

Report from California: The Governor and the University

California. Ronald Reagan became Governor of California in early January. Before the month was out, Clark Kerr, president of the state university, had been fired, and the university had been presented with a reduced budget that would curtail long-planned growth, jeopardize existing programs, and, for the first time, require students to pay tuition. Complex calculations in politics and finance lie behind both Kerr's ouster and Reagan's budget. But, when all the complexities have been sorted out, a number of facts become visible. First, the man now governing California is fundamentally out of sympathy with the values and priorities of the state's flourishing educational community. Second, Reagan is testing the viability of education as a political issue, making politics frankly the arena in which educational battles will be won or lost. Third, although opposed by powerful interests, he has so far met with considerable success, both in laying the foundations for change in the economics of education in California, and in acquiring a following in national politics where the augurs are predicting that the ex-actor's influence will rise. And fourth, whatever these developments imply for the future of the already troubled University of California, they are most unlikely to do it any good.

The event judged by eastern editorialists to be the most revealing about Ronald Reagan actually tells as much about the internal political temperature of the university as about the new governor. Contrary to a general impression, Reagan did not fire Kerr. The president was fired by a 14-8 vote of the university's Board of Regents, of which the governor is an ex-officio member. Reagan voted for the dismissal, as did the two other new regents who owed their appointments to the Republican victory. The additional votes produced a new coalition strong enough to outweigh a long-tenuous pro-Kerr majority that had sustained the president in office through years of rising disagreement between himself and many members of the Board.

Opposition to Kerr among the regents had a number of sources that might be found on any list of reasons why trustees fire presidents. He was criticized as an administrator, and there was a considerable backlog of personal friction. But the antagonism grew mainly out of years of sparring over the variety of issues that come under the headings of academic freedom and campus discipline, with Kerr tending toward the liberal side on most such issues and the anti-Kerr regents leaning in the opposite direction. With these regents, many of whom had been openly anxious to remove Kerr since the beginning of the Free Speech Movement, the governor, who had made "the mess at Berkeley" a major campaign issue, had an immediate community of interest. In addition, Reagan carried with him into the anti-Kerr faction a number of previously wavering regents who interpreted his election as a mandate for change at the university and who wanted to make a new beginning, or who thought it hopeless to try to run the university for 4 years with a mutually antagonistic governor and president.

In all these ways the presence of the new governor "influenced" the firing of Kerr—much as the previous strong support for Kerr from Democratic Governor Pat Brown "influenced" his retention during the months following FSM. But the firing was not engineered by the governor—although he was reportedly planning to engineer it, at a somewhat later date, and certainly desired it. The fact that the dismissal came when it did is related to Kerr's own preference for facing the inevitable sooner rather than later.

The motives contributing to Kerr's request to the regents for an early clarification of his status have been much debated. Kerr himself, in a television interview, stressed his feeling that the university could not effectively negotiate the budget with its chief executive in a "lame duck" position. Some of his associates have suggested that a very human desire to know what was in store for him personally also played a

role. (Kerr had already accepted a part-time assignment from the Carnegie Foundation to conduct a study on higher education, and he has since received an offer from the regents to retain his tenured post on the Berkeley faculty at a salary of \$30,000, but his long-term plans are not yet known.) It has also been speculated, rather uncharitably, that Kerr wanted to raise the issue in January well understanding that it would embarrass the regents and Reagan, and perhaps hoping that political delicacy would restrain their desire to see him go.

In any event, by resisting repeated entreaties by individual regents that he jump before he was pushed, Kerr made an exit that enhanced rather than damaged his own reputation, laid bare some of the susceptibilities of regental politics, and left the governor the chief focus of the near-unanimous opprobrium of the nation's academics—a by-product of more than casual interest to the liberal members of the Board of Regents and, for that matter, to some of its conservatives as well.

The Money Problem

Reagan's views on education appear to grow out of his views on a variety of other subjects—morality, money and taxes, and government spending and services. The greatest of these is money. Reagan believes that California is in the midst of an unprecedented fiscal crisis, the blame for which he places chiefly on the "fiscal maneuvers" of the Democratic administration that preceded him. By his audit, the state has been spending about \$1 million a day more than it takes in, and he calculates that the state government will need roughly \$500 million to balance his proposed \$4.6-billion budget for fiscal 1967-68.

In addition to believing that California simply doesn't have the money to pay its bills, Reagan endorses the general tenets of conservative rhetoric, that government has grown too big and that people are too dependent on it. He has warned listeners more than once that "The symbol on our state flag is a Golden Bear. It is not a cow to be milked." In his budget message to the California legislature, Reagan commented on the "unchecked growth" that imperiled the treasury. He pointed out that:

During the past several years, expenditures of the General Fund [the operating portion of the state treasury] have increased each year over the preceding year

by nearly 12 percent, with the increase of the present fiscal year over last year exceeding more than 16 percent. And, since the General Fund is largely "people-oriented" (education, health, welfare, corrections, etc.), it is interesting to note that the State's population has increased only about 3 percent per year and the cost of living has risen only 2 percent per year. In brief, while it has taken our population nearly 20 years to double, General Fund spending has more than doubled in the last seven years."

In figuring out where his needed half-billion dollars were coming from, it was natural for Reagan to decide not only to raise taxes but to slash services as well—or, as he put it, "to match out-go to income, instead of always doing it the other way around." In emphasizing that Californians will have not only to dig a little deeper into their pocket-books but also to expect a little less in return, Reagan has transformed his financial bind into a patriotic issue to which all good citizens are expected to respond. He appears to be attempting to institutionalize a heroic sense of privation, embattlement, and service to the cause—a spirit epitomized by his request (largely unheeded) to state employees that they work without pay on Lincoln's and Washington's Birthday holidays. Reagan is not only saving money; he is building character as well. Education is only one target of the campaign for fiscal and moral regeneration, but it seems to have been a particularly appealing one. For, while Reagan proposed an automatic, across-the-board, 10-percent cutback in the expenditures of every operating agency in the state, from the state colleges and universities he proposed to cut considerably more.

Cutting Back

The university budget submitted by the Board of Regents called for \$278 million from the state for fiscal 1967–68. The state's contribution is only about one-third of the university's total budget, but it is the portion devoted most directly to support of instruction. The figure of \$278 million represented a 15-percent increase over last year's budget, an increase equal to the projected addition of about 10,000 students to the present enrollment of about 87,000.

In formulating his own budget for the university, Reagan began with last year's sum of roughly \$243.2 million. He added \$21.3 million to take account of the anticipated increases in the workload. Then he began to subtract: He took off about \$26.5 million—the 10-percent cut applied to all agencies; he



Governor Reagan on the steps of the State Capitol addressing students who marched on Sacramento to protest his plans for cutting the budget for higher education and imposing tuition fees. [UPI Photo]

eliminated \$21.5 million that he said could be compensated by the use of special university reserve funds controlled by the regents; and he withdrew an additional \$20 million that he said could be recouped by charges for tuition. When he was finished, the state appropriation amounted to \$196.6 million, a sum roughly \$44-million less than the current appropriation and about \$80-million less than the regents' request. Reagan also cut from the budget a separate item of \$12.5 million for increases in faculty salaries, a deletion that raised the difference between the university's request and the governor's offer to the somewhat astonishing grand total of about \$100 million.

The impulse to economize affected the state colleges as well. The colleges enrolled about 172,000 students this year and had asked for a substantial budget increase to accommodate about 17,000 additional students expected next year. For these growing institutions, Reagan proposed an appropriation of \$154 million, a cut of about 12 percent from the present appropriation and about 28 percent less than the \$213 million requested by the colleges. The budget assumed that an additional \$18 million could be raised by tuition.

Implicit in these numbers are certain social consequences. Unless a massive scholarship program could accompany tuition charges, the fees would make it far more difficult for lower-income students to go to school. In addition, in order to maintain current standards of

quality under a reduced budget, the university and the colleges would have to end their historic policies of admitting all students who meet the test of academic eligibility—the top 12.5 percent of high school graduates in the case of the university, the top 33 percent for the state colleges. The new combination of tuition charges and restricted enrollments would change the pattern of who gets educated where in California, limiting the number of students who could attend the university and increasing the numbers of those who would stop at less-advanced points in the educational spectrum. Students caught in the squeeze at the university would flow back into the state colleges, whose overflow would in turn flood the community junior colleges. The junior colleges are supported chiefly by local property taxes, not by the state, and property taxes are already so high that the governor has promised tax relief. It is unlikely that these schools could expand sufficiently to meet increased demand. Thus the net effect of the governor's proposals would be to constrict educational opportunity in California, right down the line.

Views on Education

Why public education was singled out for these particularly spectacular contributions to the "fiscal crisis" is not a simple question. Perhaps most obvious is the fact that public antagonism toward Berkeley in particular, and a certain amount of anti-university feeling

Funnies on Capitol Hill

The National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities, which has been quietly doling out a modest few millions since it was established in September 1965, passed a sort of milestone in recent weeks: one of its grants was assailed and ridiculed on the floor of Congress as a wanton waste of the taxpayers' money.

This was the way it happened. On 8 February, the House was going through the periodic ritual of debating whether to raise the ceiling on the national debt. In the end, it always raises the ceiling, because, as all members know, the government would otherwise have to stop sending checks to many of their constituents. But the occasion provides an opportunity for a good deal of vigorous rhetoric, and members queue up to take their turns at the microphone.

When a turn came for Paul Fino, the Bronx, New York, Republican, it is possible that he was using a speech left over from the last Congress, for he devoted a fair portion of the brief time allotted him to the now-cancelled Project Mohole, ripping into it as though it were still burning up American dollars. "Then there is Operation Mohole—better known as 'operation rathole'—," he proclaimed, "by which our money is being poured down a hole somewhere in the earth's crust to keep the geology trade employed."

Fino was followed by Durward G. Hall, Republican of Springfield, Missouri, who had fresher findings to deploy against increasing the debt ceiling. Hall told his colleagues that he had discovered that the Arts and Humanities Foundation had agreed to lay out \$8789 to the University of California, at Santa Barbara, "for a study of comic strips."

"Federal grants of this nature," he said, "are one more reason why the Johnson administration suffers from a credibility gap, and why the Congress should not approve another increase in the debt ceiling until this administration learns to distinguish between what is essential and what is utter nonsense. . . . If refusal to raise the debt ceiling means the Federal check to the University of California will bounce, then I say let us bounce it off the heads of those who have the temerity to approve grants like this at a time when the President is asking Congress to approve a 6-percent increase in taxes and cut back interstate defense highway construction." Proceeding with his attack, Hall asked, "Is there anyone in the House chamber who will admit to appropriating money for a comic book study?" Apparently there were multitudes so willing, for a bit later the bill to raise the debt ceiling passed, 215 to 199.

Inquiry revealed that the grant, for David Kunzle, in the department of art, at Santa Barbara, was for supporting the continuation of what is planned ultimately to be a three-volume study of the development of the comic strip since the late 15th century. According to a spokesman for the Foundation, the first volume, which carries the study to the early 19th century, is ready for publication. The grant will support work on the second volume, covering the period 1826–1896.

Following Hall's attack, Barnaby C. Keeney, chairman of the Foundation, wrote to the Congressman that "both the cartoon and the comic strip have been of considerable importance in the course of American history, and they have their background in the 18th and 19th centuries. . . . I think it is important that we understand the background of this sort of popular art, not for art's sake, but simply as a better way of understanding ourselves better."

Hall replied that he was fond of comic strips and often wished they were more widely read. "If more members of the Supreme Court read Dick Tracy regularly, and became aware of the growing crime rate in America, perhaps we would not have some of the decisions which have created such a flourishing climate for the rising crime rate." But he said he did not see why the federal government should finance scholarly research on the subject.—D.S.G.

in general, helped to create a climate in which a budgetary attack on higher education seemed politically feasible. Nonetheless the governor's present attitude toward the university does not seem primarily punitive or moralistic; it is, if anything, primarily fiscal. Education is an extremely expensive item in the state budget. Together with welfare, it accounts for about 83 percent of General Fund spending. Playing the ratio game of which he is evidently fond, Reagan discovered that, while university enrollment had increased 118 percent over the last decade, state support had grown by 213 percent. This simple head-count approach omits recognition of the fact that graduate students, of which the university has had rising numbers, cost more to educate than undergraduates, and it fails to account for changes in purchasing power of the dollar. But Reagan appears to take the count as *prima facie* evidence that the costs of higher education are getting out of hand.

Perhaps equal in importance to the fiscal considerations is the fact that Reagan is very much outside the alliance of business interests and educators that for many years has heavily influenced most decisions affecting public education in California. Reagan had not so much as met Clark Kerr, who, as university president, was in many ways the keystone of the alliance, before he was elected governor. His friends, associates, and advisors are people whom no one in the old ruling circles seems to know. Reagan's advisors are described loosely as "from the southern part of the state," "in oil," or "conservative." But, as far as education is concerned, even those closest to the university, whose business it is to keep track of such matters, do not know exactly who the advisors are or what they think. The main exception to the anonymity rule is Max Rafferty, the crusading, conservative Superintendent of Public Instruction. Rafferty is said to advise Reagan on educational affairs, but his is by no means a presence in which the former establishment finds any comfort. As for the others, while they are difficult to pin down, a number of negative deductions about their views can be made. First, they resent the privileged position traditionally occupied by the experts, professionals, and intellectuals associated with the university, and do not necessarily believe that education should be left to the educators. And, second, they do not take for granted the former gospel that

the educational system as presently constituted is the essential ingredient of the success of California-based business. In addition, in Reagan's circles, and evident in the governor himself, is a rather subtle predisposition toward private schools, which jars strangely with the prevailing public-education ethos. While this feeling is amorphous and hard to document from the public record, reliable individuals have recounted private conversations with the governor in which he has commented that publicly supported institutions are competing too heavily with private ones. It is said to be his belief that public schools are properly to be regarded as a last resort for educating students not gifted enough to attend private institutions. In response to a question from a reporter about possible damage to the university from his budget cuts, he is reported to have complained that "so far the state university has had a free hand in pirating people from private universities with state funds."

Among the local cognoscenti this orientation toward private schools is attributed in part to a general bias toward free enterprise, in part to an alleged rivalry in Southern California between the University of Southern California and its state-supported neighbor, UCLA. According to this theory, there is intensifying competition between the two schools for fame, athletic victories, and the hearts and pocketbooks of wealthy Los Angelinos, which is somehow transmitted to the governor by way of his unnamed "advisors" from the south. However it actually works, if the governor's public record does not yet indicate any profound commitment to private education, it can hardly be said to reflect a commitment to public education either. And, while there is no evidence that California's private schools are doing any overt campaigning to influence the governor in their direction, it has to be recorded that with the exception of Stanford—which has been loyally defending the university's point of view—the private colleges appear to be relatively unresponsive to UC's signals of distress.

The Opposition

How far Reagan will get in translating his intentions into policy depends mainly on his successes on two battlefronts—the state legislature and the Board of Regents. Jockeying among the regents and in Sacramento is nothing new, for the university has always been the object of a certain amount of

political wheeling and dealing. Reagan has merely made the process more obvious, on the one hand, and considerably raised the stakes, on the other.

Opposition to Reagan in the legislature is partly partisan, partly principled. There is, to begin with, deep division on the question of whether a financial crisis actually exists. To most Democrats, Reagan's "we do our part" rhetoric seems more appropriate to the Depression era which it echoes than to prosperous, contemporary California. There is general agreement that the state faces a revenue gap, but the gap is attributed by Democrats to the fact that a growing state is tied to an inelastic tax structure. The seeming disproportion between the growth of state spending and population growth cited by Reagan is treated as a natural accompaniment to the fact that nearly half of California's population is under 25—an age group that places heavy demands on such state services as education. Virtually everyone agrees that taxes will have to be raised and there are few objections to modest economizing, but major cutbacks in ongoing programs are another matter. Among Republicans, on the other hand, Reagan's economics are generally endorsed, and those who believe that there is a fiscal crisis also believe that the university should do its share.

How the votes will go is another question. A caucus of Democrats—who control both houses of the legislature—has already voted to oppose Reagan and support a \$264-million budget for the university. And in Jesse Unruh, speaker of the Assembly, Reagan has a powerful opponent who is a good friend of the university and also knows a good political issue when he sees one. But there are plenty of uncertainties. Particularly among Republicans there is evident a low-key satisfaction that the university is at last being treated just like any other state agency. "They've been coming around here for years, God-like, expecting to get whatever they want," one influential Republican leader remarked in a recent interview. "They never think about the needs of the rest of the state. For once let them be just like everybody else." The legislature has been newly reapportioned, and is now dominated by representatives from the south. And the governor can veto a legislative appropriation and substitute a lower sum which can be overridden only by a two-thirds majority of both houses—

something that may be difficult for even the most supple legislative leaders to muster.

The Regents

Unlike the legislature, the university's Board of Regents has accepted Reagan's premise of a fiscal crisis with a lack of scepticism surprising in men so sophisticated in the ways of finance. On most questions relating to the budget and tuition a majority of the regents, both Democrats and Republicans, are opposed to the governor, but they are evidently deeply influenced by him as well. Their opposition to Reagan is, first of all, practical. The regents include representatives of the dominant economic interests of California. They are aware, even if the governor is not, of the practical economic returns the state gets from the university. They frequently speak of the university as an economic object. In a recent interview with *Science*, one regent generally counted among the Board's conservatives commented that "education is automatic credit; it more than pays for itself." Another remarked that "the university should be viewed as an asset, not a liability like prisons or something; it's an investment, not a cost." A third regent, at the close of a recent meeting, reminded his colleagues of a statement from a Morgan Guaranty survey that the United States is "underinvesting in human capital in the sense that further increases in both high school and college attendance and further improvement in the quality of education at all levels would be economically profitable."

The regents' opposition to Reagan is also in some measure personal. They are an autocratic lot, accustomed to having their own way in both business and university affairs, and the new governor is not treating them, or their budget, with the respect and dignity they have come to take for granted. It is "their" university—they give it enormous portions of their time and large sums of their own money—and they are not going to let an outsider redefine it for them. But, if the regents are devoted to the university and determined to protect it, their means of defending their public trust is to make private deals. At their most recent meeting they made substantial gestures toward the governor's position. They acceded to his proposal that they contribute about \$19 million in special funds—derived chiefly from overhead on federal grants—to this year's operating budget. They re-

duced their budget request from \$278 million to \$264 million, then backed down still further by authorizing the university administration to count on getting only \$255 million. And they voted that if a conflict should develop between quantity education and quality education because of the lower budget figure, the number of students attending the university could be reduced. They did refuse to vote tuition for the 1967-1968 academic year, but they agreed to take up the question at an April meeting, a date selected to please the governor, and appear to be giving it serious consideration. Reagan subsequently upped his own budget figure, and now says that he can find about \$20 million more for the university than he originally offered.

As far as the university is concerned, the \$255-million figure on which it is now making commitments is only the beginning of the end of a period of nightmare uncertainty. In the first place, there is no guarantee that the money will be voted by the legislature. At least one wealthy regent is convinced that, if it isn't, there are various untapped sources of funds controlled by the regents from which the additional money could be obtained. But this kind of scrounging could work only on a one-time basis and there seems to be considerable feeling that it could set a damaging precedent.

The threat of severe cuts, together with the university's other troubles, has itself been extremely demoralizing. For a time, which fell during the main aca-

demic hunting season, all recruitment of faculty below the tenured level was halted, out of fear that commitments would be made that would undermine the university's flexibility in meeting the cuts. There was also a period of frantic calculation about which programs would have to be scrapped at various alternative levels of funding. In one extreme calculation—based on Reagan's \$196-million budget without the addition of tuition or special funds—it was reckoned that the three newest campuses, at Irvine, San Diego, and Santa Cruz, would have to be closed. Even the \$255-million or the \$264-million budgets, though their implications are not nearly so drastic, will force reductions in a number of areas—inevitably those such as faculty-student ratios, new courses, library support, and so forth, that get closest to the heart of educational quality. In addition, the building up of new programs—such as the new medical schools at Davis and San Diego—may be slowed, and the expansion of existing programs delayed.

Most of the hard, specific decisions have not yet been made and in their absence—and the absence of a regular president—the university seems to be somewhat floundering and uncertain. Contrary to many predictions an exodus of faculty has not begun. But faculty members in all departments are being enveloped in offers, and university officials are frank to admit that recruiting does not seem to be going especially well. The optimists compare the situation to that of the loyalty oath fight

and point out that when the shouting stopped there were few permanent scars. The pessimists reply that times are changing in academia and that while California is entering a period of retrenchment, universities elsewhere in the country, both public and private, are moving into periods of aggressive growth. The mood of uncertainty is well expressed by the university official who commented recently that "The buildings are still standing, the students are there, and the work is going on, but no one is sure that when we look back, this moment won't turn out to have been the university's watershed, the point at which it lost its momentum, the time when a subtle change in its direction began."

One of the least tangible losses is the illusion that the destiny of the university rests with its faculty, students, or administrators. Faculty and students throughout the system have been formulating their views, assembling committees, and passing resolutions, trying to talk about what a university and an education are, or ought to be, about. But while they will play a minor role in selecting a president, they are largely isolated from the processes of power. The university is being defended in the language of economics, not of learning, and its fate rests frankly in the hands of politicians. When the university students marched to Sacramento to protest tuition under the banner "Keep Politics Out of Higher Education," they were not only caught in a paradox, they were asking the impossible.—ELINOR LANGER

Huntsville: Alabama Cotton Town Takes Off into the Space Age

Huntsville, Alabama. This once-drowsy cotton town provides a neatly capsuled case study of why communities throughout the nation are vigorously campaigning for a slice of the federal research and development budget. For until 1950, the plight of the Huntsville area was more or less indistinguishable from that of scores of regions that found themselves outside the mainstream of the great postwar growth of technologically advanced industry.

Then the Army decided to locate its rocket development center in an old munitions facility nearby, and, almost anyway you measure it—economically, socially, educationally, culturally—Huntsville was never the same again.

The events that flowed from the Army decision of 16 years ago have probably wrought more change in Huntsville than its century and a half of previous history. Huntsville's growth and the change in its way of livelihood

have been remarkable. In 1950 the city had about 16,400 inhabitants. It was, and is, the Madison County seat, and on the broad steps of the county courthouse farmers could loll of a Saturday afternoon and exchange homilies. A Confederate soldier, standing tirelessly alert on his pedestal of stone, kept a stern vigil over the somnolent square. The city once had had a thriving textile industry, but many of the mills had fallen on hard times, and their spindles were idle. Although Huntsville had fewer Negroes than most Alabama towns, those who lived there knew their place, which was segregated, poor, and unfavored.

Huntsville today has a population estimated at 143,000, or more than eight times that of 16 years ago. The Confederate soldier on the square is