

Election

Voters pass two amendments

By The Associated Press
Texas voters Tuesday night overwhelmingly approved increased retirement benefits for teachers and public employees and, by a smaller majority, approved a pay raise for their state legislators.

In a light turnout preceded by very little organized campaigning about ten per cent of the registered voters went to the polls under clear to partly cloudy skies to register their support for the two proposed constitutional amendments.

Amendment number one, calling for an increase in retirement benefits for teachers and public employees was approved by nearly 75 per cent of the voters, while the pay raise for state legislators was getting the approval of nearly 60 per cent of the voters.

As expected, the pay raise found opposition mostly in rural counties with at least 64 rejecting it. But rural Texas was more sympathetic to the teachers and public employees voting in favor of their increase in benefits.

Urban counties voted in favor of the increased benefits by a majority

of 73.39 per cent and in favor of the pay raise by a majority of 59.36 per cent.

In rural counties the vote on increased benefits for teachers and public employees was 71.86 per cent in favor and on the pay raise was 56.96 in favor.

There was little organized support for either constitution change before the election except by those directly involved — state legislators, schoolteachers and state employees.

One group of Texas House mem-

bers urged a "low profile campaign" to get teachers, state employees and their friends to the polls but keep others away.

A similar special election in 1973, another nonpresidential election year, attracted 605,000 voters to have their say on nine proposed constitution changes. The 1973 legislative pay raise proposal — to increase the annual pay from \$4,800 to \$15,000 — carried in only 12 of the 254 counties.

The lonesome two issues on Tuesday's ballot made up the short-

test ballot on constitutional changes ever presented Texas voters since 1923.

The Secretary of State estimated the election cost at \$1.5 million, no matter how few or how many turned out.

Here briefly were the constitution changes approved earlier this year by the legislature and sent to voters as an emergency matter:

Proposition No. 1 — Adds a new section to the present constitution and repeals six existing sections to continue in effect public retirement systems and benefit programs for teachers, state and local employees, leaving virtually all details of their administration to the legislature. On the state retirement systems, the change would wipe out the present requirement that state and employe contributions to such funds be the same. The new language says employe contributions would not be less than 6 per cent and the state contribution limit is raised from 6 to 10 per cent. On local retirement systems the legislature could establish programs for city and county employes but participation by local government would be voluntary.

Proposition No. 2 — Increase the pay of the 181 state senators and representatives from \$4,800 to \$7,200 a year; increase their personal living expense accounts during legislative sessions from \$12 to \$30 a day, and give them travel pay of 16 cents a mile, instead of 10. The change would cost the state an additional \$1.4 million the next two years.

Neither issue would be affected if

voters adopt a new state constitution in another special election Nov. 4.

The pay legislators are receiving on Nov. 4 would continue until, salary commission, as created in the new constitution, can act, probably some time in 1977.

The current contribution rates a state retirement funds on Nov. 4 would be phased into the new constitution.

The combined cost of changes in the retirement plans was estimated at \$124 million for the next five years, all coming from general revenue. The schedule calls for about 45,000 retired teachers to get 5 1/2 per cent boosts in retirement pay and about 9,600 retired state employes, including 96 retired legislators and statewide elected officials, to get 12 per cent increases.

Prior to the Tuesday voting, Texas voters turned down legislative pay raises five times since they first went on the annual salary list in 1960.

The \$4,800 salary, plus \$12 a day for personal expenses during sessions, was approved in 1960 and replaced "part-time pay" of \$25 a day when in session and nothing for the interims.

Senators and representatives have complained that the \$4,800 salary was still just "part-time pay" for a job that took full time. The news releases put out by legislators before the election referred to the proposed pay change as an "adjustment" because of inflation, not a pay increase.

Growth may be bad if not fully justifiable

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russell W. Peterson, chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, said Tuesday that the nation could grow itself to death.

In a speech to the National Conference on Water, Peterson said there's only one thing in nature "based on the principle of constant growth. We call it cancer."

The conference, he said, should balance industrial and economic needs for water against environmental needs and quality.

"We are at the point now where you must distinguish between requirement and demand. In that myopic way that permits us to assume that life will always go on, we are entirely capable of growing ourselves to death," Peterson told the delegates.

The conference was called by a group of cabinet-level officials, composing the U.S. Water Resources Council, to develop recommendations on national water policy.

The nation is being guided by the position of former President Richard M. Nixon who said in 1973 the future of water projects should be justified on both environmental quality and their economic need.

Both factors should have an equal weight in developing projects for navigation, irrigation and flood control, he said.

However, in 1974 Congress directed the council to reevaluate this position in light of the intense pressure on the nation's water supply expected for the rest of this century.

House passes voting rights bill

Benefits Mexican-Americans

AUSTIN, Tex. (AP) — The Texas House has passed a Senate-originated bill making it easier for many Mexican-American to vote.

Tuesday's 123-16 vote came on the same day as a U.S. Senate committee heard testimony on a bill by Texas Congress-woman Barbara Jordan to extend federal supervision to elections in her home state.

House members also defeated, for the second time, a bill relieving county property taxpayers of the requirement that they pay 50 percent of the cost of highway right-of-way.

Rep. John Wilson, D-LaGrange, the sponsor, followed the 66-72 defeat of his bill by saying his next effort will be to add to the general appropriation bill a rider requiring the state to pay the full cost of right-of-way. This would add about \$9 million to yearly highway costs, Wilson said.

The voting bill would require all election materials, including voter registration forms and ballot instructions, to be in both English and Spanish in counties whose popula-

tion are 5 percent Mexican-American or more.

Critics said Monday that the bill was rushed through so that Secretary of State Mark White could use it in his testimony in Washington Tuesday as ammunition to keep federal voting supervisors out of Texas. White cited the measure in his remarks.

State senators must act on House amendments before the bill can be sent to the governor for signature into law.

Wilson talked the House into a 71-65 vote to bring his highway right-of-way bill back to life but could not persuade the representatives to pass it.

The Texas Highway Department places an intolerable financial burden for right-of-way on many counties when it decides to run new roads through them, Wilson said.

"We have counties that cannot possibly afford the right of way — they don't have the money... Today, highway right-of-way brings a price that is more costly than the

fair market value of the land," Wilson said.

Opponents said the bill might impose such a large drain on the giant highway trust fund that either construction would have to stop or an increase in the gasoline tax would be required.

An expected House vote on a controversial bill appropriating \$2.8 million from the State Textbook Fund to cover book contracts in excess of the amount appropriated did not materialize.

Speaker Bill Clayton said sponsors wanted to await an attorney general's opinion, requested Monday by the House, on whether the bill would violate a constitutional provision against grants to private interests.

Senators approved and sent to the House, 27-3, a bill by Sen. Frank Lombardino, D-San Antonio, a former policeman, to let retired officers carry handguns for five more years. He explained that many such peace officers receive threats from persons they had arrested.

They also sent the House a bill changing the composition of the Texas Amusement Machine Com-

mission to eliminate all representation of the regulated juke box and game machine industry.

Most of the present commission's duties were taken away by recent court decisions holding unconstitutional the taxation and regulation system imposed by the law creating it.

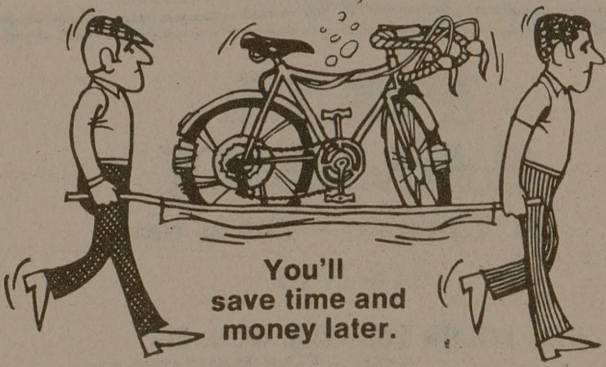
Also approved and sent to the House were measures that would — Urge Congress to reject legislation banning the manufacture of handgun ammunition.

— Establish a state policy of developing geothermal energy, under supervision of the Texas Railroad Commission.

— Permit suspension of a driver's license if a justice of the peace or municipal judge found it was likely a money judgment would be entered against him for not having auto liability insurance after having an accident. Under present law, an actual judgment must be entered before a license can be suspended.

Senators tentatively approved, 22-8, a bill requiring all health insurance policies to cover treatment for alcoholism.

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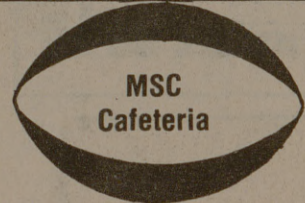
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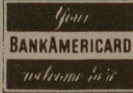
WEDNESDAY EVENING SPECIAL

Chicken Fried Beef Steak w/cream Gravy
Whipped Potatoes and Choice of one other Vegetable
Roll or Corn Bread and Butter
Coffee or Tea

THURSDAY EVENING SPECIAL

Italian Candle Light Spaghetti Dinner
SERVED WITH SPICED MEAT BALLS AND SAUCE

Parmesan Cheese - Tossed Green Salad
Choice of Salad Dressing - Hot Garlic Bread
Tea or Coffee



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FRIDAY EVENING SPECIAL

Mexican Fiesta Dinner
Two Cheese and Onion Enchiladas w/chili
Mexican Rice
Patio Style Pinto Beans
Tostadas
Coffee or Tea
One Corn Bread and Butter

SATURDAY NOON and EVENING SPECIAL

"Yankee Pot Roast Texas Style"
Tossed Salad
Choice of one vegetable
Roll or Corn Bread & Butter
Tea or Coffee

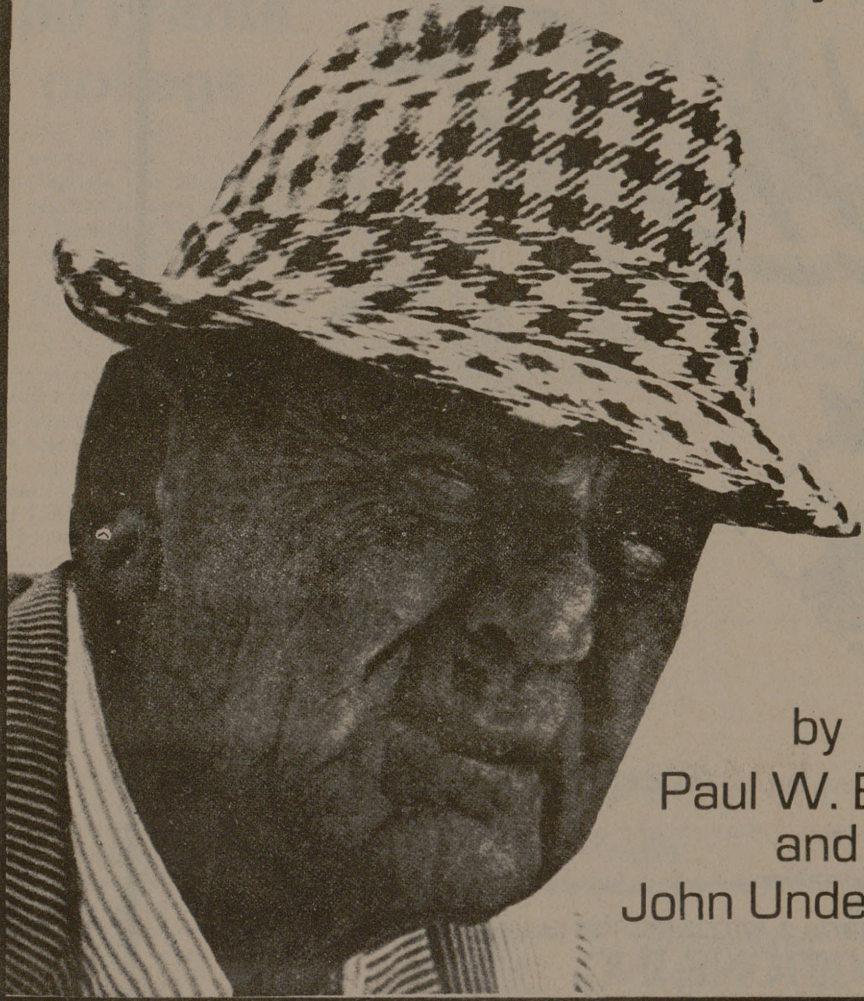
SUNDAY SPECIAL NOON and EVENING

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Cornbread Dressing
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Giblet Gravy
And your choice of any One vegetable

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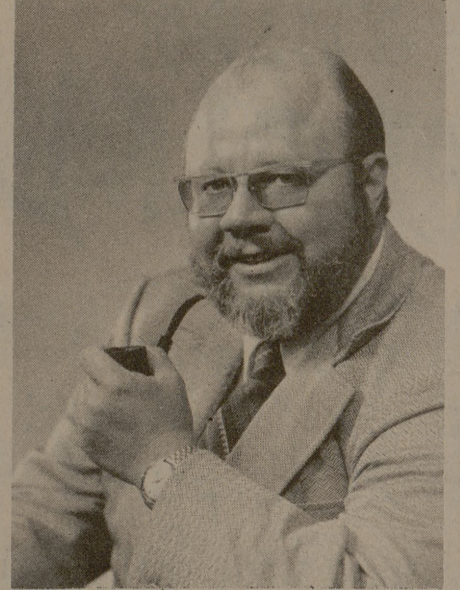
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