

Disenchanted With Nixon

By Harry Johannesen

In 1966 Richard M. Nixon campaigned for the election of Donald Riegle to Congress in Riegle's home town of Flint, Mich. Riegle won.

In 1968 Rep. Riegle campaigned for Richard M. Nixon's election to the presidency. Riegle's district wound up in Nixon's victory column.

Last March Riegle campaigned for the election of Rep. Paul N. McCloskey in the New Hampshire Republican presidential primary. McCloskey lost, getting only 20 percent of the vote.

Much had happened to turn Riegle off on President Nixon and vice versa between 1968 and the New Hampshire primary.

The turning point for Riegle and the President came on a day in November, 1969, when Riegle attended a White House congressional breakfast by invitation.

Riegle tells what happened in his new book,

"O Congress" (Doubleday: \$7.95):

"I raised my hand and he (the President) called on me. I stood up and remarked: 'I heard you say in your inaugural address that it was time to lower voices and bring people together. I was inspired by the statement. But the Vice President (Agnew) is behaving exactly the opposite way. He's dividing people, turning them away. He's hurting the country, and that's not consistent with your theme.'

"Nixon seemed confused by the comment. He responded by saying that the Vice President's way was not always his (the President's) way. Then he added, smiling: 'With respect to Agnew and the press, well, you ought to know, they've been giving it to us for years.' He clenched his fist and leaned forward. 'Now they're getting a taste of it themselves and they just aren't liking it very much.'



DONALD RIEGLE
A turning point

"... I was disturbed by Nixon's apparent delight in getting back at the press, using Agnew to even an old score. That, for me was a turning point."

Riegle, whose anti-

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leagues have refused to speak to him since the book was published June 23.

On the other hand, Rep. Gerald Ford, the House Republican leader, liked the book "and went out of his way to say so," Riegle said. Ford also is from Michigan.

The congressman-author said he has not heard any presidential or White House reaction to the book although he has been told there is a waiting list for nine copies in the White House library.

His disenchantment with President Nixon, Riegle said, extended to the Republican National Convention at which the President has been nominated for a second term.

"I felt depressed after testifying at a pre-convention subcommittee meeting in Miami," he said. "It was such a pervasive depression I couldn't even turn on the television to watch the convention."

The 34 year old congressman, whose names book about Congress and the presidency has hit the New York Times non-fiction best seller list, said several Capitol col-