

Gov. Reagan's White House hopes ended

By Sydney Kossen
Political Editor

Governor Reagan's low pressure campaign for president collapsed when Gerald Ford took the oath of office.

This is the view of top-level California Republicans who told the Examiner the 63-year-old Governor privately admits that he no longer sees the White House in his future.

"Everything regarding 1976 has been predicated on Nixon's staying in office," a Southern California party source noted. "The Governor was one of the few who supported and defended Nixon to the end."

Now wealthy members of the Governor's "kitchen cabinet" and other conservatives reportedly are no longer earmarking funds for another Reagan presidential caper.

This, coupled with a revival of rank and file party loyalty, could ease the financial distress of the current GOP candidates for Congress and state offices.

At the moment, President Ford looks like a sure winner, leading many Republi-

cans to believe there won't be a contested California GOP presidential primary in 1976.

Few Republicans view Reagan as Ford's likely choice for vice president, for this would amount to "setting up" a potential rival.

Among others on the long list, a more probable California vice presidential prospect might be former Treasury Secretary George

P. Shultz, who left the Nixon Cabinet in May to become vice president of the Bechtel Corporation in San Francisco.

Unblemished by Nixon Administration scandals, Shultz as former dean of the University of Chicago graduate school of business, could be a valuable economic trouble shooter for President Ford.

Reagan told newsmen it

would be difficult for him to refuse the vice presidency if offered, but he suggested instead that Ford tap Sen. Barry Goldwater of Arizona.

The Governor recently enlarged his personal political staff.

Reagan has publicly denied that fund-raisers and other out-of-state party functions are part of an early search for GOP support.

Reagan, who challenged

Nixon — for the 1968 GOP nomination, said here recently, "It's too early to even let yourself think of such a thing as running for president in 1976 . . . I could never conceive of myself or actually understand anyone who would just say, 'I want that job' and start out to get it."

On Tuesday in Sacramento, the Governor told newsmen, "No, that's the farthest thing from my mind."

Reagan's GOP speaking trip to Seattle today had been planned long before the collapse of the Nixon presidency.

Today the Governor is a lame duck in more than one sense of the political term. He will be out of office in January with perhaps no more electoral peaks to challenge Democrat John V. Tunney, California's junior U.S. senator, in 1976.