

ALL PAST RECORDS were broken in the initiative business in 1990. All told, not less than \$200 million was spent, and the general hoopla for the top initiatives — Tom Hayden's Big Green leading the pack, but closely followed by the liquor tax initiatives — far exceeded the

Election Overview

Alan Heslop

excitement generated by all the legislative campaigns combined.

The decline of representative government in Sacramento is, in fact, well measured by the rise of the initiative industry. The November ballot's 28 state initiatives (described in 224-page booklets) offered voters far more

A Symposium

REFLECTIONS ON CALIFORNIA IN THE '90s

SIXTEEN CALIFORNIANS LOOK AT THE ELECTION JUST PAST AND THE DECADE TO COME

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real choice than the legislative elections that were hopelessly dominated by incumbents. They posed issues far more substantial than the subject matter of most of the 1500 or so laws passed annually out of the Capitol.

Hayden's Prop. 128, ballyhooed as the beginning of a new environmentalist movement that would spread across the country, flopped badly. Indeed, its disastrous showing seems to have contributed to Dianne Feinstein's defeat, for Pete Wilson ran especially strongly in the

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Central Valley and other rural areas. Again, in the tradition of gun control, liberal ballot measures helped GOP candidates.

THE FEINSTEIN CANDIDACY

Although Feinstein's loss disproved the cruder versions of the thesis that women vote for women, the election results bear some warnings for the GOP. Feinstein ran more strongly than recent top-of-the-ticket Democrats in Southern California suburbs. Even after all absentee ballots are counted, it seems Wilson will have failed to pile up the usual lead of GOP presidential and gubernatorial candidates in Orange County. Suburbs that contributed mightily to Wilson's runaway victory over McCarthy in 1988 gave him many fewer votes in 1990. Bush's narrow victory over Dukakis would have been impossible with the Wilson vote totals in 1990 in these areas.

It seems fairly clear that numbers of Republican women whose party identification is weak, or who are strongly motivated by women's issues, voted for Feinstein; and such voting is more common in suburban areas. Further analysis is likely to show that some of the difference between Wilson's showing in rural and suburban California is to be explained by a very mild form of the gender gap.

TERM LIMITS: 131 AND 140

The campaigns for these two initiatives — modest affairs in both cases, with tiny budgets — brought together an interesting array of groups. Defeated proponents of the June redistricting reform initiatives were prominent in both campaigns. So, too, were women and minority political activists, frustrated by incumbents' monopoly control of elections. Conservative Demo-

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crats and liberal Republicans, striking against the dominant wings of their parties in Sacramento's caucuses, were much in evidence, the former mostly supporting Prop. 140, the latter mostly Prop. 131.

The initiatives' opponents enjoyed an advantage of probably more than five-to-one in terms of advertising expenditures, and much more than that in terms of slate cards and mass telephone.

Yet, in an impressive showing that voters do read the fine print on ballots, Prop. 140 won while Prop. 131 — with its plan for publicly-funded campaigns — lost with almost a million fewer votes.

Now the legislative establishment will launch a lawsuit (using tax dollars?) to block 140. Hoping to recover in court what they lost at the polls, they seek a friendly judge to strike out of the Constitution the provisions the people put in on election day.

THE NEW DECADE

The election results promise little immediate relief from the political stalemate in the Capitol. Democrats added slightly to their already substantial majorities in both chambers; and tensions between the Legislature and the Executive had undoubtedly been irritated by Pete Wilson's bold endorsement of Prop. 140.

Perhaps the most interesting question is how redistricting will be affected — and, in particular, how the huge prize of seven new

Congressional seats will be distributed. The threat of a harsh partisan gerrymander of the 1981 type seems significantly reduced by Wilson's election. But what about a repetition of 1982's bi-partisan gerrymander? Can Gov. Wilson hold back enough Republicans — some of whom are no less careerist in temper than their Democrat colleagues — to sustain a veto of a sweet-heart redistricting bill?

Prop. 140's Term Limits may prove the best antidote to either the partisan or the bipartisan gerrymanders. Since all seats now open at least once a decade, party leaders must draw the dis-

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tricts more cautiously than before. They can't count on established incumbencies to help buffer them against tides

of opinion; and therefore, if the partisan gerrymander is to last the decade, it must be drawn to be a little less efficient.

The incumbent gerrymander is also complicated by Prop. 140's stimulus to competition. As career Assembly members think ahead to 1996, when their terms are to end, they will jostle to draw the new lines for Senate and Congress. Imagine the competition between the chambers! Imagine the struggles among incumbents!

Let's hope that 1991-92 will see the gerrymanders of 1981-82 overturned, not merely adjusted and amended. The future of representative government in Sacramento hinges on the return of electoral competition to our legislative districts. The initiative ballot will continue to swell until voters again believe their Legislature is responsive to the needs of a changing California.

Wilson

The New Administration

AFTER A DECADE of expanding economic opportunity and personal freedom through the Reagan-Deukmejian policies of lower taxes and limited government, we more recently have

Mandate for Conservative Change

James W. Robinson

seen an unfortunate resurgence of the old tax and spend mentality in the nation's state houses and in Washington. Yet in 1990, voters across the country consistently rejected this liberal trend, showing a broad desire to return

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THE CHIEF PROBLEM facing the Wilson administration is the progressive unaccountability of the government of the state and of the nation. The secondary problem is the vast inefficiency and wastefulness, and the swollen scope and scale, of the gov-

The Test of His Life

L. P. Arnn

ernment's every operation.

Gov. Deukmejian fought as hard as a man has fought in that job in memory. He vetoed more

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to an era of conservative change. One fourth of all governors running for reelection lost, most because they raised taxes.

In California, voters rejected virtually every measure on the ballot to raise taxes or increase government debt, spending and regulation. They struck forcefully at the legislative establishment by enacting term limits, and passed Gov. Deukmejian's plan to put prison inmates to work, a concept vociferously opposed by the liberal establishment.

For the first time since 1954 voters are replacing an outgoing governor with a new governor from the same party. Clearly, Californians like George Deukmejian's common sense leadership — after the Jerry Brown

bills and stood firm on more controversial issues than any recent predecessor. Nonetheless, government grew at the accustomed rapid pace, outstripping growth in population, or growth of the gross state product, or of any relevant comparative measure. In the end it had increased its size by well over 100 percent. We are firmly established as a leader among leaders in high-taxed states. Yet we have too little money for roads, bridges, school buildings, water recovery, or waste disposal.

Our education system — now much larger than the whole state government when Deukmejian

debacle — and see in Governor-elect Wilson a capable leader who can build on its successes.

What are the key elements of the conservative change begun under Gov. Deukmejian's leadership? California is changing from a high tax to a moderate tax state. We are transforming an over-regulated economy into a job-producing deregulated economy. A liberal judiciary and criminal justice policy have been largely supplanted by a conservative approach. A philosophy of welfare dependency has been replaced with a workfare policy and 2.8 million new private sector job opportunities. Our state, known in 1982 for budget deficits and fiscal irresponsibility, is now respected by the financial community for budget surpluses and budget reform.

IT IS NO secret that some California conservatives have in the past cast a skeptical eye on Pete Wilson. But I believe conservatives should take great comfort

took office and guaranteed in the Constitution a fat portion of new revenues — continues to deliver putrid, though in some respects slightly improved, results. We compete with the likes of Poland; the worst school in Hong Kong rivals the best in California. Red tape and central administration multiply. And we go toward year-around schooling.

OF COURSE THE welfare system continues to encourage unwed motherhood and divorce. Local government, partly driven by the avarice of central authority, continues to regulate the middle class out of the housing mar-