

search. Good financial management doesn't mean harassment. We should learn that." His view is that DOE is still "thrashing around" in its effort to manage both military and nonmilitary research programs.

In its original business, weapons design, Los Alamos did well in its decade under Agnew in terms of competition with Livermore. Los Alamos is the design source of warheads for all new strategic weapons entering the stockpile—Minuteman III, the Trident submarine missile, cruise missiles, and the proposed MX land-based mobile missile. This marks something of a comeback for Los Alamos, which had earlier lost out in contests with Livermore for a number of strategic warhead designs.

Weapons work itself has been changing. Testing and maintaining the reliability of the nuclear stockpile has become as important a part of the labs' mission as design of bigger—or smaller—and better weapons. In the words of one weapons scientist, "The job is to make hazards less hazardous. By seeing that [weapons] need less care and feeding and will sustain in an [adverse] environment, we make them more credible, not for use but for potential."

One change that Los Alamos staff members say makes for easier recruiting of lab staff and for fewer awkward moments in conversations on airplanes is that negative attitudes toward weapons work among the public have diminished. Weapons scientists are a self-selected group who do not suffer from an occupational sense of sin, but some say they keep mum about their work for reasons ranging from not wanting to be "has-sled" to some nervousness about "the kooks out there." A fair number of scientists who came to Los Alamos during the buildup of energy R & D took pains to make clear that they were not involved in weapons work. One Los Alamos old timer observed of them, "We got some pretty good peaceniks up here, still do, but as they get older they get more pragmatic." And toward the recent bleak developments in international affairs and their military implications there is, among the Los Alamos regulars, a quiet air of "We told you so."

That Los Alamos has a future as a multipurpose lab is the current consensus although there have been times when that seemed much less certain. As for Kerr's stewardship and the 1980's, it is never safe to predict what is in store, but, although it appears that the 1970's growth spurt is over, a good bet is that life at Los Alamos will not get any less complicated.—JOHN WALSH

Republican Candidate Picks Fight with Darwin

Ronald Reagan recently had kind words for creationism, a nationwide movement that over the last decade has been trying to get the biblical view of creation inserted into public school curriculums on an equal footing with evolution.

At a press conference following a speech to a fundamentalist religious coalition in Dallas, the Republican presidential nominee was asked if he



Roger Sandler photo

thought the theory of evolution should be taught in public schools. The governor responded:

"Well, it is a theory, it is a scientific theory only, and it has in recent years been challenged in the world of science and is not yet believed in the scientific community to be as infallible as it once was believed. But if it was going to be taught in the schools, then I think that also the biblical theory of creation, which is not a theory but the biblical story of creation, should also be taught."

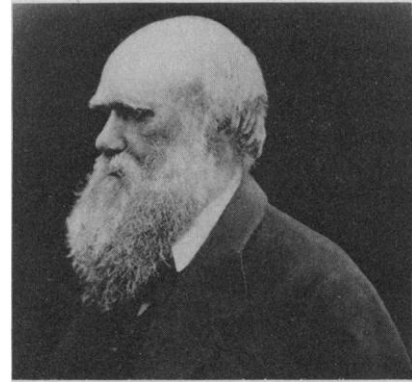
Asked if he believed in the theory of evolution, Reagan replied: "I have a great many questions about it. I think that recent discoveries down through the years have pointed up great flaws in it."

Where has Reagan been getting his update on evolution? As it happens, the only "recent discoveries" casting doubt on evolution have been made not by scientists but by persons associated with the Creation Research Society, which wants the Bible given equal time with Darwin in biology classrooms.

According to G. Ledyard Stebbins, a geneticist at the University of California at Davis, Reagan's sympathy

with the creationists was common knowledge when he was governor. Reagan supported an unsuccessful 1972 suit brought by the state school board—whose superintendent was a friend of the governor—to bring the teaching of creationism to public schools.

Creationism is an increasingly powerful movement that has been working through state legislatures for laws that would give the Bible "equal time" with Darwin. So far, such legislation has been introduced in 15 states, and in 27 states textbook selection committees have come under heavy pres-



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sure to accommodate creationism. Where the issue has come to court the creationist forces have been turned back. But support by a major presidential candidate of what has so far been a grass-roots anti-intellectual movement raises interesting questions about the extent to which it may be able to affect school curriculums in the future.

In the speech to the fundamentalists, Reagan furnished another clue about his thoughts on science teaching. Accusing the government of having become "morally neutral," Reagan dredged up an issue that caused a stir in Congress 5 years ago. That was a course developed by the National Science Foundation called MACOS (for Man, a Course of Study), which went into a lot of detail about the social life of Eskimos. Reagan described it as a course "which indirectly taught grade school children relativism, as they decided which members of their family should be left to die for the survival of the remaining ones." Added the governor, "I don't recall the government ever granting \$7 million to scholars for the writing of textbooks reflecting a religious view of man and his destiny."