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Under The Capitol Dome

Olympia . . . Despite the fact that there are a record number of candidates on the ballot this year, there isn't any indication that any records will be broken for voter participation in next Tuesday's primary election.

Interest in the coming primary has been at its lowest ebb in many years, though it was expected to pick up in the final week or 10 days.

Over the years, the average voter participation in a statewide primary has been about 55 percent of the total registered vote, and it seldom varies much either way, whatever the circumstances.

Voter turnout at the polls next Tuesday, however, will be below 55 percent. The total vote, including absentees, may bring it up to the average, as applications for service men's ballots indicates considerable interest, among the armed forces.

Reasons Are Vague

The lack of interest is strange, with so many spirited contests for party nominations to the partisan offices.

Intensive campaigns are being waged by many of the candidates, which should stir up more interest than has been evidenced to date.

These include the campaigns for Governor waged by Atty. Gen. John J. O'Connell and Sen. Martin J. Durkan, both seeking the Democratic nomination. Gov. Dan Evans hasn't been letting any grass grow under his feet, either. He has four challengers for the Republican nomination, headed by former State Rep. Al Canwell.

There also are spirited contests for the Republican nomination for Lieutenant-Governor, between Art Fletcher and Bill Muncey, and for the Democratic nomination for Attorney General, among five aspirants, State Sen. Fred Dore, Marvin Durning, Don G. Abel Jr., John G. McCutcheon and Don Navoni.

There also are "token" contests for several other nominations, but the hectic campaigns waged by so many have failed to fire up the voters as much as usual.

Possibly the fact that the Democratic national convention was held so late has overshadowed the primary contests and robbed them of their usual attention.

Good For Some, But Few

Normally low interest and a small vote favors the incumbents, for the party "regulars" always vote.

This time, however, with the exception of Governor Evans and Lieut. Gov. John Cherberg, all the incumbent holders of partisan statewide offices who are seeking reelection are unopposed in the primaries.

All of the incumbent members of Congress except Democrats Thomas S. Foley and Brock Adams have token opposition in the primaries, but would be certain of renomination, even with a record-size vote.

"Another" Evans Runs Again

Vaughn Evans, Seattle attorney, who has vowed he will run every two years against whoever happens to be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, is opposing the reelection of Chief Justice Robert C. Finley this year.

He first ran against Judge Richard Ott in 1964, losing by a vote of 358,765 to 259,287.

Two years ago, he ran against Judge Hugh Rosellini. Though Vaughn Evans isn't related to Gov. Dan Evans, some reporters billed it as "another Evans-Rosellini race," but Rosellini won, 314,277 to 196,937.

Governor Evans' name wasn't on the ballot two years ago, however. This year it is, and with his signs and bumper strips posted throughout the state, some members of the bar have expressed concern.

Attorneys, who know the judiciary best, conducted a statewide ballot by mail last month. They gave Judge Finley 1,866 votes to 231 for Vaughn Evans.

The race will be settled next Tuesday. The candidate receiving a majority will appear on the general election ballot unopposed.

The Comeback Trail

No less than a dozen former legislators are attempting political comebacks this year. Of the group, eight are Democrats; four, Republicans.

All except two are running for the House, but the two running for the Senate have been out of politics for longer periods than any of the others.

Keiron W. Reardon, Olympia, who is seeking the Democratic nomination in the 22nd District, formerly served from Monroe, in the 39th District.

First elected in 1932, he served a total of 14 years in the Senate, from 1933 to 1941 and again from 1943 to 1949. A conservative Democrat, he was at one time one of the most powerful men in the Senate.

The other Senate candidate on the comeback trail is George Elmer Brown, Spokane Republican, who is running in the 3rd District. Brown last served in the House in 1931.

Other Republicans attempting a political comeback, all candidates for the House, are Richard Morphis, Spokane; Morrill Folsom, Centralia, and Fred R. Mast, Seattle.

Democrats seeking to regain the House seats they formerly held are Jack L. Burtch, Aberdeen; Charles R. Savage, Shelton; Marian Gleason, Tacoma; Georgette Valle, Seattle; Jack Dootson, Everett; W. O. E. Radcliffe, Bellingham, and David Roderick, Seattle.

New Faces

Seven House members are running for the Senate this time, including five Republicans and two Democrats.

Republicans making a bid for the upper chamber are Francis G. Holman, Seattle; Charles W. Elicker, Poulsbo; R. D. McDougall, Wenatchee; Charles E. Newschwander, Tacoma, and Brian J. Lewis, Bellevue.

Democrats attempting the move from House to Senate are former Speaker William S. Day, Spokane, and Gordon L. Walgren, Bremerton.

That assures at least seven new faces in the House, and there actually will be at least 13, even if all those seeking reelection should be successful.

Six others, three from each party, aren't seeking reelection for various reasons.

Of the Republicans, Virginia Clocksin has moved out of the state with her husband, who has been transferred by his employer; Timothy Hill, Seattle, has been elected to the