

State GOP Leaders Playing Musical Chairs

By HENRY C. MACARTHUR
SACRAMENTO — (CNS) — How much effect the exodus of high state officials from the realm of state government, to hop on the band-wagon of President Richard Nixon, is going to have on the administration of Governor Ronald Reagan remains to be seen.

ism, rather than to the more conservative side of the party as espoused by the Reagan contingent.

Starting with former Lieutenant Governor Robert H. Finch, the governor is successively losing Assemblyman John G. Venemen, R-Modesto and probably later, Assemblyman William T. Bagley, R-San Rafael, who is rumored to be slated for a Washington assignment in the United States Attorney General's office.

It has been learned also that

Spencer Williams, the governor's health and welfare director, will soon step out of state government service to trek to Washington for a post under Finch.

Appointment of Ed Reinecke, a congressman, as lieutenant governor to succeed Finch, opens another problem for the governor, as two Republican assemblymen, Pat McGee, and Newton R. Russell, of Los Angeles and Burbank, respectively, are seeking Reinecke's con-

gressional seat. If either wins, then Reagan will be confronted with another special election to fill one of the seats.

All of which poses a peril to the Republican majority in the House for despite the fact that the GOP has had great success in winning special elections, nothing is certain until the votes are counted.

The special election situation is becoming somewhat complicated. One is under way for a state senator to succeed the late

George Miller of Contra Costa county, and another to name a new congressman in place of Reinecke.

A third later will involve Veneman's seat in the assembly, and a fourth possibility is for a successor for Bagley in the event the Marin assemblyman leaves for Washington. The fifth would occur in the event either Russell or McGee is successful in obtaining the Reinecke seat for Congress.

It has been fairly well established, perhaps not on the sur-

face too much, that there is no love lost between Reagan and Nixon, and that therefore, the president's forces have no compunctions about raiding Reagan of some of his key personnel, especially those whose departure might have the effect of splitting the Republicans right down the middle in California again, as they were split when Max Rafferty nosed out Sen. Tom Kuchel in the 1968 primary elections.

Veneman, although a loyal Republican, nevertheless is at odds with much of the Reagan

philosophy, particularly in the matter of a withholding tax for state income tax purposes, which the governor has opposed during the entire time of his administration.

But despite this opposition the Modesto legislator has rendered invaluable aid to Reagan in Medi-Cal matters, and in revenue and taxation problems which necessitated the services of a veteran legislator who not only put together solutions, but to see that they were carried out.

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Comment and Opinion

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A Step Backward

Rumbles persist that the aborted review of the city's charter is far from dead. This despite a City Council decision to close off the study after the 10-man committee proposed to throw out city government as we know it and substitute a new form of government in which our councilmen would become mere functionaries and ratifiers of management policy.

It frightened us and a lot of other people in town, and we suggested along with them that the committee was doing a disservice to Torrance by proposing such a radical change in city government.

The Council agreed and dissolved the committee and ended consideration of its proposals.

Dissolving the committee, however, hasn't ended the matter. In fact, it may have been a spur for some of the behind-the-scenes forces who have been pushing the charter changes.

For one, the changes envisioned by the charter committee would go a long way in trimming the strength of the city's councilmen, an dits mayor.

While trimming of the mayor's power may not be a prime goal of the review committee members, others in the background have spent major efforts in this direction.

During his nearly 14 years as Torrance's mayor, Albert Isen has crossed swords with many groups. His unbending opposition to the rubbish contractors alone has brought him some powerful enemies in the ranks of the rubbish industry and among their influential friends.

The direction of the charter study has some other major flaws.

The charter proposals would put the city in a position of influence over the school system, which many see as a step in the wrong direction.

The proposals would give the administrative planners the last word on the city's development; department heads would lose tenure protection offered by Civil Service and would be subject to the whims of the powerful man who sat in the chief administrator's office.

We believe the continuing study in this direction stands as an impediment to the operation of our city government. Certainly the current charter has some obsolete sections — but most of us believe its basic form is good; in fact, it's far, far better than the one being pushed.

Let the committee continue to press its study, but let's get away from the idea of destroying our city's government — especially if it is being done just to placate the enemies of a man who happens to be mayor.

Election Trivia

Most of the 16 candidates seeking to oust the incumbent mayor of Los Angeles in the April 1 primary election have one thing in common — they have declared "open season" on Samuel Yorty.

The typical pre-election mails accuse the incumbent of everything from violation of his sworn duty as an attorney to complete disrespect.

The reason that most incumbents are historically successful in reelection bids has to be the total disregard of the issues by their opponents.

The city of Los Angeles has enough problems to provide every politician in every city of the nation with enough material for a 30-minute election speech and not one would overlap.

We would like to see some constructive ideas by the candidates seeking the top political seat in the city's government.

Anyone can criticize, but it takes a real candidate to see through the problems.

Let's hear a little bit about budget cutting, about property taxes, about city services, about crime on the streets or about the narcotics problems.

We're tired of hearing about the mayor's personal faults.

Meanwhile, Back At The Ranch



ROYCE BRIER

Touted Plan to Buy Off Plane Hijackers Scoffed

For centuries pirates in North Africa exacted tribute from European powers to lay off merchant shipping in the narrow of the western Mediterranean.

Even the great Louis of France made treaties with the so-called Barbary states, putting up tribute annually, and, of course the pirates violated the treaties.

When the new American republic was shaping, President Adams was willing to buy off the pirates, but President Jefferson wasn't. He thought it was unbecoming a self-governing people, and he sent Stephen Decatur to rough up the pirates, 1803-5. He did, but it was 1815 before the tribute-hostage-ransom system was stamped out.

The other day there was a speculative news item floating around of a plan to "end" hijacking of airliners to Cuba

by paying Fidel Castro to turn a few hijackers back to the United States to be tried for their dangerous crime.

The idea is that most of the hijackers are only a nuisance to Castro, with little propaganda value, and hardly worth trouble of returning the seized

Opinions on Affairs of the World

airliners and the wide-eyed passengers deluded they were bound for Miami.

The yarn is pretty shaky, but it said there is some talk among State Department factotums that it might be worth an experiment. It was thought only one or two such surprises might discourage potential hijackers and radically reduce hijacking incidence, which has been running an almost weekly schedule.

The scheme was submitted to airlines recently hit by hijacks but they were dubious. They lose thousands of dollars every time one of their liners is diverted, but some officials thought this particular trick was hairbrained. It is something more than that. Our experience in the Pueblo affair should have taught us that all you get out of dealing with highbinders is a national headache.

Not that the hijack ransom scheme resembles the Pueblo case, or that it bears any relation to piracy as an institution, except as it pertains to an unimportant desperado.

Senor Castro, for all we don't like him, is not a pirate, and there is no suggestion he would be interested. In a sense he is a puritanical guy like all communists, and he might even think it immoral. Which it would be.

The key in these hijacks is that any plane passenger, if

he is desperate enough, holds all the good cards; if he is forcibly resisted everybody aboard can be lost. Consequently, the United States cannot bring its power to bear on these cases.

But for the United States to buy for cash a presumed immunity for its innocent nationals, would be not only immoral but absurdly self-defeating. When the United States is flouted by blackmailing mobs anywhere in the world, it must look to its own dignity and to its fair name. It doesn't invariably do so, because there are always Americans, some in government, willing to solve a problem the cynical and easy way. But this does not vitiate the principle of no dealings with strong-arm individuals or conspiracies.

So if you don't mind we will not buy our way out of the baffling hijack problem, which will be honorably solved one of these days.

Morning Report

Of course it's too early on the basis of accomplishing anything to know if President Nixon is worth \$4,000 a week, before withholding, that we are paying him.

But there is no doubt that we have given him plenty of opportunities to earn his wages. For a hard worker who likes a job with challenges, he should already be supremely content. Russia wants him to bring peace to the Middle East pronto. The National Urban League urges him to do away with the welfare system in some 3,000 counties and replace it with a guaranteed wage for the poor before summer. A pride of proud Senators wants the draft abolished at a cost of almost \$4 billion a year. Peace is still far off in Vietnam. And everybody wants his taxes cut.

Overpaid my eye. He needs a raise at once.

Abe Mellinkoff

HERB CAEN SAYS:

'Nixon Spoken Here' on Finch's Latest Medallion

The scam what am: When Bob Finch was elected L. Gov. by that whopping majority (more votes than Reagan) he sent all his friends silver medallions showing California's profile under the message "Quam Dulcis Est" ("How sweet it is"). Now that he's head of HEW, he's mailing out duplicate medallions, with the message changed to "Nixon Spoken Here" . . . Addendum: remember when the President's brother, Donald, opened a string of "Nixonburger" hamburger stands and failed? Well, now that his brother's culinary tastes are again top news (Wheaties, cottage cheese, with catsup, hamburgers) he could always try again.

Comic John Byner, imitating Ed Sullivan introducing the celebrities in the audience: "And there's Eldridge Cleaver, a really fine fugitive, hiding out here in our crowd tonight!" . . . Socialite Matthew Kelly—and what kind of pep pills does HE take?—is now dancing attendance on Actress Elsa Martinelli, here with that Italian movie troupe shooting "Perverse Ending" or whatever it's called (will somebody kindly tell me the title?) . . . A localite boarded a plane here last week and was almost bowled off his feet by a stewardess who suddenly sallied forth from the rest room. If you don't believe her name turned out to be Sally North, you're just plain crotchety . . . You mean you LIKE items like

that? Okay: Stanford's wrestling team, having lost one of its stars, was upset by San Jose State the other night. Wrestler Ben Shaver was disqualified for not having shaved. (I can prove it.)

I see that the N.Y. Times is campaigning for "More and

Report from Our Man in San Francisco

better street signs" in Manhattan. Welcome to the club! . . . The new U.S. stamp commemorating the 50th anniversary of the American Legion features an eagle with a right wing only, suggesting a subtle designer at work . . . Irate lady patriot on a radio phone-in show: "I don't know what those Negroes want. Why, they can't even TALK legibly!" . . . Eric Nord, the ex-Big Daddy of the Beatniks, has written his first book, with predictable results. The printer said he could print them at four-bits each, then upped the price to a buck. The guy distributing the book pays Eric 88 cents a copy (booksellers charge \$1.95), "and so," sighs Eric, "it's costing me 12 cents a copy to be an author. Do me a favor—don't buy one" . . . Mysterious journey: Marijuana is now arriving here in sizable quantities from North Korea, of all unlikely places, but it's nothing to write home about. . . . Frankly, the National Airlines people are getting a little tired of customers who walk

up to the ticket counter and grin waggishly: "I'll take two chances on your flight to Miami."

A mess of dottage: Novelist Blair Fuller of the local literary Establishment has been awarded a Fulbright to teach at the U. of Algeria, starting in September for a nine-month run; he'll take his wife, kiddie, and motorcycle . . . Further comings and goings: Gregory Corso, one of the brightest of the Beat poets, is back in town, living in the Chestnut St. house vacated by Poet Lenore "The Love Book" Kandel, who has moved to Hawaii. His early book of poems "The Vestal Lady of Brattle" will be reissued by City Lights' Lawrence Ferlinghetti, who just won a major Italian prize for his poetry. Meanwhile, the noted Beat/Zen poet, Gary Snyder, is back from Japan and living in Marin with his Japanese wife and baby, having turned over his Kyoto house to Dick Baker, head of the S.F. Zen Center . . . All we need now for a Beat Renaissance is Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac — or does anybody need Kerouac? . . . Even squarish old Doubleday is loosening up, having just published its first "underground" novel — a wild affair called "Informed Sources" by Willard Bain of Corte Madera. I don't know how Doubleday came to do this unlikely thing except that Mr. Bain stands 6'8" tall and can look VERY menacing.

WILLIAM HOGAN

Trio of James M. Cain's Finest Thrillers Reissued

I have been immersed again in the early novels of James M. Cain, and while they seem flaked around the edges, like those 1931 bungalows in Glendale, they remain prototypes. Cain was a chief exemplar of the "hard-boiled" school of writers in the 1930s and early '40s, no doubt influenced by Dashiell Hammett and Hemingway. Edmund Wilson once called him "the poet of the tabloid page," but Cain was more than that. He had his own style, as he documented the sassy Southern California culture and mythology of that time, loosely the Joan Crawford period, as Raymond Chandler did in his thrillers.

The first line of "The Postman Always Rings Twice" (1934) seemed to me one of the great lead-ins of contemporary writing: "They threw me off the hay truck around noon . . ." That was the shabby, if diamond-bright story of a young hobo (he was always John Garfield, even before Garfield played him in the film) who saunters into a roadside diner run by a Greek with

which now emits a wave of nostalgia in a reader (me) who thought, in that time, that James M. Cain was the greatest writer in the business.

A former Baltimore and New York newspaperman who soaked up the Southern California atmosphere as a film writer in the '30s, Cain was never a major writer of original scenarios. Raymond Chandler once told him that the trouble with Cain's screen writing was that his dialogue played to the eye; it wouldn't play in a movie. Yet over the years Cain sold nine novels to the movies.

Browsing Through the World of Books

a big insurance policy and a Lana Turner-style wife. Garfield takes one look at the wife, settles down to work at the diner, and before you know it, "I kissed her . . . it was like being in church."

Talk about mythology. They've written novel like that over the years, but "The Postman" was sweet, ugly and in a class by itself to the point where Albert Camus got on to Cain and used his novels as a model in writing "The Stranger."

In an omnibus collection titled "Cain X-3" we find "The Postman"; "Double Indemnity" (1936) and "Mildred Pierce" (1941). For all their fast-paced, free-wheeling style, they are more complex novels than they appear to be on the surface. They seem composed, like intricate fugues. "Double Indemnity" had an insurance theme, as, in a sense, "The Postman" did. An insurance salesman plots the perfect murder to beat his own racket. It was the stuff of superb police reporting.

"Mildred Pierce" was all Joan Crawford (who played her), the divorcee with the no-good husband and monstrous daughter. It's all tough poetry

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