

For the Record . . .

The Amnesty Issue:

Who's in Favor of What?

The following question by Claude Sitton of the Raleigh News & Observer and Senator McGovern's answer is excerpted from NBC's Meet the Press program of Oct. 29:

Mr. Sitton: Senator, on the question of amnesty, you have said, "Amnesty should be granted to those who, on the ground of genuine conscience, have refused to participate in the Vietnam tragedy." Now, does this mean amnesty for draft dodgers and deserters?

Senator McGovern: I have never at any time, Mr. Sitton, advocated amnesty for deserters because in many cases deserters are people who have committed crimes; they have murdered; they have committed the crimes of rape or robbery and I have never advocated an amnesty for them, but for those who on the grounds of conscience have either gone to jail or who have gone into exile, I have said that once the war is over, once our prisoners are home, and once our soldiers have been returned to their home, then we should have an amnesty. Now, I want to tell you what Mr. Nixon has said on this subject because he has changed his mind on numerous occasions in this year.

1971?

On March 13th he told U.S. News and World Report, "I, for one, would be very liberal with regard to amnesty after the Vietnam War is over and our prisoners are home."

1972

Then he told Newsweek Magazine on January 17th of this year, "We always, under our system, provide amnesty after a major conflict has ended." Now, that is identically my position. The same position as Mr. Nixon, but on yesterday when he was out in Ohio he said, "I will never grant amnesty. The 200 who have deserted their country, the draft dodgers, are never going to get amnesty."

28? OCT 72

So he has done a complete flip-flop on this question and I really don't know what his current position is, but my position is the same one that Mr. Nixon took earlier this year, that we would follow the precedent of previous Presidents and grant amnesty once the war is over.