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Interview with Governor Ronald Reagan, Jan. 4, 1978.



Governor Reagan showed me around his home in Pacific Palisades which was built during the time he was working for General Electric. The house, ^{is} as he explained, is completely electrified. ^H He showed me a dial ^(with which) in ~~which~~ he can turn on lights all over the house when, as he says, "he thinks he may hear a prowler."

Conserv

I asked Reagan if he felt that the Nixon and Ford administrations had been conservative administrations, ^H he said that this was hard to pin down when one considers the fact that they were always up against an opposition Democratic Congress. He said that only once in the last 25 years had the Republicans controlled both the presidency and congress. He pointed out that in that two year period, ^(at) ~~in~~ the beginning of the Eisenhower administration, there had been no inflation. Since then, the dollar has been losing value on a regular basis. Reagan said ~~that~~ that in 1972, he thought the people had for the first time become aware of the direction of the Democratic party, and it was this that produced the landslide for President Nixon. Nixon had been the beneficiary, he said, of the change in the Democratic leadership. Prior to 1972, Reagan said, the Democrats had not been particularly ^(at) campaigning on the basis of what they intended to do in the way of social reform and federal funding of education which inevitably requires control of education. The Democrats, Reagan said, pretended that they would never use federal grants in aid to pressure or threaten other levels of government, when in fact the very existence of such grants represent a threat to local and state governments. While he was Governor, Reagan said, he was often faced with threats of cutoffs of federal aid. ^(at) This was the reason the Republicans had turned to the principle of revenue sharing, Reagan said. The threats of cutoffs of aid had been particularly applied ~~to~~ in the area of highway building. While he was governor, the federal government ^(indicated) that the state would have to require motor cyclists to wear crash helmets or federal aid would be ~~cut off~~ ^(reduced) for highway building. Reagan said that his personal view is that anyone who does not wear a helmet

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when riding a motorcycle is nuts, ^(BUT) this is a matter ^(for) of personal preference as far as he is concerned, ~~and~~ ^H he refused to modify the state legislation in the way that the federal government was attempting to force him to do. Reagan ⁷ said that ^(some) on some occasions he had found it necessary to oppose proposals made by the Republican administration in ~~Ex~~ Washington, the notable example of this being President Nixon's Family Assistance Plan. He said that it was his feeling that if Nixon had understood what was in the plan, he himself would have opposed it. The Family Assistance Plan, Reagan ⁷ said, would have added millions to the welfare rolls, ^H he said ~~that~~ that he had personal reason ^{the} to know that Nixon ultimately had become disillusioned with ~~his~~ plan himself, and had, Reagan ^(shear the) said, "sheared his blade."

Welfare

In the area of foreign policy, Reagan ⁷ said, he had in general supported the Republican administrations, ~~he thought that~~ ^I there was a ~~plan~~ program going ahead which unfortunately the present administration has abandoned. The Carter administration, Reagan ⁷ says, has charted ^(C) no course in the area of foreign policy. Reagan ⁷ said that in 1972 he ~~had~~ went as a personal emissary of President Nixon to several European countries, and that in each of these countries the leaders of the countries ~~xi~~ said to him the same thing, "Do the people recognize that President Nixon has a workable plan for peace that ~~is~~ is the best hope for peace that the world has?" He said a little after that he went to ^g Singapore and was told by the leader of the Singapore government, ~~that~~ ^H that the Nixon policy is the only thing that is holding a stable Southeast Asia together." Everywhere he went during the latter part of the Nixon administration in Europe and Asia, Reagan ⁷ said, he was ~~asked~~ asked by government leaders, "How can the American people allow Watergate to get in the way of the carrying out of President's Nixon's foreign policy?" In the Middle East, too, the current initiatives that are being made by President Sadat are the result of the diplomacy that was begun ^R during the Republican administrations. Under the Republicans, the Soviet influence was removed from the

foreign policy



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Middle East and now as a result of Carter's policies the Soviets are back in the Middle East. ^PReagan said that no one had prayed harder than he had that President Ford would be successful as President, but finally there were some things that Ford proposed that he could not go along with, ~~and~~ ^{Also}, he was concerned whether Ford would be able to win the election if he were the Republican candidate in 1976. His differences with Ford were not differences of basic philosophy, he said, but more differences of method. Ford, he pointed out, had run up the two biggest deficits in American history. ^HHe said that Ford wanted to fight inflation, but he was not prepared to carry on the fight of to the point of ^(cutting) ~~spending~~ back spending to the extent that Reagan feels is necessary. Such cuts, Reagan says, are long overdue, ~~and~~ ^I if he were to become President, he would make them. Reagan said he had really no philosophic difference with Ford, ~~he felt that he~~ had been allied with him many ~~x~~ times, ^Bbut he felt that Ford had become so much a part of the Washington establishment that he was unable to break with ^(the Washington "buddy system") ~~that~~ ~~establishment~~ in the way that was needed to make the drastic changes that are necessary in American policy.

CKR

Reagan pointed out that all the polls show that the American public basically agrees with the conservative position on most major issues. Reagan referred to a study done at Georgetown University which showed that in 1972, the rank and file Democrats were more in agreement with the delegates to the Republican convention than they were with the delegates to the Democratic convention on a wide range of issues. I pointed out to Reagan that the same study had shown that the Wallace delegates to the Democratic convention had not ^(been) ~~been~~ well disposed to ^{was} ~~well~~ Republicans, including Reagan, and asked if this showed that it was not correct to include the Wallace following and the Reagan following as a single conservative block.

WLC

Reagan agreed that ~~in~~ this was true. ^HHe said that in his view ~~Wallace~~ an independent Wallace candidacy in 1972 would have taken more away from the Democrats than from the Republicans. He said there is a lot of populism in the Wallace movement which would be different from the kind ^{of} following that he has. I asked if there were some



populist feeling in ~~his~~ ^(Reagan's) own attacks on bigness, Reagan said in ^(a) sense ~~x~~ he thought there was, but he thought the Democratic kind of populism was going down the wrong path. He said that on ~~the otherhand~~ Democratic liberalism was creating a distortion in the balance between ~~of~~ levels of government, which has led to an erosion of individual freedom. The Democratic kind of populism, Reagan said, favors redistribution of wealth, redistributing the earnings of the middle-class to those who are less productive. I pointed out that Reagan in his opening statement in his campaign for the presidency in 1975 had included big business among the groups that he had attacked. Reagan said that ~~x~~ he would not want to make ^(a) blanket ~~of~~ indictment of all big business, ~~that~~ ^(S) some of them are working ~~to~~ ^(The) preserve free enterprise ^(system) ~~that~~ ^(BUT) many elements within big business have decided to line up with the government. Reagan says that he uses the analogy that it is like feeding the crocodile, ~~and~~ ^(I) they hope that they ~~will~~ will be fed to the crocodile last. Large corporations have their own bureaucracy, and these tend to develop sympathetic relationships with the government bureaucracy.

Big Bsns.

Reagan said that he thought the platform that was adopted by the Republican convention in 1976 provided a good ~~praga~~ banner under which the Republican party should now go forward. ^(H) He pointed out that both the Ford delegates and the Reagan delegates had agreed to this platform. He conceded that some conservatives had wanted to put somewhat different shadings into the platform, to be more ^(specific) ~~definite~~ on some statements on foreign policy, ~~more specific on some statements on foreign policy.~~ ^(BUT) he said that he thought that the platform as it was written was a very acceptable document. He pointed that it even took ^(a) ~~the~~ position ~~of~~ in favor of protecting Taiwan.

1976 platform

Reagan said that his selection of Richard ^(Schweiker) ~~Swiker~~ as ~~x~~ his running mate in 1976 was aimed more at winning the election in November than at getting the nomination from the convention. Reagan said that he found in his exploration ~~in meetings~~ with Republican leaders ~~that~~ in the Northeast that they had no hope of winning in November in their areas. ~~and~~ ^(that) he felt ^(a) by bringing someone on ^(C) to the ticket who was from the



Northeast, ~~that~~ he might be able to bring the Northeastern Republicans back into the fight, as he put it. Reagan said that he recognized that if ~~he~~ ^{Swiker Schweiker} had brought Drew Lewis into consultation earlier, ~~on the selection of Swiker~~ ^{or if Swiker} had brought ~~Lewis into consultation earlier that~~ it might have been helpful, ^B But he said ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~that~~ the Pennsylvania delegation was really sewed up when they visited the White House about 2 weeks before the Republican convention. Reagan returned to the theme that President Ford had had great difficulty going against his old friends in Congress, ~~that~~ ^{||} he could not reverse the policies that they had put into effect over a long period of years. He said that Republicans in general have a difficult time dealing with the federal bureaucracy. Reagan said that if he were President, he would do the same as he had done in California, which was to show the bureaucrats that he meant business. He said that during the eight years he was governor of California, he had kept the level of state employment stable while the population of California was rapidly growing. He said that he had made increases where necessary, ^F ~~for~~ instance, the highway patrol had doubled in size, ^B ~~but~~ at the same time, they had added a great deal of additional mileage to the state highway system. Governor Jerry Brown, his successor, Reagan said, as far as he could tell, has no philosophy, ~~it~~ ^{||} 's allowed the state government to deteriorate. The mental health system that used to be regarded as a model for the nation and indeed for the world is now in terrible shape.

Reagan says that he thinks the Republicans are going to gain in the 1978 elections because the problems are now clearly identified with the Democratic president. He said it was difficult to make out the case that the Democrats were responsible for national problems as ~~w~~ long as the Republicans held the presidency, ^B ~~but~~ now that is no longer so, ^{||} he thinks the Republicans will make gains commensurate with their following on issues in the population. He says that he has noticed the young people are coming more and more to the Republicans, ^{||} he said that he used to tell Nancy (Mrs. Reagan) after speaking on campuses that he thought that many of the young Republicans were Republicans because they couldn't get into

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anything else, This is no longer the case, Reagan said. Reagan said that President Carter is now at a low ebb in populatrity, but he points out that President Truman was also at a low ebb ~~in~~ at a comparable time in his term. Reagan recalled campaigning with President Truman in 1948, he and George Jessel, when Truman ~~was~~ came to California. Both he and Jessel were amazed to find that Truman had complete self-confidence that he would win the election.

Reagan said that Republicans do have a special problem in ~~at~~ attracting their best people to government because it is hard to get a man who is making \$90,000 ^(a year) to take a job for \$35,000 a year. He said that ~~as~~ ^{was} governor he was able to attract people ~~who~~ of two kinds from the business community. Some ^(were) what he called ^{"the} premature retirees", who had left business for one reason or another at a ~~early~~ fairly early age, and the other group were young executives who would come usually for about two years. ~~And the~~ ^B business men whom he knew told him that ~~if~~ ^{men} they came back to their companies broader and with more experience. ^P Off the record, Reagan made the comment that Nixon ~~x~~ had had difficulty controlling his administration because he had filled his cabinet with political appointments such as the Governor of Massashusetts and George Romney as a means of repaying politicians who had given him delegates at the 1968 convention, ~~As~~ ^A a ~~x~~ result, he did not have control over these cabinet people. It became necessary for him to run the administration from the White House, which ~~inturn~~ led to the centralization of power within the administration.

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