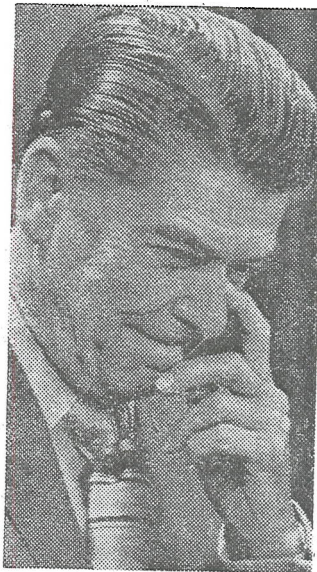


SF Examiner
**Ford's 'a
good man'
--Reagan**

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GOVERNOR REAGAN
Leads conservatives

—UPI Photo

United Press

SACRAMENTO — Governor Reagan has sized up his latest potential political rival, Rep. Gerald R. Ford, as a "good man" who very possibly will run for president in 1976 and be a formidable candidate.

Reagan, whom White House sources reported was one of four finalists for the vice presidential nomination that Ford received, yesterday said he "never thought for a moment" he would be President Nixon's choice.

Reagan said unlike John B. Connally, another finalist, he was not contacted by the White House before Nixon's Friday night announcement to determine whether he was available for the job.

The conservative Republican Governor also said he still assumes former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew to be innocent of the bribery and kickback charges which the U.S. Justice Department dropped when Agnew pleaded "no contest" to income tax evasion and resigned.

With Agnew out of presidential competition for 1976, Reagan generally is regarded as the leading conservative candidate for the Republican nomination.

The 62 year old Governor, who intends to embark on a nationwide speaking tour af-

ter his second term expires in January, 1975, dodged questions about his presidential availability at a free-wheeling news conference.

"I don't know anything I can do that isn't supposed to be tied into the election in '76," said Reagan, replying to suggestions that his tax limit initiative campaign was a dress rehearsal for a presidential bid.

Asked whether he thought the 60 year old Ford, who since 1965 has been the House Republican leader, would be a formidable presidential candidate, Reagan said:

"Jerry Ford, whether he's a formidable presidential candidate or not, seems to have taken himself out of consideration. And he has repeated this so often, so emphatically, that I assume until he changes his mind he has to be considered not (a candidate)."