

Some Tips on How to Pick A President

Washington

PRESIDENT NIXON has been asking for suggestions about how to improve the way we pick presidential candidates in the United States, and if it hadn't been for falling down a flight of stairs, we'd have had the list in sooner.

1. No candidate should be considered hereafter who dyes his hair. In this hairy age, "truth in campaigning" should begin right here. This should be known at the Democratic convention as the Humphrey Amendment and at the Republican convention as the Reagan Amendment. Lady candidates, of course, would be exempted from the rule.

2. All candidates should be subjected to a rigorous physical and psychological examination before the nominating conventions. Anybody with minor psychological hang-ups should be accepted in order to assure that **somebody** is available, but congenital liars, twisters, and obvious nuts should be rejected before the primary elections begin.

3. Eliminate the Politics of Bribery. Anybody who promises "a generation of peace" or a prosperous world without war or inflation should be hooted out of town.

4. All candidates should have a valid driver's license.

5. No man married to a ninny who adores her spouse and tells him he's always right should even be considered.

6. Let each state propose at least one nonpolitician for the job. Politics may be too serious to be left



James Reston

to the politicians alone.

7. Indict George Gallup and Lou Harris for running popularity polls and obstructing individual judgment and common sense.

8. Draft Elliot Richardson of Massachusetts and Bill Ruckelshaus of Indiana into the race. Also Kingman Brewster of Yale and Father Hesburgh of Notre Dame and Cy Vance and Bill Moyers of New York — all of them better than most of the characters on the present list.

9. Amend the rule against foreign-born candidates and give Henry Kissinger a chance.

10. Eliminate any candidate who says he knows there is evidence that will clear up the Watergate mysteries but can't say what the evidence is and hasn't had time to read it.

11. Make both parties pick their vice presidential candidates at least 15 minutes before they're shoved out on the convention stage.

12. Forget about "charisma" and look for a few straight characters who simply know the difference between right and wrong and yes and no.

13. Amend the Constitution to get rid of any president who obviously loses the confidence of the people before his four years are up.

14. Look for somebody who has read a book.

15. Eliminate any man who is obviously running for the presidency but says he's not and won't even think about it for another year or two.

16. Give credit lines on all major political speeches: "Written by Pat Buchanan and Charles Colson, with quotations and borrowings from Ted Sorensen and Adlai Stevenson."

17. Let the newspapers publish the texts of the average extemporaneous speeches made by the candidates on the stump so that the people can understand just how bad they really are.

18. Concentrate on the men who are coming instead of the men who are going.

19. Get all candidates, in advance, to define "executive privilege" and "national security," and check their income taxes.

20. Make all candidates and their White House aides read the Constitution of the United States before they swear to uphold it.

21. And do it early. In the last few days, Reagan has been making speeches in New England, South Carolina, and Washington, and having lunch with the editors of the New York Times. "Just out on the mashed potato circuit," he says.

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BUT THE CAMPAIGN'S ON. Nelson Rockefeller is already computerizing it, Teddy Kennedy's courting the Democrats in the South, Scoop Jackson's running against the oil barons and the Russians. So something more than mashed potatoes is being served up.

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