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REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL RACE WIDE
OPEN IN CALIFORNIA -- GOLDWATER
AND NIXON LEADING

by Mervin D. Field

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The Republican Presidential race in California is a wide open affair at this time, with Senator Barry Goldwater and former Californian Richard Nixon leading in voter popularity, but with Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge also strong enough in voter favor to make it a four-man race.

The California Poll obtained the opinions of a cross section of the state's GOP voters in a statewide survey of the adult population. Republicans who were interviewed were asked to name their first choice for the Republican nomination from a list of potential candidates. The proportion choosing each man is shown below:

Barry Goldwater	28%
Richard Nixon	26
Nelson Rockefeller	18
Henry Cabot Lodge	14
George Romney	7
William Scranton	3
Harold Stassen	1
Don't know, no choice	3

Last October the California Poll made a similar measurement when Goldwater and Rockefeller were the chief contenders and found that Goldwater held a substantial lead of 41% to Rockefeller's 27%. Nixon, Lodge, and Stassen were not included on the list at that time. Since the assassination of President Kennedy, the names of these men have increasingly often been mentioned as possibilities.

The changed political scene has caused a considerable shift in Republicans' candidate preference as today's results show. The addition of strong vote-getters like Nixon and Lodge brings about a wider dispersion of preferences. When each candidate's supporters were asked to name their "second choice" for the nomination, they spread their votes over all remaining candidates proportionately, giving no one a clear majority of second choices.

(MORE)

The California Poll was founded in 1946 as a medium for promoting public opinion research. The California Poll is completely independent of all political parties and candidates. Its sole purpose is to report public opinion accurately and objectively. Most of the financial support for the Poll comes from newspapers that have publication rights within the city of publication. The Poll utilizes accepted scientific sampling and questioning procedures in obtaining the data reported in its releases. Representative samples of adults are interviewed at periodic intervals on election issues and other socially important questions of the day. Proportionate numbers of people of both sexes, from all parts of the state, from different sized communities, and of all age, economic, political and occupation groups are included in the samples. Major surveys are made with samples of 1,200 or more respondents. Interim surveys sometimes are made with smaller samples but not less than 600 interviews.

Early in the interview, survey respondents were also asked how well they knew the various Republican candidates. Eighty-five per cent or more said they "knew something about" the four leading candidates, while Romney, Scranton, and Stassen were known by 50 to 60 per cent of the Republicans interviewed.

It is probable that at least Rockefeller and Goldwater, and possibly Nixon and one or more of the other potential candidates, will appear on the California Primary ballot in June. As of this time, it appears that the race could be very close. The California Poll will be sampling the climate of public opinion on this issue as election day draws nearer.

Next Monday, the Poll's report will show how some of the possible Democratic Vice-Presidential candidates stack up in favor among rank-and-file Democrats of California.

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