

Reinecke ponders the realities

Associated Press...

PLACERVILLE — Former Lt. Gov. Ed Reinecke says he has not ruled out a political comeback — if he can reverse his perjury conviction and clear his name.

"I'm certainly not closing the door to another campaign for political office," Reinecke said. "The first thing is to get this case reversed before I could ever be creditable candidate."

Reinecke was convicted July 27 of lying to a U.S. Senate committee about his role in the ITT affair. He received, an 18-month suspended sentence but has since filed a notice of appeal.

"All I'm doing now is feeding the cows and chickens and mending the fences. We have a magnificent view. We're very isolated.

It's a great place to re-think your life and things."

His interview Friday with three reporters was the first he has granted since he resigned Oct. 2. He met the three by chance at a Placerville high school where they were speaking on a panel.

Throughout the interview, Reinecke was friendly. He discussed the grand jury system, the Nixon pardon and the public's attitude toward politicians.

He has just completed the sale of his home in a Sacramento suburb and has moved the last of his personal possessions to a 227-acre cattle ranch in the Sierra foothills near here.

He is working on a book about his experiences.

He said the book will express ideas about the need

'First I have to be a creditable candidate'

to reform the grand jury system.

"The grand jury system is nothing but a tool of the prosecution," he said. "You don't know what is being said about you or who is saying it. Government is getting just as oppressive as it was under Geroge III."

He said society is on a "search-and-destroy mission against all public office holders."

Reinecke, 50, was convicted of lying to the Senate Judiciary Committee about when he told Nixon's Atty. Gen. John Mitchell about an offer from International Telephone and Telegraph Co.

to underwrite the 1972 Republican National Convention.

He told senators he had not discussed the offer with Mitchell until after the Justice Department had abandoned an antitrust suit against the giant company. But he later said he had told Mitchell about it before the case was settled.

Reinecke has said he told Mitchell about the offer during a telephone conversation. He said he thought the senators were asking him if he had told Mitchell about the offer during a meeting between the two men.

Reinecke called the Nixon

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of a comeback

pardon "a white wash ... My first reaction was that it was very unwise, but thinking it all over I think it was an inevitable action.

"If you think of the length of time it would take to get a jury and a trial this could easily be a year or more and this would be very damaging not only for the office of the presidency but for all our institutions, and our image abroad.

"I think the overriding issue that did justify the pardon was the consequences of waiting," Reinecke said.

He added that the pardon did not spare Nixon punishment. "Can you think of a person more miserable in the entire world today?" he asked.

Reinecke said that although he personally would

vote against Nelson Rockefeller's confirmation as vice president, he believes Rockefeller is being treated unfairly in televised hearings of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

It was Reinecke's testimony before that same committee in 1972 that led to his perjury conviction.

"The procedure of the committee, putting this man up on the wall and nitpicking him to death, is wrong. They're doing nothing right."

Asked how he would change the vice-presidential confirmation procedure, Reinecke said: the proceedings should be open to the press but not to live television coverage.

The former lieutenant governor had criticized the press for escalating his in-

dictment into the dominant issue of his unsuccessful campaign last spring for the Republican nomination for governor.

Asked what he would do about the media, he said he would not "put any legal or legislative curb on the media." But he said he would support the creation of press councils where people could

air their complaints and have a public discussion of "what is or is not ethical."

Three weeks ago, Reinecke spoke before a government class at El Dorado High School in Placerville and criticized the press for what he said were distortions in the way reporters handled his indictment during his campaign.