

How your vote can 'save parliament'

Somehow it seems an interesting coincidence that this country's major election date falls in the same week in which the English observe Guy Fawkes Day.

In a way it is symbolic of your most precious possession as an American citizen, your right to vote.

There is little doubt that no matter which way you turn this weekend, you are going to be bombarded with last minute campaign propaganda. It will be the last big chance for individual candidates, and for those advocating or opposing given issues, to reach your eyes and ears.

Be thankful that you live in a country where they have that chance.

through bifocals



The electioneering probably will be at its retching worst Sunday. On that very day, back home in the mother country, the normally undemonstrative

English will be hanging poor ol' Guy in effigy again. If you don't know why, read on.

YOU SEE, back in 1605 — 15 years before that boatload of transients sailed from England on the Mayflower — some of the dissidents who dwelled around and about pastoral England vowed they'd had enough of King James I and his government. They went about solving their differences the hard way.

Knowing the king was scheduled to be present Nov. 5, the day Parliament was to convene, their solution was to sneak some kegs of gunpowder to the cellar of the House of Lords with the intention of blowing most of royalty into kingdom come.

As often happens to such sinister plots, both in real life and on television, somebody let the cat out of the bag. Fancy their surprise when Guy and his buddies were greeted at the cellar door by a committee of the king's royal fuzzi.

Historians have called this aborted uprising the "Gunpowder Plot," which demonstrates a shocking lack of imagination, and its annual perpetuation long ago became known simply as Guy Fawkes Day.

AS IN MANY losing situations, there had to be a fall guy, and maybe that's how Fawkes went into the books as the chief conspirator.

Actually he was only one of a number who were dispatched to their graves for their dastardly conspiring, but whether he was king-pin of the conspirators or not seems to have been lost in the retelling.

One suspects that down to the tasteless end he never knew who spilled the beans. Later on, it turned out that one of the mob had a relative who was a member of Parliament.

This led to a personal warning to his lordship not to risk his life and limb on the day in question because things were going to go boom. That's when the law moved in.

THE REASON that in England they still pop cannons and corks and hang Fawkes in effigy every Nov. 5 is to celebrate that as the date Parliament was saved.

Traditionalists that they are, members of the government also have seen to it that a formal search of the vaults beneath the houses of Parliament has been conducted before each new session ever since. In a span of 373 years not a single cask of gunpowder has been found.

Your way Tuesday to figuratively "save parliament" is to vote.

Close elections have abounded lately in our area, in fact in our state. The value of a single vote has been demonstrated time and again. Don't let it be failure to cast your own that brings defeat to your candidate or cause.

YOUR 'CLOUT' IS YOUR VOTE



Ballot issues in summary

To sum up my last two weeks of columns, here is a fast review of the 11 proposals voters will have to face next Tuesday at the polls:

A. Should we have a constitutional convention? Our state constitution is only 15 years old and can be amended by section if there are flaws. A convention will cost \$10 million, and voters can't be selective as to its provisions; it would have to be voted up or down in its entirety.

B. Prohibit paroles to prisoners convicted of certain crimes of violence before they serve their minimum sentences. This will crowd the jails but keep those convicted of violent crimes off the streets longer.

C. Permit deposits of state funds in savings and loan associations and credit unions. This will increase the amount of money available for home mortgages, and S&Ls and credit unions are insured and regularly examined.

D. Prohibit alcoholic beverages from being sold to persons under the age of 21. This is overkill. State law raises the drinking age from 18 to 19 on Dec. 3. Pushing it to 21—by constitutional amendment—will only create enforcement problems.

E. THE HEADLEE tax limitation amendment, which would limit state tax and revenue increases to the rate personal income increases in the state and prohibit increased local taxes without a vote of the people. It is unfortunate this is needed, but something must be done to slow down government spending. This proposal will not cut taxes, only limit their increases in the future. There is no Proposal F.

G. Allow collective bargaining for State Police troopers. Presently troopers' salaries are set by the state Civil Service Commission, and troopers' salaries are lagging behind some local police agencies. But experience shows that once collective bargaining enters the picture, illegal strikes also become a threat.

H. Voucher system for financing education for both public and non-public schools. This proposal will

eliminate property taxes for financing education and increase by some \$90,000 the number of students the state will have to educate. This proposal will end up increasing your state income taxes substantially and take away a lot of control your local school boards now have.

There is no Proposal I.

J. THE TISCH amendment. This will cut your property assessments in half but will raise your income taxes on a state level 21.7 per cent and totally about 43 per cent because local government could levy a one per cent income tax to replace lost property taxes. It would also shift more control from local government to the state, since that is where the new funding would come from.

K. Deny bail under certain circumstances to persons accused of violent crime. Presently only murder and treason are unobtainable. This proposal adds armed robbery, first degree criminal sexual assault (rape) and kidnapping for extortion and automatically for persons who have been twice convicted of crimes of violence in the last 15 years.

The purpose is to take violent people off the street. The problem is that it will put in jail many people who will later be found to be innocent of the crime of which they have been accused.

F. A transportation proposal that reserves constitutionally 90 per cent of the fuel tax revenues for building and repairing highways as compared to other transportation needs. The problem is that, as the cost of oil increases, there will be a greater need for public transportation, and this amendment will limit the sources of funds.

There are no Proposals N, O, P and Q.

R. To authorize the creation of a Railroad Redevelopment Authority which can float bonds and loan money to railroads for in-state redevelopment projects. This

Eccentricities

by HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.



probably won't cost the state any money and will help the railroads here get back in shape.

All these proposals are important. If you fail to vote, you will have to live with the decisions of the majority who do vote.

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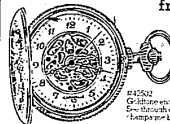
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