

JUNE '80

PETE RATES THE PROPOSITIONS

by Pete Stahl

PROPOSITION ONE --- for

Since 1964, California voters have approved four bond acts to finance acquisition and development of parks, beaches, wildlife preservation facilities, etc. The funds from these four acts are expected to run out next July. Like its predecessors, Prop 1 is a bond act to finance environmental programs. Specific amounts are allocated for recreational lake-shore at Tahoe, hatcheries in Northern California, and the development of the State Park system <sup>and</sup> ~~other~~. Partly because of inflation, Prop 1 indebts the State for two thirds the amount of money of the previous four bonds combined. But there is another reason. Since the passage of 13, cities and counties have been less able to support parks and recreation. Prop 1 sees to it that 13 will not wipe out parks in California.

Opponents of Prop 1 claim that the "Spirit of 13" is being violated. Nothing could be further from the truth. 13 was intended to eliminate waste in government; parklands, beaches and conservation facilities can hardly be considered wasteful investments. Another objection is that Prop 1 is a hodge-podge, a pork barrel designed to offer at least something for everyone while still containing several expensive, "unimportant" programs. Well, it is a mishmash (nearly seven pages of small print is the primary pamphlet), but the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. Consider that the failure of Prop 1 would severely limit State Park service and coastal development.

Perhaps the strongest argument against Prop 1 is that it would add nearly a billion dollars to the State's debt. These dollars would have to be repaid out of the State's General fund. True, but consider that the State will get a billion 1980 dollars, and only have to pay back a billion 2000 dollars (or so). This is the advantage of a bond.

PROPOSITION TWO --- for

The Cal-Vet loan program, Prop 2, has been around for 60 years. It provides low-interest home and farm loans for veterans. It will not cost the State one cent. <sup>to you</sup> ~~to me~~ It will not cost you one cent. It will not cost me one cent. Unless 100,000 veterans simultaneously default on their loans, Prop 2 don't cost nobody nothin'. (Not a single Senator or Assemblyman voted against this measure.)

PROPOSITION THREE --- no

Now look at what the bumlbers are doing!! Prop 3 seeks to amend the State Constitution so that any (and I mean any) architectural changes in the Capitol building would have to be part of the Budget. Written in blood, as it were. Now, I love the Capitol as much as anybody, but the Constitution is hardly the place to safeguard its historical integrity. If emergency repairs were needed in the future, Prop 3 would make <sup>major</sup> them impossible until

the next budget act took effect, <sup>probably</sup> ~~or~~ at least several months. <sup>at least</sup>  
And if, as the supporters of Prop 3 claim, we need to be  
protected from the capricious whims of future legislatures,  
then God help us all. Let them mangle the Capitol. I think  
it's ugly, anyways.

PROPOSITION FOUR --- yes

Under current law, all government-subsidized low-rent housing projects must be approved by voters locally. This means that if my county wants to build a low-rent apartment building on what is already a shoestring budget, it must spend thousands of additional dollars to finance a voter referendum. The spectre of paranoid citizens voting down a low-rent project because they feel it will depress property values is scary; it may even have nipped some of these sorely needed projects in the bud. You and I both know that government-subsidized housing can be beautiful and a boon to any community. My sister lives in such a project in Davis, and let me tell you, it's no slum.

I don't need to tell you how badly we need low-rent housing in this state. The population is growing at a staggering rate, and vacancy rates have not been lower in a long time. Conversion to condominiums has not helped the situation. Prop 4 will provide housing not only for the poor, but also for the elderly, and the handicapped. And Prop 4 could actually save public money from being needlessly squandered on unnecessary referenda. (Under Prop 4, a populace that felt strongly about a given project could still petition for a referendum, just like it can challenge any local government decision.) It is simply silly to have the public vote on every low-rent project that comes along. We elect legislators to do that for us.

PROPOSITION FIVE --- yes

Swallow hard, folks. In guaranteeing free speech, Prop 5 will give special priveleges to members of the press. If you or I find a secret "source" to supply us with information on some incident, we can be subpoenaed and forced to disclose that source if it bears on some official proceeding. Under Prop 5, newsmen will not be subject to such subpoenas. Members of the press will not have to disclose who their sources are; nor will they have to reveal any information that they haven't published yet. You and I will still have to.

This is one of those foggy, marginal cases that our founding fathers didn't think of when they drafted the Constitution. Free speech is guaranteed, but so is justice and equality under the law. The public is being asked to resolve this <sup>paradox</sup> contradiction in the Constitution.

It is my feeling that the failure of Prop 5 would be a tragic mistake. To be sure, pure justice would not be served; members of the press would be more equal than ordinary citizens, and possibly some suppression of facts would take place. But we do not live in a pure society. It is likely that many sources would not talk unless their outlets (reporters) would be certain not to

reveal them. Thus, evidence would be brought to light that otherwise would never surface. Furthermore, a free press is the single institution that separates our free society from totalitarian regimes. ANY infringement on a free press is a threat to the very heart of America. My scales tip in favor of 5.

PROPOSITION SIX --- no

Let me tell you a story. Once upon a time, some Californians wrote a section of the Constitution. They called it Section IV. In it, they said that, no matter how many people were in a county, that county could not be subdivided among two or more Senate districts. Also, they said that not more than three counties should be in any one Senate district.

Well, California grew and grew, and before you knew it, there were 58 counties. But while big Los Angeles County had six million people, little Alpine County had barely five hundred. The wise men of the United States Supreme Court looked down from Washington in dismay. "Clearly," they said, "an injustice is being done to the people in big Los Angeles County, and in all the other big counties in California." So they invoked the principle of "one man, one vote," and invalidated ~~the~~ Section IV.

But in order to amend the Constitution in California, a state-wide referendum must be held. So some hot-shot legislators in the crumbling Capitol drew up a new Section IV lickety-split, and plopped it on the June ballot. Sadly, though, they were bumblerers, and the bill that they drew up was too ambiguous to become part of the Constitution. Pete said to vote no on Prop 6, and the obedient voters did so.

The Legislature, <sup>was</sup> forced by the old Section IV that remained after the failure of Prop 6 to draw up ridiculous senate districts. Little Alpine County got as much representation as big Los Angeles County. But the California Supreme Court came to the rescue. After invalidating the Legislature's preposterous plan, the Court drafted a new Section IV that was indeed fit to become part of your Constitution. Judges are good at legal language, so it just came naturally to them. New, reasonable districts were drawn up, the voters approved the Court's Section soon, and they all lived happily ever after.

(Except for the yahoos from Alpine County, who seceded and became part of Oregon, which is where they belonged in the first place.)

PROPOSITION SEVEN --- yes

Here we have a bill that would extend disaster assistance to victims of an emergency (declared by the President) for removal of debris and wreckage immediately after such an emergency. Such assistance helps alleviate threats to life and property that come with disaster. I know of no cogent argument against Prop 7.



- locally.
- 3) All new rent control laws must expire four years after approval, unless re-approved by the voters in another local election.
  - 4) The State of California may not enact any form of rent control.

Clearly, this Proposition was not invented to facilitate rent control. What it does, is leave rent control open to attacks from the moneyed landlords at least every four years. If these interests can make the voters believe that they are voting for controls when they vote for Prop 10, just think what they can push over on the public when it comes time to vote on real controls. My mind is boggled.

So vote no on 10. Vote yes on rent controls. Keep the controls out of the hands of the naïve, manipulable public.

PROPOSITION ELEVEN --- yes

As the world's oil supply runs out, we must gradually reduce our dependence on the automobile. It is terribly inefficient to haul thousands of pounds of metal around just to move one or two people from place to place. Prop 11 is a relatively mild bit of public transportation development, financed by the obscenely high profits of the oil companies.

In view of the U. S. Congress's watered down version of the Windfall Profits Tax, Prop 11 doesn't harm the oil companies at all. What Congress passed plus what Prop 11 will add is still less than Carter's original proposal. Therefore, any claims that Prop 11 will pose a hardship for the oil companies are patently absurd.

Prop 11 would make it illegal for the oil companies to pass the windfall profits tax on to the consumer in the form of higher gasoline prices. There is no direct cost to the public. Prop 11 also gives the oil companies a tax break for investments they make in California. This helps to ensure the health of our state's economy.

Proceeds from Prop 11 would go to build the Tijuana Trolley in San Diego; the Wilshire Blvd. subway (~~and MX system~~) in Los Angeles; light rail systems for San Jose and Sacramento; and improved railroad service all over the state. Municipalities would be encouraged to use Prop 11 funds for extending bus service or reducing bus fares. In any case, Prop 11 serves to reduce dependence on automobiles.

It might be argued that the oil companies should decide for themselves how to spend their profits. The purpose of this Excess Profits Tax is to reduce dependence on the automobile. Oil companies, as suppliers of fuel for said automobile, have a vested interest in its continuance, not in its demise. Do you think that, left to their own devices, Gulf, Exxon, Chevron, et al. would offer alternatives to cars? Just think about it.