Democratic primary will be a test of Jerry Brown's salesmanship — rather than a showing of popularity by any of his opponents.

Not so in the Republican primary, where the influence of the Dart-Murdock group could be especially potent. Last year, the hand-picked candidate of the GOP kingmakers — Proposition 13's Paul Gann — turned out to be a miserable challenger for Democrat Alan Cranston. Pete Wilson undoubtedly would be a stronger nominee for the party, but the Gann episode eliminated much of the fear factor for other potential candidates. No longer will a John Rousselot choose not to run rather than risk the wrath of the Justin Darts of the Grand Old Party.

As a result, Wilson will have to claw and scratch his way over three other candidates to win the nomination and fight a

rear-guard action against several others behind him in the early polling. The candidates break into two flights, with Barry Goldwater Jr., incumbent S. I. Hayakawa, Congressman Pete McCloskey and Wilson bunched at the top. The other five possible candidates are far to the rear — First Daughter Maureen Reagan, Congressmen Bob Dornan and Rousselot, state Senator John Schmitz and law-school dean Ted Bruinsma.

Wilson will have several advantages — his traditional following in San Diego and among party moderates, a possible kosher label from the conservatives in Reagan's kitchen cabinet, plus enough money to raise an effective campaign. But Hayakawa holds steady in the polls at 20 percent, and he has been campaigning with vigor at the age of 75. Goldwater has the magic name, and he has consistently been a big favorite with the conservative wing of the party. McCloskey is a maverick who figures to do especially well in Northern California. Can any of the other candidates break into the top bracket? That would depend primarily on their ability to raise money. (Candidates for Senate fall under federal rules, which limit individual contributions to \$1,000. There is no limit on donations to candidates for state office.) Dornan has raised large sums in the past through direct-mail solicitations, and Maureen Reagan undoubtedly has some resources — despite her father's indications that he would rather see her sit on the sidelines. (She could embarrass him with her liberal views on some issues.) Schmitz, Rousselot and Bruinsma are long-shots, although Rousselot is well-liked within the political community.

The 1982 elections may be the pivotal test for the Dart-Murdock group. If Curb and Wilson are both defeated, perhaps the machine will disband, just as the power brokers of another generation disbanded their cartel during the debacle of 1958. But if Curb and Wilson are successful in June, even if they are defeated in the general election, the GOP oligarchy may get even more bold in elections to come.

The statewide picture

With more than eight months remaining before the June primary, the statewide election picture seems much clearer than could have been expected just a couple of months ago — with the exception of the Senate race. The main question seemed to be whether Assembly Speaker pro Tempore McCarthy would run for the Senate against Jerry Brown or for lieutenant governor. Assuming McCarthy runs for lieutenant governor, here is the current outlook:

Lieutenant Governor — The incumbent, Curb, will be a candidate for governor. Assembly Minority Leader Carol Hallett will probably be the leading GOP candidate, and she might become identified as Curb's "running mate" if she draws significant opposition. Other possible candidates include state Senator Marz Garcia and former Republican state Chairman Truman Campbell. Leo McCarthy apparently can have the Democratic nomination for the asking. If Leo tackles Jerry, a likely candidate is Gray Davis, the governor's chief of staff. One or more Democratic state senators with free rides in 1982 might also run for the seat.

Attorney General — With George Deukmejian running for governor, this race might draw several Republican candidates. The earliest entries are George Nicholson, one of Deukmejian's aides and a favorite of district attorneys, and Assemblyman David Stirling of Whittier. Look for more action in the GOP primary. The leading Democratic candidate is John Van De Kamp, district attorney of Los Angeles County. State Senator Omer Rains also has indicated a strong interest in running, but he is being urged to seek re-election to the Senate.


Controller — The Democratic incumbent, Ken Cory, has been working behind the scenes for years to generate steam behind his candidacy for governor. But the boilers are luke-

warm at best, and those close to Cory say the controller will run for re-election rather than gamble that Tom Bradley's popularity will disappear overnight. Cory may have difficulty winning re-election, however. It appears that the Dart-Murdock group will put its muscle behind Jack Ford, the San Diego resident who is the son of Palm Springs resident Jerry Ford. Ernie Dronenburg, the only Republican on the state Board of Equalization, also wants to run for controller but only if the odds are decent.

Secretary of State — Incumbent March Fong Eu has toyed with running for higher office, but probably will decide that 1982 is a very good year for a Democrat in her spot to play it safe. She really hasn't been challenged since the primary of 1974. Veteran GOP Assemblyman Gordon Duffy of Hanford has talked about running against her, and Duffy could probably raise enough money to make the race interesting, especially if a Republican tide is running.

Treasurer — Incumbent Jesse Unruh is probably the most frustrated powerhouse politician in California. He would love to run against Jerry Brown in the primary or take another

shot at the governor's office. Instead, he is making peace with Bradley and telling himself he will just have to wait for 1986 or beyond. Unruh probably will draw only token opposition: he need fear only a GOP sweep.

Superintendent of Public Instruction — The three-term incumbent in this non-partisan office, Wilson Riles, will have to fight to keep his job. The field may get crowded, and that may not be good for him. Under the rules of the election, Riles must get a majority of the vote in June or face a runoff in November. He would probably be the underdog in any runoff. Thus far, the most active of his opponents has been Bill Honig, a Marin County school superintendent, a member of the State Board of Education, a former businessman, a lawyer and undoubtedly a future doctor and Indian chief. Dick Ferraro, a member of the Los Angeles school board, has good name identification. Sheldon S. Baker of Glendale is known within the school community as the immediate past president of the California School Boards Association. Gene Pratt learned the political pitfalls around the state as aide to Hayakawa. And the list could get much longer. 

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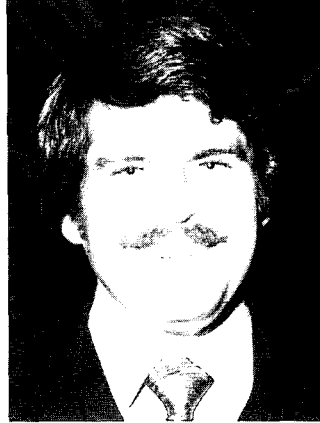
Bradley's successor as mayor of Los Angeles?



REINER



FERRARO



YAROSLAVSKY



WACHS

By MICHELE WILLENS

With every new poll and glowing endorsement, Tom Bradley's chances of becoming the next governor of California increase. Naturally, this pleases the Los Angeles mayor and those close to him. But not far behind them on the pleasure scale are numerous politicians of varying ilk who would love to replace Bradley at the helm of the nation's third (some say second, when undocumented workers are included) largest city.

Should Bradley become governor in 1982, a special mayoral election would probably be held at the time of the next municipal election, April 1983. That is a year and a half away — a short time in the campaign realities of the day. Because the political situation is filled with the hypothetical, most possible mayoral candidates remain fairly silent about their plans. Questions to them produce lots of "nothing-is-impossible," "never-say-never" and "all-options-open" sorts of answers.

Despite their vague responses, however, the city's politicians are keenly aware that the LA mayor's position is not only one of the most visible municipal offices in the country but a stepping stone to much bigger things.

As City Hall worker Mark Siegel says, only half in jest, "We may very well see 15 co-chairmen of the Bradley-for-Governor campaign." Siegel refers to the members of the Los Angeles City Council (where Bradley sat before being elected mayor), almost all of whom have entertained the thought of moving into the top spot. But of the 15, probably only three will, in the end, make serious attempts at a campaign. Of these, only two would seem to have a real shot. One is recently elected Council President Joel Wachs, who was voted in at the last moment when two others deadlocked. Wachs was totally surprised. The other: Zev Yaroslavsky, 32, the council's youngest member. The third possible contender is former Council President John Ferraro.

Michele Willens is a free-lance writer in Los Angeles and a regular contributor to the Journal.

Ferraro, 57, has been on the council for 16 years. While his name is a familiar one in the city, his politics and effectiveness are less clear. He lost a natural base of power and visibility when he could not hold onto the council presidency, and City Hall watchers say Ferraro has lost much of his energy and drive along with the presidency.

It is also difficult to find any base of support for Ferraro, a conservative Democrat, although he says he has over \$200,000 in an ongoing campaign committee. Ferraro admits he would have to be pretty confident about his 1983 chances, because his council seat comes up at the same time. He will have to decide whether it is worth it to risk that sure seat for a shot at the mayor's office. Odds are he will not make the run.

An image problem

Wachs has the advantage of sitting in the top council position, which means he would be acting mayor during those months between a possible Bradley victory and the special election. Wachs says he is "very definitely" considering the mayor's race and has about \$350,000 in his standby kitty already.

"You can't live or die for the next office," Wachs says, "and I will continue trying to accomplish the goals I set for myself. Right now I have a positive feeling about how I would do in the race if Bradley is elected governor. But things change so much from one day to the next, you can't predict anything. I know that better than anyone, because of the way I ended up council president."

Wachs has always been outspoken and willing to take risks, apparently without political second thoughts. Those qualities have won him the respect of a wide variety of groups. His district includes part of the huge, politically powerful San Fernando Valley, and residents there are exuding community pride in "the first council president from the Valley." He has also been in the forefront of liberal, controversial issues like rent control and environmental causes.

Wachs has not alienated the establishment, however. He has consistently taken positions supporting fine arts interests and is a popular figure in the city's cultural world.

If Wachs has a problem — and it is a serious one — it is his image. “He just doesn’t look or sound like a mayor,” says one long-time City Hall figure, referring to Wachs’ compact, slightly effeminate appearance. “Ferraro looks like a mayor; Zev Yaroslavsky looks like a young mayor; but Joel Wachs does not project leadership. The more media exposure he gets, the more I’m afraid he will come off as this sweet, well-meaning guy who couldn’t run a city.”

One who benefits from media exposure — and is exceedingly adept at using it — is Yaroslavsky, who seems the likeliest choice right now to be LA’s next mayor. Yaroslavsky was ready to go for it last time, but he dropped out when Bradley surprised everyone by running again. With about half a million dollars set aside for his political future, Yaroslavsky will almost certainly make the run next time.

The liberal young representative from the Jewish Westside of the city has a new plum position of his own, one that could help him in the interim. He was recently named to the council’s Police, Fire and Public Safety Committee and already has questioned the LAPD’s intelligence-gathering methods.

He will also be able to take vocal stands on law enforcement issues when, as Yaroslavsky himself says, “There is unparalleled anxiety and fear in the city.”

Yaroslavsky denies he will take political advantage of his committee membership: “Yes, it is a committee that is always in the public eye, but I didn’t seek my appointment to it. And in six years on the council, I don’t think I have ever acted in regard to politics first. This kind of committee can prove a double-edged sword, depending on what you do.”

One City Hall veteran thinks Yaroslavsky can benefit from the assignment: “If Zev handles that job well and doesn’t come off as anti-cop, it will show voters he can handle sensitive assignments and it will take a too-liberal edge off his image.”

Ronka, Robbins, Reiner

Yaroslavsky has managed to wear well for six years, both with the public and his colleagues. That is perhaps proved by the fact he has been regularly mentioned as mayoral material almost from his beginning in politics. Yet he has managed to keep his ambition in check, unlike his former council buddy, Bob Ronka, whose over-eagerness to move up led him to a bruising defeat by Ira Reiner for city attorney. Both men spent over a million dollars in that race. Ronka lost partially due to last-minute TV advertisements which desperately — and erroneously — tried to link Reiner to the Charles Manson case. The ads backfired wildly.)

Ronka is among a group of local political figures who could have been mayoral contenders were it not for self-destructive or miscalculated behavior in the last year. State Senator Alan Robbins has sought the mayor’s job before and would have again had he not spent the spring in a Sacramento courtroom, defending himself against charges of illegal sex with teen-agers. Despite the happy ending (for him) of that trial, Robbins says he is aware he could not expect voters to send him to City Hall.

Former controller and current City Attorney Ira Reiner was set to challenge Bradley last time, but he was persuaded not to attempt an unwinnable contest. Reiner would still like to be mayor, but he was left with a negative image from the city attorney’s race and also a \$650,000 deficit. It would take tremendous *chutzpah* — something he has displayed as he has hopped from one office to the next — to go back and ask his still-unpaid lenders to contribute again so soon.

City Hall political consultant Jack McGrath says Reiner can’t ever be counted out of the picture. “Financially and practically, he couldn’t run for mayor in 1983,” McGrath says. “But politically, he could find a sneaky way, as Bradley did when he ran for a third term. He got groups of political supporters to hold news conferences and supposedly ‘force’ the mayor to run again, due to ‘public demand.’ ”

Another candidate who may have blown his chances this year is Police Chief Daryl Gates. Gates toyed publicly and naively with a challenge to Bradley last time. But his sitting back and waiting to be begged didn’t go over well with conservative interests looking for some action.

“Gates is seen as a zero, with no political skills,” says one City Hall aide. But the police chief’s chances could rise or fall with a celebrated case.

If conservative backers are dissatisfied with Gates, they may look to the city school board for a candidate. Careers have been made and broken there in the last few years over the controversial busing issue. A few of the conservatives who rode that issue to hometown fame could emerge in 1983. Especially interesting is Board President Tom Bartman, the most appealing and articulate of the lot. Bartman is of the “never-say-never” school, although he admits, “I would be honored to be mayor of Los Angeles. But everything I do will be determined by how well I do this year for public education, and that is where all my hours are going.”

Former City Attorney Burt Pines retired this year to return to private practice, but he has certainly harbored higher political ambitions in the past. He ran for attorney general in 1978 but lost in the primary to Yvonne Burke. “He has the contacts, the name identification and — if he makes a lot of money in the next year — he will have the money,” says McGrath.

Assemblyman Art Torres is also said to be thinking about such a race, and even Yvonne Burke’s name occasionally crops up, although she lost her last two elections: one state, one local. “Still, you can’t count out the possibility of a woman emerging,” says one City Hall watcher. “Yvonne will likely be very active in Bradley’s gubernatorial race, which would make her visible again and win his support in return.”

Naturally, there is always the possibility that new faces will emerge, but it is hard to imagine where they will come from. The voters of Los Angeles apparently have been happy with Bradley’s quiet form of leadership and will probably want more of the same. It is still largely a Democratic city, but if President Reagan has turned the country around to everything conservative by 1983, that could have an effect on the LA mayor’s race.

In the meantime, a lot of aspiring politicians are watching Bradley’s rise closely, hoping it will in turn lead to a move upward for themselves as well.

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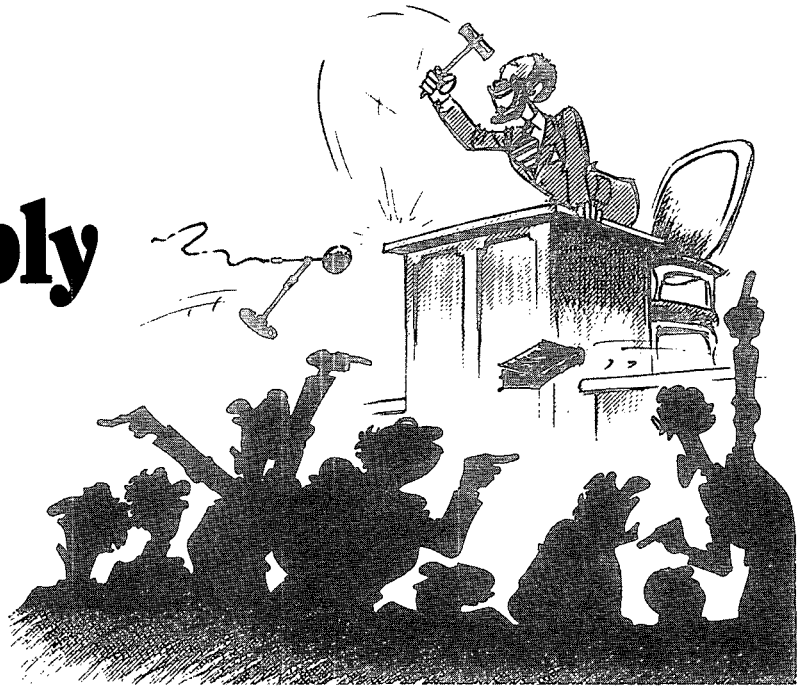
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Power guide to the Assembly

Of the 80 members of the Legislature's lower house, who are The Patriarchs, The Shepherds, The Statesmen, The Easy Riders; who are The Mechanics, The Shadows and The Spectators? And which of these groups make the inside moves that determine the direction of major legislation?



This is the second in a two-part series examining the power structure within the state Legislature. In this article, regular Journal contributor Daniel J. Blackburn, a former member of the legislative staff, assesses the relative effectiveness of members of the Assembly and attempts to outline several of the strengths and weaknesses of the 80 members of the Lower House. Comments are based on numerous interviews with legislators, staffers, lobbyists and reporters who cover the Assembly on a daily basis.

By DANIEL J. BLACKBURN

In the proving grounds of California state government, the 80 members of the Assembly are the test pilots, striving to take the legislative machine to its very limits. Its size makes the lower house a bit cumbersome in nature, just as interded in the bicameral system. Brash, impertinent, innovative, the Assembly by nature feeds its concepts and ideas to the Senate, which is smaller and more deliberative, providing the supposed balance.

Leadership is a more fickle possession in this house, but those who have climbed to those top posts tend to remain in control for reasonable periods of time.

It was a house under a public micro-

scope as never before late last year when Howard Berman, a Beverly Hills lawyer and top lieutenant to the then-speaker Leo T. McCarthy, turned savagely and unexpectedly on his boss in an attempt to wrest from McCarthy the speaker's crown. The battle became deadlocked and protracted, exposing the underside of the lower house with disturbing clarity.

The Assembly is a body in transition, with freshmen outnumbering veterans by a substantial margin, a circumstance which contributes to its inherent state of turmoil. It has become the breeding and feeding ground for a new strain of politician, the "mechanic" whose goal is victory without question.

Ambitious politicians spring from it; lazy politicians try to hide in its confusion. Unscrupulous politicians exploit its clumsiness to mask their actions. On a busy floor day, it looks like a Central American public market.

No generalization is ever wholly accurate, particularly when analysis of human nature is the objective. These summaries have been culled from the consciousness of regular observers of the members in action. (Total office expenditures for 1980 are listed for all but first-term members, to offer one basis for comparison between cost and effectiveness.)

THE PATRIARCHS

The uncontested leaders, people who have exerted themselves, inserted themselves and who have the reins of power in the lower house. Whether through wile or ability, this group can make things go. A remarkable thread of patience exists among them.

WILLIE L. BROWN, JR. (D), 17th District. (\$159,984) Hot cars, a slick wardrobe and a gift of gab characterize the first black speaker, who won his mantle in 1980 by jockeying between McCarthy and Berman. Brown's ostentation wears well in his district, and he gets frequent and valuable press in his hometown of San Francisco by confiding in columnist-friend Herb Caen. Brown has been in the lower house's hierarchy throughout his legislative career, which began there in 1964. Most of his career has been spent on the fringe of the power element, everywhere but at the top, until now. As majority floor leader under McCarthy, he amused and befuddled his colleagues with his bob-and-weave narrative style and outspoken, articulate manner. A controversial appointment to the Board of Regents of the University of California has given Willie reason to relax his criticism of bene-