

Santa Barbara Election

Reagan Shocked by GOP

By George Murphy

Governor Ronald Reagan was obviously shocked yesterday when he was informed here that a favored Republican candidate had been upset in a special state Senate election in the 24th (Santa Barbara-Ventura) District on Tuesday.

"I'm terribly disappointed," Reagan told newsmen at Civic Auditorium. The governor had come here to give a welcoming address to the Lions International convention.

In the election, Assemblyman Don MacGillivray lost to Ventura attorney Omer Rains. The result increased the Democrats' margin in the Senate to 22-to-18.

Reagan was unaware of the election results ("I was supposed to be briefed on

them later"), and when a reporter told him what they were—the Democrat got 58 per cent of the vote—Reagan paused a moment before commenting.

Voter turnout in the district was very light: 34 per cent in Santa Barbara county; 28.3 per cent in Ventura county.

Reagan attributed that—and the 47.4 per cent voter turnout statewide in the June 4 primary—in part to "a feeling by people that they don't have to be involved.

"That's very foolish," the governor said, "because government's going to be around even if nobody votes, so the people better start taking an interest in it."

Rains had made Watergate a major issue in his campaign, and MacGillivray



OMER RAINS
Demo victor

admitted it was one of the factors in his loss.

Reagan admitted that Watergate does contribute

to the disenchantment of the electorate, and that Rains had been obviously successful in making it a campaign issue, but Reagan felt that the Democrat should not have done so.

"It's pretty stupid," he said, "to build a campaign for state senator around Watergate." The voters, he said should be told by the candidates how they stand on issues affecting their district and the state.

In effect, he said Watergate is a federal matter and state senators should be more concerned with such problems as taxes, pollution, and transportation in the state.

The Republicans had brought their big guns into the district to support MacGillivray.

Former state senator

Upset

(now Congressman) Robert Lagomarsino campaigned heavily for him.

It was Lagomarsino's election to the House of Representatives earlier this year that brought about the Tuesday election. Reagan had appeared at a fund-raiser for MacGillivray late last month, and GOP gubernatorial nominee Houston I. Flournoy walked precincts for him on Tuesday.

Rains will serve out Lagomarsino's unexpired term (through December 31) in the senate. Rains and MacGillivray are their respective party's nominees for a full term in November.

On another matter, Reagan said that no date has been set for a special election to fill the unexpired term of former Assemblyman (now Congressman)

John Burton, of San Francisco.

After his speech and press conference, the governor returned to his Pacific Palisades home, where he will spend the month of July on vacation.