

Reagan Won't Talk About His Chances

By George Murphy

The big question for California politicians after Vice President Agnew's resignation yesterday was: what affect does this have on Ronald Reagan's political future?

The 62-year-old Governor would not speculate on it — but he was about the only one who wouldn't.

Reagan, informed of the resignation while taping a television show in Sacramento, told an impromptu news conference in a trembling voice:

"I'm saddened and I'm sure most people in America are. Ted Agnew was and is a good friend of mine. I know none of the details of this case."

QUESTION

A newsman asked if he would be available to take Agnew's post, and the Governor replied: "I have no comment on that."

Later in the day, Reagan's office denied an NBC report that he was flying to Washington. "The governor is keeping to his schedule," a spokesman said. (The schedule called for him to remain in the Sacramento area.)

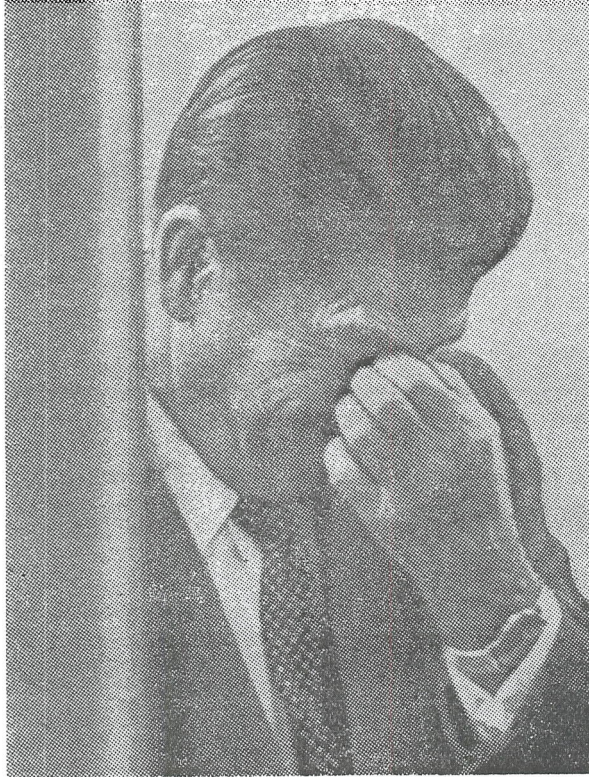
But whether he's offered the job or not, there is no question that Agnew's departure enhances Reagan's chances for the 1976 Republican presidential nomination.

POLL

An August Gallup Poll showed Reagan and Agnew tied at 22 per cent each when GOP voters nationwide were asked their preference for a 1976 nominee.

A more significant figure in the same poll showed that with Agnew's name not on the list of potential candidates, Reagan finished an easy first with 32 per cent of the Republicans choosing him over second-place Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York. Rockefeller got 16 per cent.

The question of Reagan's becoming Mr. Nixon's nominee for the No. 2 spot becomes sticky because Democrats control the Congress.



AP Wirephoto

GOV. REAGAN HEARD THE NEWS
Picture was taken in Sacramento yesterday

Under the 25th Amendment, the President's choice must be approved by majority votes of the House and Senate. And there appeared to be little sentiment in either body yesterday for approving a potential GOP candidate.

OPINION

Congressman John J. McFall (Dem-Manteca), the Majority Whip, perhaps expressed the consensus when he told The Chronicle:

"The President ought to name a non-political appointee . . . someone who would not be a candidate for President in '76.

"We should not be asked to vote for someone who would then be in the position to beat the hell out of us in 1976."

McFall named Reagan, Rockefeller and former Treasury Secretary John Connally as among those he would not vote for if nominated by the President.

California's two Democratic senators, Alan Cranston and John Tunney, expressed the hope Nixon would submit the name of a man well qualified to be president yet who is not a potential GOP candidate in 1976.

Congressman Jerome Waldie (Dem-Contra Costa) had nothing to say about Agnew's successor but expressed displeasure over the

vice president having been allowed by the Justice Department to plea bargain for a suspended sentence.

"I suspect any American of lesser office would have been denied a similar opportunity," Waldie said.

COMMENTS

Congressman Phillip Burton (Dem-S.F.) said the possibility of Reagan taking Agnew's place would be "a blessing for the state and a disaster for the country." He said he would not vote for the governor.

Congressman Fortney H. (Pete) Stark (Dem-Oakland) said he believes President Nixon should withhold nomination of a vice presidential candidate until he (Nixon) is cleared of all suspicion in the Watergate affair.

Congressman Ron Delums (Dem-Berkeley), said "the President ought to look to women, blacks or other minorities for his choice for Vice President. As he knows, no one from these groups was involved in Watergate."

CHRISTOPHER

Former San Francisco Mayor George Christopher, one of the country's best-known Greek-Americans, said of his fellow Greek-American:

After hearing Mr. Agnew last week state that he

would not resign even if indicted, he gave some assurance of innocence in the matters involving his official conduct.

"Now, his sudden reversal and his resignation based on charges not previously mentioned is cause for concern and anguished reflection not only for the Republican Party but for all Americans."