



UPI Telephoto

Tom McCall of Oregon, at Republican governors' conference with Winfield Dunn of Connecticut and Meldrim Thomson of New Hampshire, said the President was "on the way back"

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Governors Offer Nixon Praise--And a Warning

Memphis

Republican governors of every ideology praised the new openness of President Nixon yesterday but warned that he must come completely clean with the American people if he expects to restore his Watergate-shattered credibility.

"We're not going to be housemen for the White House and try to whitewash one of the sorriest pages in American political history," said Oregon Governor Tom McCall.

On the eve of the Republican Governors' winter con-

ference; incoming chairman Winfield Dunn of Tennessee and McCall agreed that Mr. Nixon's decision to take the offensive against the many allegations of scandal involving the White House had succeeded in forestalling any resolution by the governors calling for impeachment or resignation. But they said that Mr. Nixon must answer the charges against him if he hopes to fully restore credibility.

"Mr. President; you've got to become more credible, more human," said McCall. "You're on the way

back but we don't buy that you're all the way back."

At a joint news conference with McCall and New Hampshire Governor Meldrim Thomson Jr., Dunn praised the "candid and honest" performance of the President when he answered questions Saturday of the Associated Press Managing Editors in Orlando, Fla. But Dunn also agreed that Republicans must be careful in the way they express their support.

"I would agree 100 per cent with Tom that a purely partisan, knee-jerk reaction is not what Republican governors will offer . . ." Dunn said.

He added that he didn't think that the President would want such an endorsement.

McCall is one of the most liberal and outspoken Republican governors, and he has been critical of the administration on Watergate. However, a similar view was expressed by one of Mr. Nixon's most consistent defenders, California Governor Ronald Reagan.

In an interview, Reagan praised the President for speaking out and said Mr. Nixon's action indicated a presidential belief "that the facts are on his side." Reagan suggested that Mr. Nixon ought to go further and hold televised meetings with small groups of commentators to answer questions about Watergate or other allegations.

The 17 state governors — Governor Francis Sargent of Massachusetts and Governor Stanley K. Hatahway of Wyoming are absent — will meet tomorrow with the President.

Both Dunn and McCall said they would request that the meeting, now planned as a closed session, be opened to the press.

Energy will be the main issue before the governors.

They will hear speeches tomorrow from administration energy director John A. Love and from Interior Secretary Rogers C. B. Morton.

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