

The election eye...

# Primary confirms flaw in delegate selection

*Id. June 4 1980*

BY BEN J. PLASTINO

Post-Register political editor

The primary election confirmed what had been earlier charged — the Democratic caucuses did not reflect the views of the Democratic people.

This is not the fault of the Idaho Democratic officials but that of the National Democratic Committee which instituted the caucuses to open the party process to anyone who wanted to participate. The idea was fine, the end results were something less than spectacular, and a disaster in Idaho.

The Sen. Ted Kennedy forces were far more active in the caucuses than President Carter's and managed to get delegate representation that was larger than reflected in the primary vote.

\* \* \*

In the Democratic presidential beauty contest, Carter received 31,393 votes, or 62 percent; Kennedy, 11,445, or 22 percent, and undecided 5,824, or 12 percent. Gov. Jerry Brown of California, who had earlier announced his withdrawal, polled 2,034, or 4 percent.

Contrast this to what happened in the statewide Democratic caucuses April 17.

President Carter managed to lead but with eight delegates, Kennedy was given five and four are uncommitted. In terms of percentages that gave Carter only 49, Kennedy 30 and uncommitted 21 percent.

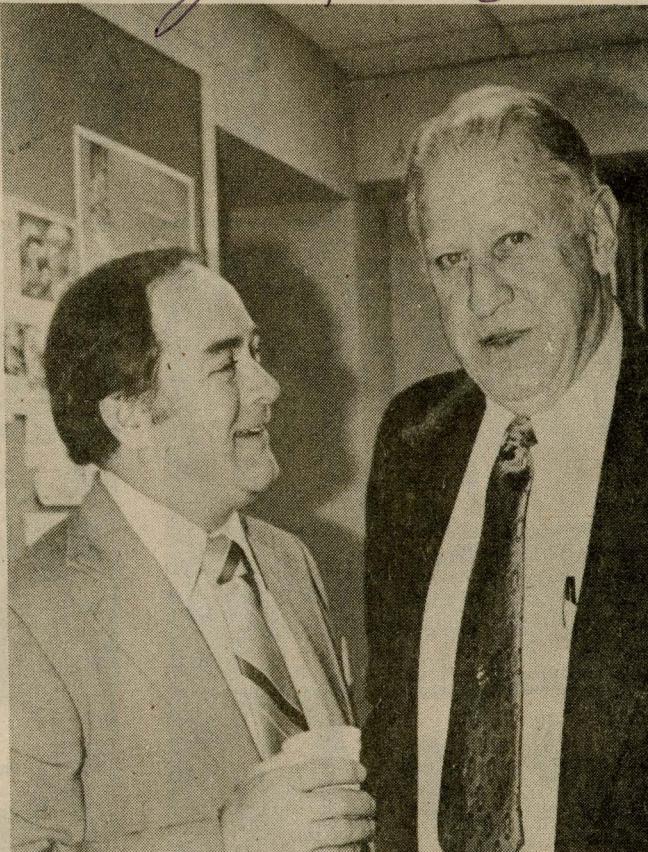
If Carter should receive all of the four uncommitted votes as he should, then it will help reflect more accurately what the Democratic voters want in their delegation to the National Democratic Convention at New York City in August.

The statewide delegation representation was based on the 35 legislative district caucuses selecting 185 delegates for Carter, 111 for Kennedy and 84 uncommitted.

\* \* \*

The caucuses selection in East Idaho was particularly out of line with how people voted. In the 10 East Idaho counties, Carter got 10 delegates, Kennedy 9, and uncommitted 8 in the six regional caucuses.

In the election, all of East Idaho counties voted better than 2-1 in favor of Carter and some counties, particularly Bonneville, it was 3-1.



Post-Register

## Won't be back

**TWO OF THE MOST CONSERVATIVE LEGISLATORS** in the Idaho House of Representatives have announced they will not return. From left are Gary Ingram, R-Coeur d' Alene, and John Reardon, R-Boise. Ingram said he must devote more time to his business and Reardon is convalescing from open heart surgery. Both have been influential as committee chairmen, Ingram heading the Local Government Committee and Reardon State Affairs Committee.

To reflect the contrast, District 27, which includes most of Bingham County, 7 delegates went for Kennedy and 2 for Carter. Bingham County voted more than 2-1 in favor of Carter.

In District 31, made up of East Bonneville and Teton, 5 delegates were voted for Kennedy, 2 for Carter and 2 were uncommitted. Bonneville voted nearly 3-1 for Carter and Teton more than 2-1 for Carter.

\* \* \*

While the Carter forces did little in the field preceding the Democratic caucuses, the Kennedy forces were extremely active. Kennedy sent two field representatives into East Idaho, for example. They enlisted the help of Robert Fanning, Idaho Falls attorney, who did an excellent job in getting more delegates for Kennedy than he was entitled to on basis of the primary vote.

The Idaho primary vote turnout of 187,188, or 37.6 percent of the estimated 490,000 registered, showed voters are interested. This came about despite the lack of a bona fide contest for president in either party. Reagan was

virtually alone after George Bush formally withdrew the day before the election. Carter was in almost as strong a position after defeating Kennedy decisively in several states preceding the Idaho primary.

The 37.6 percent, for example, surpasses the 30 percent, and sometimes less when the primary is held during the vacation month of August when politics is hardly of consuming interest. In the 1978 primary when there were brisk congressional and a number of local races, the vote turnout totaled 177,082, or 35.5 percent of the 498,425 registered.

The primary vote indicates there is interest and does reflect the will of the people. For this reason, widespread efforts by the Legislature to junk it at the next session should be viewed with concern.