

Constitutional Changes to Be Voted On in '60

By VINCENT THOMAS
 Assemblyman, 68th District
 Imagine trying to drive a 1913 acetylene lighted auto safely on a modern freeway. Well, in a way that's what we are trying to do with our state government, operating it under a Constitution originally enacted in 1879, which we have tinkered with at practically every general election since.

As a result we have one of the longest, most cumbersome state constitutions in the nation. The record shows that since it was first adopted, more than 800 changes have been

submitted to the voters, of which about half have been approved. Everyone criticizes the document on account of its mass of detail, and many believe it should be completely rewritten. But so far all attempts to call a new Constitutional Convention have failed.

The latest effort at rewriting was made in 1949, but bogged down in a study committee. The work wasn't a complete loss, though, because suggestions for removal of 15,000 words of obsolete provisions—about 20 columns of newsprint—were approved.

LIKE ALL its predecessors, the 1959 session was confronted by many suggestions for amendment of the Constitution. A total of 87 different proposals were introduced in both houses. Eleven of these passed and will appear on the ballot at the 1960 general election. This is a smaller than average number, but it should not be forgotten that others can come out of the 1960 budget session.

Most of the proposed amendments would make only minor changes, but their very technicalities reveal the extent to

which involved detail has become imbedded in the Constitution. As might have been expected, one of the 11 is intended to repeal still further obsolete provisions adopted in 1879.

Two of the other measures relate to the veteran's tax exemption. The first would limit the \$1000 property tax exemption to those veterans who entered service from California or who are residents of the state at the time the measure is voted on. The second would extend the \$5000 exemption for totally disabled veterans to a second home purchase after sale of the first on which such an exemption is granted.

Two others are designed to

make improvements in our system of courts. One would enlarge membership of the Judicial Council from 10 to 17, adding one municipal judge, four practicing attorneys, and one member of each house of the legislature, and would also further strengthen powers of the Council to improve the working of our courts. The other would spell out the jurisdiction of district courts of appeal on appeals from municipal and justice courts.

TWO RELATE to the Legislature. The first proposes to change the term of Assemblymen from two to four years, with half the membership to be elected each two years. The

second would increase legislative salaries from \$6000 to \$9000 per year.

One proposal would permit the use of gas tax funds to retire bonds issued by localities to pay for grade crossings. Another would require local assessors, when assessing recreational property, to base its value only on its recreational use. The eleventh, and last, would clarify the law on the right of former convicts to vote.

In addition to these proposed amendments, we are submitting one other very important measure to the voters. That is the \$1,750,000,000 bond issue to finance major water pro-

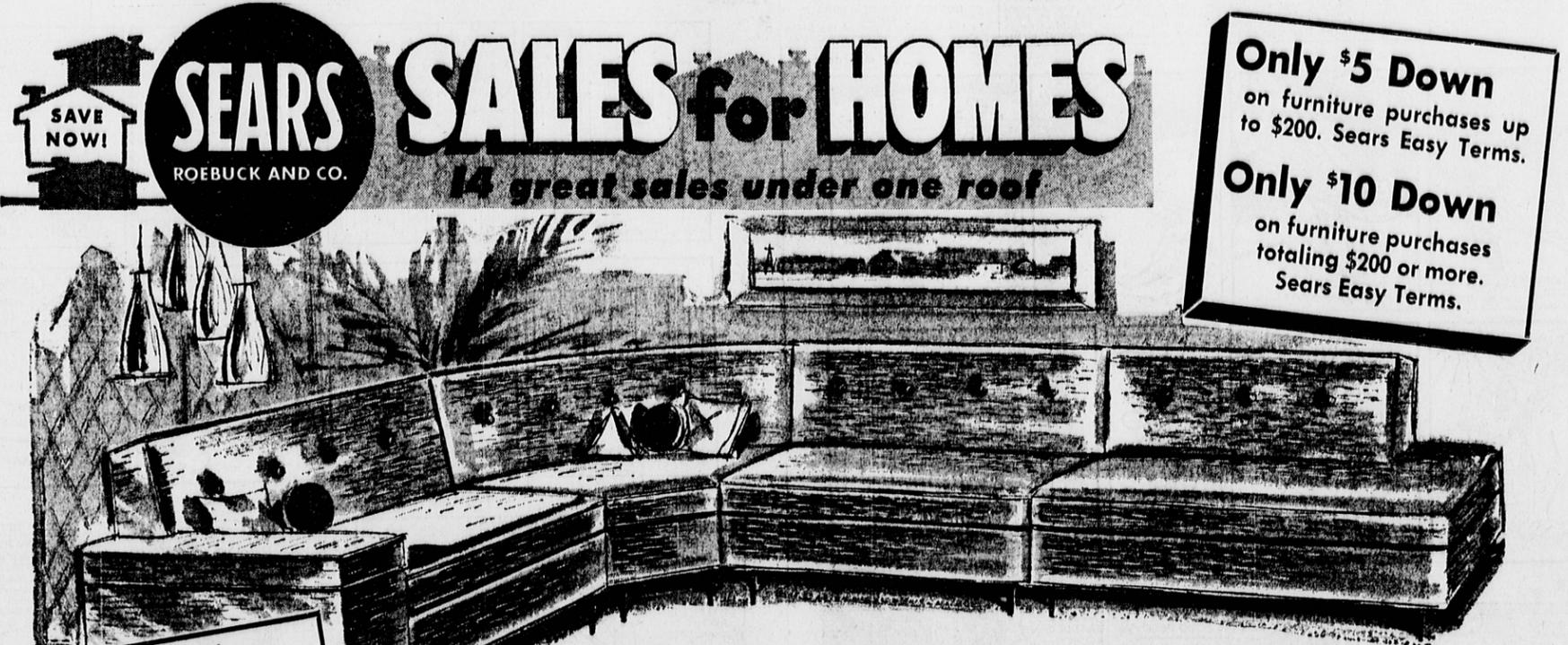
JULY 12, 1959

TORRANCE HERALD

Five

jects. All of us will be called on to give our opinions on these measures when we go to the polls in November, 1960. As legislators, we have made our recommendations on these issues to all voters.

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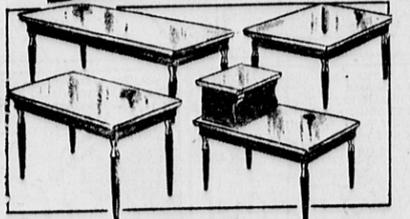
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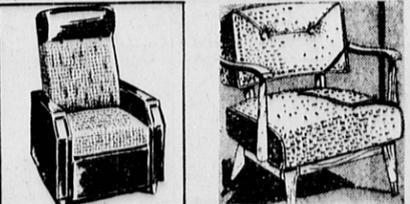
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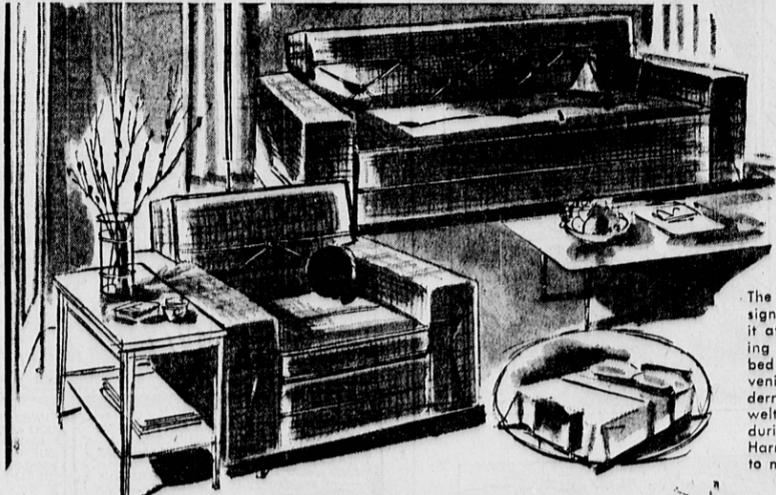


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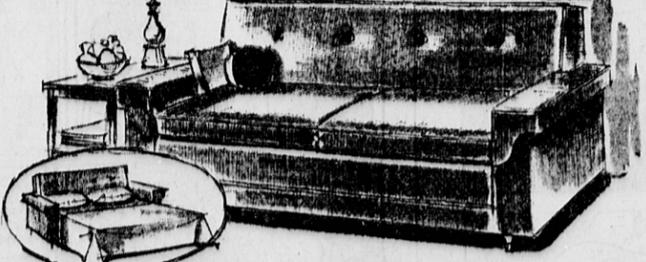


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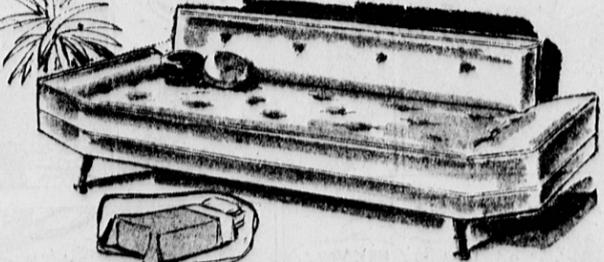


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