

1-22-78 8-13-78

Knowledge of Fund Club Denied by Gov. Reagan

SACRAMENTO, Calif. Aug. 12 (UPI)—Gov. Ronald Reagan says the Republican Party formed an exclusive fund raising club without his knowledge, and he will ask movie star John Wayne for an explanation.

"I will have to look into it and see what Duke (Wayne) is doing," Reagan said at his weekly news conference Tuesday.

Wayne is chairman of the select "California Golden Circle" Club organized in May by the Republican State Central Committee. Membership is by "invitation only" at fees of \$1,000, \$3,000 and \$5,000.

"My only comment is I couldn't afford to join and I don't know anything about it," Reagan said.

The "Golden Circle" Club is comprised of about 50 movie stars, corporation leaders and Sacramento lobbyists.

The club was organized to

raise funds for the Republican "Cal-Plan," a program to elect GOP candidates to the state Senate and Assembly. Both houses now are controlled by one-vote Republican majorities.

Ed Gauer, Republican Central Committee finance chairman, said he believed Reagan was aware of the club.

"I don't want to argue with the governor," said Gauer. "It was my understanding he had some knowledge of it, but if he hasn't, I guess he hasn't."

Republican Finance Director Keith Coplen said although Reagan may not have had personal knowledge of the club, "his people in his office know what it's all about and have said 'fine.'"

Invitations to about 3,000 movie stars, corporate executives and lobbyists were sent out under Wayne's name from a "select list" of prospective GOP donors.