

Governors Praise Nixon's Openness

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MEMPHIS, Tenn., Nov. 18—

Republican governors of varied ideologies today praised the new openness of President Nixon 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 Gov. Tom McCall.

On the eve of the winter conference of the Republican Governors Association, 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 restore his credibility completely.

"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 Gov. Meldrim Thomson Jr., Dunn praised the "candid and honest" performance of the President when he answered questions Saturday night of the Associated Press Managing Editors Association in Florida. 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 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 Gov. Ronald Reagan.

In an interview Reagan



GOV. TOM McCALL

rules out "whitewash"

praised the President for speaking and said Mr. Nixon's action indicated a presidential

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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 and other allegations.

The 17 state governors—Francis Sargent of Massachusetts and Stanley K. Hathaway of Wyoming are absent—will meet Tuesday with the President in Memphis.

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 Tuesday from administration energy director John A. Love and from Interior Secretary Rogers C. B. Morton. While it is unclear whether the governors will make any statement at all on Watergate, it is considered likely that they will attempt to draft a GOP policy position on the energy crisis.

One indication of the differences between the governors on this issue came when Thomson advocated the suspension of air pollution control restrictions on automobiles, at least during the winter, as a means of conserving fuel.

McCall warned against "turning tail" on efforts to clean up the water and the air because of energy concerns. He said that it may be neces-

sary to suspend pollution regulations on a case-by-case basis, as President Nixon has advocated.

The Oregon governor lauded the President's energy message and said that it would mark the turning point for his administration if he escaped from the "Watergate woods."

Watergate concerns are heightened by the mathematics of the 1974 election, when 12 of the 19 seats now held by Republican governors are up for re-election. The governors didn't agree on the prospective effects of Watergate, however.

Dunn and Thomson said that state elections would be determined on the basis of state issues. McCall said that Watergate was a "minus" for the party but that President Nixon could become a plus for it if he continues to restore credibility. Reagan said that Watergate had hurt all incumbents but that Republicans were the minority and could afford it least.