

RIPON FORUM

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NOVEMBER 15, 1975

VOL. XI, No. 22

50 CENTS

EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL POINTS: THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE CITY

It was with great regret that we learned of Vice President Rockefeller's decision not to run on the national Republican ticket in 1976. During the last year Rockefeller has served both the country and President Ford with distinction, bringing to his office a wealth of governmental experience and political expertise while providing a needed solidity to the fledgling Ford Administration. As a progressive Republican with a long record of accomplishment in state as well as national politics, Rockefeller would have been a major asset to President Ford and the GOP in next year's general election and would have contributed significantly to the second Ford Administration.

We are concerned, moreover, that the Vice President's announcement may result in an accelerated narrowing of our party's already diminished base of support, and that it may encourage the Republican Right to demand still further concessions from the Ford Administration, most notably the nomination of Ronald Reagan or some other conservative as the President's 1976 running mate. Increasingly, it appears that President Ford's campaign will concentrate on the parochial and overly anxious objective of warding off opposition by an aroused GOP Right in the primaries or at Kansas City. If President Ford is to win election in November—and to govern well thereafter—he will need to appeal to a much broader segment of his own party, not to mention forging a wider coalition among the electorate generally. The withdrawal of Vice President Rockefeller is thus an unsettling indication of the dangerous course on which we fear the Administration may now have embarked.

On the bright side, President Ford's appointment of outstanding moderate Republicans to fill three important cabinet-level vacancies demonstrates once again the substantial resources on which our party is able to draw when it so chooses. Donald Rumsfeld has distinguished himself in a series of high White House positions; he is especially well-suited for the post of secretary of defense by virtue of the training he received in strategic and world affairs during his two years as U.S. ambassador

to NATO. It is also good to welcome back Elliot Richardson into the cabinet to succeed Rogers Morton as secretary of commerce. Throughout the dark days of Watergate, Richardson exhibited a high standard of moral and political rectitude that has been the trademark of his public life. Finally, we hope that former Texas Congressman, former U.N. Ambassador, and current Envoy to Peking George Bush will be as successful in restoring confidence in the Central Intelligence Agency as he has been in his other governmental pursuits. These are moderate Republicans of whom we are proud. They have been widely maligned as utility players in an Administration with little tolerance for sometimes erratic "stars." In reality, however, they are professional civil servants with extensive backgrounds in both politics and policy. Rather than disqualifying them from their new tasks, their political sensitivity hopefully will provide them with better guidelines for reestablishing citizen confidence in and cooperation with government.

Politics has become a dirty word. Rumsfeld, Richardson, and Bush have a continuing responsibility to demonstrate that the political system can be responsive to public attitudes while also providing leadership for public goals. If they can do that, they will have accomplished more than any transcontinental campaign flight by Air Force One could ever hope to do for President Ford's reelection.

We are gratified that House Minority Leader John J. Rhodes has adopted the position advocated by Ripon—that the federal government offer appropriate loan guarantees to avert New York City default, conditioned upon the city's immediate adoption of a balanced budget.

A federal guarantee is unlikely to cost taxpayers a penny. It will enable sufficient bonds to be sold and produce enough cash to avoid default. The city's fiscal plan, upon which the guarantee would be premised, will ensure that the specter of default will not arise again. ■

POLITICS: ELECTIONS

AT LEAST IT WASN'T A ROTTEN YEAR

Anyone looking for political trends in this year's election results could have spent his/her time better looking for seashells in the Rocky Mountains. A sampling of non-trends follows:

CALIFORNIA The preliminary in the San Francisco mayoralty race was something of a surprise as the favorite, Supervisor Dianne Feinstein, finished out of the money as a conservative supervisor nudged past her to face State Sen. George Moscone(D) in the runoff. State Sen. Milton Marks, a progressive Republican, finished a poor fifth.

CONNECTICUT The GOP had hoped for some victories in the state's big cities, but they hoped too much. Democrats continued control of Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury, and New Britain, while crushing the GOP in previously Republican Bridgeport. Only in Stamford was the GOP successful.

KENTUCKY The GOP had hoped that the busing controversy in Louisville and Jefferson County would provide enough dissatisfaction with Gov. Julian Carroll(D) to build a "vote the ins out" tidal wave. Instead, a backlash against violence and divisiveness on the part of the GOP led to a Democratic win statewide and a bare margin of victory for GOP gubernatorial candidate Robert Gable in Jefferson County. Carroll swept every congressional district including the solid Republican 5th C.D. It appears that more and more grass roots Republicans are staying home in Kentucky. Carroll's record margin came from a decrease in GOP votes. Democratic legislative margins were cut by only one vote.

INDIANA Republican William Hudnut(R), a former congressman, recaptured the Indianapolis mayoralty for the GOP, but elsewhere in the state, the Democrats picked up ten more mayoralties.

LOUISIANA Republicans didn't even have a candidate to disturb Gov. Edwin W. Edwards(D), who easily coasted to victory over two Democratic opponents.

MISSISSIPPI Republican Gil Carmichael put a scare in gubernatorial winner Cliff Finch(D), but that was about the only scare the Democrats received. Other statewide Democratic candidates won handily, and only one Republican seat was added to the existing two House seats controlled by the GOP. In the Senate, two is still the loneliest number for the GOP.

NEW JERSEY After the crushing defeat suffered by the GOP in 1973, Republicans had only one way to go, and they did pick up 17 seats to narrow their deficit in the Assembly to 49-31. In several counties, however, the GOP failed to make expected inroads in nominally Republican areas...particularly when they had touted the legislative elections as a referendum on Gov. Brendan Byrne's leadership.

MINNESOTA Minneapolis Mayor Albert Hofstede(D) was unexpectedly upset by former Mayor Charles Stenvig, an independent conservative. Although the GOP candidate hardly made a dent in the mayor's race, Republicans did rebound in from their 1973 disasters in the city council elections, winning an additional two seats.

PHILADELPHIA Republican votes went to Mayor Frank Rizzo(D) again this year, reducing City Councilman Tom Foglietta(R) to a poor, third-place finish in the mayoral race. The GOP was shut out of the district council races for the first time since 1959, and is now represented by only at-large Councilwomen Beatrice K. Chernock and Dr. Ethel Allen. Across the state in Pittsburgh, Mayor Peter Flaherty(D) strengthened his political hand with the election of his brother, Jim, to the Alleghany Board of County Commissioners. Flaherty's new organizational base in the county may propel him into next year's Senate contest.

OHIO Cleveland Mayor Ralph Perk(R) handily hung onto his office and the GOP managed to pick up an extra city council seat in Cincinnati, but Gov. James A. Rhodes' massive bond program suffered a massive defeat. Rhodes blamed the setback on New York City.

VIRGINIA Republican hopes of recapturing legislative seats they lost in the last elections were unfounded. Democrats held onto their 35-5 margin in the State Senate and boosted their margin in the House of Delegates by two more seats, 174-19 (with seven independents).

WASHINGTON Secretary of State Bruce Chapman(R) won a surprisingly easy victory over Democrat Kay Anderson to fill out the unexpired portion of the office to which he was appointed earlier in the year by Gov. Dan Evans(R). Chapman is pledged to try to abolish his office and so is considered a likely candidate for another statewide office. Another Chapman-Anderson contest is considered likely next year.

POLITICS: NEW YORK

WINNING SOME AND LOSING SOME IN NEW YORK

by Glenn Gerstell

The elections earlier this month reaffirmed that New York voters can be rather discriminating when they cast ballots on pocketbook issues and still remain susceptible to emotional rhetoric on social matters. With only 25 percent of the eligible electorate voting, the state's voters approved constitutional amendments that reformed governmental structure, rejected other amendments that would cost taxpayers more money, and vetoed the proposed equal rights amendment to the state constitution.

In an election year which featured chiefly local races, the equal rights amendment proved to be the only statewide issue of any controversy. Virtually every major political figure and newspaper in the state endorsed E.R.A.; opposition came mainly from the Conservative Party and several Catholic groups. Some of the more militant opposition organizations distributed literature charging that "a vote for E.R.A. is a vote against the family" and a "vote for homosexual marriages." Feminist and other groups attempted to rebut these claims, of course, as well as assuage the ill-founded fears that passage of E.R.A. would lead inexorably to coed bathrooms. Some of the lavatory legends must have lingered, however, for the amendment lost by a vote of 1,775,000 to 1,365,000.

While it was expected that normally conservative upstate voters would reject E.R.A., few observers believed that the amendment would lose in the downstate suburbs and upstate urban areas as badly as it did—E.R.A. lost Monroe County, which contains the mildly liberal city of Rochester by a staggering 2-1 margin. To the surprise of E.R.A. supporters, the amendment carried only the five counties of New York City.

With the specter of New York default haunting the daily headlines, voters were suspicious of any ballot proposition that called for increased borrowing or taxation. They rejected constitutional amendments involving municipal financing for sewers, a statewide unified court system, increased taxes for public employee pensions, and authorization for a bond issue to finance housing for the elderly. However, two politically significant amendments were approved: one establishes a state commission to investigate judicial misconduct, and the other permits the legislature to call itself into session, as is now allowed in a majority of states. Previously, only the governor could summon the legislature back into session. Now, with the concurrence of two-thirds of the Senate and Assembly, the legislature may reconvene in special session in an attempt to override a

gubernatorial veto made after the close of the regular session. Since the Assembly is controlled by the Democrats, who are reluctant to override Gov. Hugh Carey(D), it is doubtful that passage of this provision signals a period of legislative dominance over the executive. But the days of legislative subservience, which characterized the 15-year reign of Gov. Nelson Rockefeller(R), are clearly over.

New York City's fiscal crisis formed the originally unexpected backdrop for the debate surrounding the proposed amendments to the city's charter that were suggested by a state commission headed by State Sen. Roy M. Goodman. When established in 1972 by then-Gov. Rockefeller, the State Charter Revision Commission was seen as a vehicle for dampening the Presidential ambitions of then-Mayor John V. Lindsay(D). However, in a responsible manner, the bipartisan commission set about to decentralize the delivery of municipal services and provide minor reforms in governmental structure and finances.

But by the time the commission's formal recommendations were presented to the public this past August, decentralization had taken the back seat, and the proposed fiscal reforms took the spotlight. In a political compromise with some of the Democratic commission members, the commission placed ten charter amendments on the ballot but only recommended the first six. These six would enhance the City Council's power at the expense of the mayor, mandate fiscal reforms, and give local neighborhoods a greater voice in community planning and municipal service delivery.

Sen. Goodman, a progressive Republican from Manhattan, and his top aide, John Steele, coordinated a vigorous campaign with state funds to publicize the existence of charter amendments on the ballot. A separate Citizens' Committee, headed by Archibald L. Gillies, urged the adoption of the first six, recommended amendments; the commission itself was barred by state law from advocating a "yes" or "no" vote on particular amendments. Mayor Abraham Beame opposed all ten proposals; Gov. Carey approved only the first three; the New York Times and Post adopted the commission's recommendations; various citizens and good-government groups were split on the proposals. To the surprise of many observers, the voters did approve the first six proposals while rejecting the remaining four. The Times editorial analyzing the election's impact a few days later suggested: "Mayor Beame and his aides chose to oppose reform... and to make a political issue of Sen. Goodman's suspected aspiration to run for mayor in 1977."

The voters' response constitutes a powerful rebuff to the mayor and his policies and a boost for Mr. Goodman, who has demonstrated an impressive capacity for leadership..." In the wake of the election, Goodman has opted to keep the commission in business to implement the reforms. Beame, however, is determined to run the reformation from City Hall.

As expected, Democrats retained their hold in other city elections, winning state Supreme Court judgeships, the Bronx and Staten Island district attorneys' offices, and elections to fill vacancies for one State Assembly and two City Council seats. Unexpectedly, however, Democrats made strong inroads in the formerly Republican bastion of Westchester County to the north of the city. Two years ago, voters elected a popular Democrat, Alfred B. DelBello, as county executive, and this year they trimmed the Republican margin on the Board of Legislators to a 9-8 margin. In nearby suburban Rockland County, Democrats also gained in local elections.

Democrats in Nassau County had hoped to continue the advances made last year, but they ran up against one of the strongest Republican political machines in the nation, that of Assemblyman/GOP County Chairman Joseph M. Margiotta. At issue this year was a ballot proposition that would have mandated a change in county governmental structure from a six-man Board of Supervisors (one supervisor from each town in the county) to a 15-member county legislature (with members from equal population districts). To account for population discrepancies between towns, the current board, which consists of four Republicans and two Democrats, has a weighted voting system that gives the Republicans 128 votes to the Democrats' five. Needless to say, the GOP strongly urged the retention of the Board of Supervisors. The Democrats, the League of Women Voters, and many newspapers advocated the change, but the Republicans struck a responsive chord with their claim that the proposed legislature would cost more, and the measure went down to defeat.

Further out on Long Island, Suffolk County Democrats succeeded in taking control of the

county legislature by an 11-7 margin. Suffolk used to be one of the most Republican counties in the state, but last year Democrats picked up all three congressional seats as well as the district attorney's office. This year's gains spell trouble for GOP county leader Edwin S. Schwenk. One bright spot for Republicans was the reelection of County Executive John V.N. Klein, who had attracted favorable publicity for his efforts to stem urbanization and preserve the remaining rural areas of the county. In the eyes of many political observers, Klein's victory makes him a potential statewide candidate. State Assembly Minority Leader Perry B. Duryea, Jr., another Suffolk resident who would like to be a statewide candidate, might face some future difficulties—as evidenced by the election of a Democrat this year for the local legislative seat in his home district.

Had he not been indicted on an alleged election law fraud in 1974, Duryea, then speaker of the Republican-controlled Assembly, might have challenged Gov. Malcolm Wilson in that year's GOP primary. Duryea's supporters claimed the indictment was politically inspired by former Gov. Rockefeller to facilitate the election of Wilson, who had been Rockefeller's lieutenant governor for 15 years. Duryea's charge was dismissed in two months when the section of the law on which the indictment had been based was declared unconstitutional. Now a similar occupational hazard has befallen the current Assembly speaker, Democrat Stanley Steingut. Steingut (whose father, Irwin, was also an Assembly speaker) and his son, New York City Councilman Robert Steingut, were indicted by Brooklyn District Attorney Eugene Gold for allegedly promising a patronage job to someone in return for a contribution to the son's campaign two years ago. Since the indictment is based on an obscure section of the statutes (last used in a 1915 prosecution), the speculation is that this charge—like Duryea's—is politically motivated. The elder Steingut has no realistic hopes of further political advancement, but his son and D.A. Gold do have such hopes. Gold, in fact, is reported to have just spent \$18,000 on a statewide poll to see if he should run for Sen. James Buckley's seat in 1976. ■

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THE RIPON FORUM is published semi-monthly by the Ripon Society, Inc., 1609 Conn. Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. Second class postage rates paid at Washington, D.C. and other mailing offices. Contents are copyrighted © 1975 by the Ripon Society, Inc. Correspondence addressed to the editor is welcomed. (Ripon FORUM, Box 226, Charlestown, Mass. 02129.)

In publishing this magazine the Ripon Society seeks to provide a forum for fresh ideas, well-researched proposals and for a spirit of criticism, innovation, and independent thinking within the Republican Party. Articles do not necessarily represent the opinion of the National Governing Board or the Editorial Board of the

Ripon Society, unless they are explicitly so labelled.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES are \$15 a year, \$7.50 for students, servicemen, and for Peace Corps, Vista and other volunteers. Overseas air mail, \$6 extra. Advertising rates on request. Please allow five weeks for address changes.

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POLITICS: PRESIDENCY

IS THERE AN EDSÉL IN FORD'S FUTURE?

Subsequent to Vice President Rockefeller's announcement of non-candidacy, Democratic National Chairman Robert Strauss told reporters that Ronald Reagan would be a tougher GOP presidential candidate than Gerald Ford. After all, noted Strauss, "Reagan wouldn't have to run on Ford's record." Ford's actions meanwhile—particularly on aid to New York City—prompted the conservative weekly Human Events to caption an editorial: "Ford Continues to 'Reaganize' Campaign."

Meanwhile, Reagan's forces have been Reaganizing the GOP. One alleged reason for Rocky dropping a vice presidential bid were GOP polls in Connecticut and Minneapolis that showed Rockefeller had only a 38 percent favorable rating compared to a 49 percent favorable rating for Reagan in Minnesota and a 46 percent such rating in Connecticut. Other signs of Ford trouble follow:

Florida: With former GOP Chairman Tommy Thomas running the Reagan campaign, Reagan organizer Lyn Nofziger says, "We think things look very good down there." Regarding Reagan's efforts to attract moderates, Nofziger says, "We'll go after anybody who's willing to support the governor's point of view."

Illinois: Reagan activists may give the Percy-led Ford operation a run for the money. Commented Chicago columnist Edward S. Gilbreth recently: "[Reagan organizer Mark Rhoads] and scores of men and women like him in the under-30 crowd in the prosperous suburbs, constitute Reagan's secret weapon in Illinois. College-bred, business-oriented, intensely conservative, they form a network of activists that would shame some of the Republican Party's lethargic township organizations."

Kentucky: Ford cancelled a gubernatorial fundraiser for Robert Gable in October and declined to reschedule the event in Lexington or Frankfort instead of strife-ridden Louisville, which security officials felt might be dangerous for Ford. Republican officials and party workers are quite angry with Ford and many have switched to Reagan. Former Gov. Louie Nunn is leading the Reagan effort while Ford still has no organization and about as much enthusiasm following the resignation of Nunn's brother Lee as Ford's deputy national chief.

Maine: Former Sen. Margaret Chase Smith(R) has a reputation as a moderate but she says Ford has been "disappointing," while Reagan "is telling it like it is."

Maryland: Sen. Charles McC. Mathias(R), one of the nation's most respected progressive Republicans, has threatened to enter the GOP presidential race. Complaining of Ford's "fas-

cination with a very real threat on his right," Mathias told a National Press Club luncheon that the failure of the GOP to develop and push new solutions to the nation's problems was killing the party. A Mathias candidacy at the very least would jeopardize a Ford delegation from Maryland.

Massachusetts: U.S. Rep. Silvio Conte(R) has been appointed to lead the Ford effort but action by the state GOP committee switching delegate selection to a proportional congressional district system will make it easier for Reagan to pick up delegates.

Mississippi: This state is normally considered Reagan country so perhaps the result of a poll of GOP leaders isn't surprising: Reagan, 304; Ford, 222. And Ronnie hadn't even announced.

Nebraska: A group of 40 prominent Nebraska Republicans has signed on to run the Reagan campaign for the Nebraska primary. Former GOP State Chairman Milan Bish heads the effort, aided by a large cross-section of Republican officials and office-holders. The Nebraska organization is fairly typical of the jump Reagan organizers have gotten over Ford activists in several states.

New York: GOP leaders in effect unendorsed Ford by deciding at a recent meeting to attempt to send a "united and uncommitted" delegation to the 1976 convention. Rocky's departure has obviously weakened Ford's strength in the state. There is no evidence of a Ford campaign organization, but Ford fundraiser Gustave L. Levy, head of the investment banking firm of Goldman, Sachs, & Co., is having trouble raising cash because of Ford's default stand.

North Carolina: A head-on and critical clash is scheduled for this state with Gov. James Holshouser(R) leading the Ford effort and Sen. Jesse A. Helms(R) leading the Reagan operation. The primary should revive the moderate-conservative split in the party. Helms is expected to pick up substantial support.

Texas: Former Texas Gov. John Connally(D-R) is looking toward Pennsylvania Avenue and trying to act both Presidential and Republican. That act could be a difficult one to top if Connally enters the Texas GOP primary.

Utah: A poll by the Salt Lake City Tribune in early November showed Ford leading Reagan by a bare 37-35 percent with 25 percent undecided.

Virginia: In case anyone is interested, Sen. William L. Scott(R) says he won't "rule out" a Reagan-Scott ticket.

Commentary: THE PRESIDENCY

EXPERTS AND CANDIDATES: HOW TO CHOOSE A PRESIDENT

By L. Scott Miller

Ideally, during next year's Presidential campaign, candidates will forthrightly debate several of the most pressing issues and in the process furnish interested voters with much of the information necessary for a sound evaluation of each aspirant's leadership ability. Recent election experience, however, suggests that we should not assume the campaign will be either issue-oriented or otherwise provide many genuine opportunities for a thorough comparison of candidates' executive credentials. Instead, a more realistic expectation for voters is that "Campaign '76" probably will be long on media drama and short on decision-making substance.

Despite this less than sanguine forecast, the FCC's recent modification of the equal-time rule for political candidates offers at least a prospect for improving the quality of next year's campaign debate. The FCC's new ruling will allow broadcasters to cover third-party sponsored discussions between particular candidates as news events without having to worry about other aspirants' demands for equal time. Although full repeal of the equal-time rule probably would have maximized the potential for head-to-head political debates, this more limited rollback provides ample opportunity to bring candidates together in traditional or innovative discussion formats which can be seen and heard by virtually all voters.

One possible format that might go a long way toward focusing the 1976 Presidential campaign on key issues and candidates' executive credentials would be to have the principal candidates and panels of experts engage in a series of televised discussions, each of which would concentrate on a single national problem. In practical terms, these discussions might be considered the electoral equivalent of job interviews. During each of these sessions, voters—via the experts' questioning of the aspirants—would have an opportunity to compare and contrast in a systematic, convenient way each candidate's basic understanding of/position on a carefully selected issue.

Comparision of the candidates' views would be facilitated by having the experts focus their questions almost exclusively on the various steps in the decision-making process that should be employed by an able executive politician when attempting to handle a public policy problem of some difficulty and importance. For example, the interrogation could be designed to elicit the candidates' views on the following:

1. The nature and causes of the specific problem;
2. Its relative importance vis-a-vis other issues;
3. Possible alternative solutions:

4. The socio-economic costs and benefits of each;
5. Appropriate criteria for selecting the "best" solution;
6. The preferred solution;
7. The time and resources required for its proper implementation;
8. The likelihood of its success; and possibly;
9. Its political feasibility.

By having the discussions center on a number of these steps, voters should gain valuable information concerning several aspects of each candidate's executive ability which probably could not be obtained easily from "normal" campaign events. More specifically, assuming the issues selected for discussion are genuinely difficult and require a substantial degree of knowledge of one or more technical subjects, then decision-oriented questions should provide significant insights into each aspirant's ability to retain competent advisors as well as each's capacity to select/evaluate/use information and recommendations provided by those counselors,

If the experts' interrogation requires aspirants to definitely state both their preferred solutions and the decision rules used to select them, then the electorate might obtain very tangible and immediate understanding of how each candidate's political philosophy and value system may tend to influence the choice of specific policies. Finally, to the extent that an issue under discussion is characterized by uncertainty, voters may be able to observe candidates' behavior in a situation in which an honest, forthright leader would be compelled to admit his/her analytical limitations. In turn, the electorate may acquire more appreciation of the complex trade-offs associated with most major issues—and in the process, develop more reasonable expectations concerning what any President and government can achieve.

Admittedly, any voter conclusions drawn from these discussions should be used with caution. Even with the most comprehensive set of questions, a particular candidate may perform successfully by employing a combination of charisma and rote memory. It should also be recognized that selection of good advisors for a debate may signify nothing more than the ability to pick a capable "kitchen cabinet," which is a valuable but limited skill when contrasted with a President's task of staffing the executive branch. Of course, other key leadership traits, such as the ability to motivate subordinates to carry out decisions or the capacity to work/negotiate with independent groups such as a Congress would not be explored at all dur-

ing such discussions.

In order to maximize the opportunity for the electorate to obtain the benefits outlined above, the series of discussions might be structured in the following way:

* There would be three discussions in all, one every third week during the latter part of the campaign.

* Each discussion would be one-hour long and centered on one issue, e.g., unemployment, detente, or welfare reform.

* Discussions would be aired twice to insure maximum exposure, once (live) in the evening and once (via video tape) in the morning. Radio could supplement the televised broadcasts as could newspaper transcripts of the debates.

* A panel of five experts would be selected for each discussion who would represent a diverse set of viewpoints on the particular issue. A broadcast journalist also would be selected for each session to act as moderator.

* The major questions to be examined during each discussion session would be developed by the experts with the assistance of the moderator and submitted to the candidates by the middle of August.

* In addition to the list of major questions, the experts also would provide the candidates with: (a) an explanation of how the questions should be interpreted; (b) an estimate of the total amount of time expected to be allocated to each one (as well as associated follow-up questions); and (c) the amount of time the candidates would have to present their prepared answers. Presumably, candidates' prepared answers would be relatively short, typically about two-three minutes, leaving substantial time for follow-up questions and answers.

* Candidates would be required to focus strictly on the questions, making no reference in any way to the positions taken by other candidates. Although enforcement of this rule would be difficult, a possible incentive for compliance might be to reduce a candidate's total response time during a discussion by one minute for each such reference.

* Each candidate would furnish the experts with copies of his/her prepared answers at least one week before the discussion. This would enable the panel to use the candidates' answers to develop a follow-up question strategy as well as prepare some preliminary comments on the similarities and differences in the aspirants' positions on the issues. To assure that the commentary would be both balanced and expeditiously made, two experts could be assigned follow-up responsibility for each major question.

* Experts would have no mandate to draw conclusions during the discussion as to which candidate's answers were "best." However, they could note (collectively or individually) differences between their knowledge of the facts and the facts assumed by the candidates.

* During the last 15 minutes of a discussion, the experts would summarize their under-

standing of each candidate's stance on the issue and the candidates would comment on the accuracy of these summaries.

Although discussion structured in the above way could improve substantially the quality of debate during a Presidential election, there would be at least three potential sources of major controversy: (1) selection of the issues; (2) selection of the panels of experts; and (3) determination of eligible candidates. Of the three, selection of the issues may be the easiest task. For example, issues could be selected in the following way:

* A nonpartisan organization such as the League of Women Voters, the American Bar Association, or the Society of Professional Journalists might agree to sponsor the discussion series.

* The sponsoring organization would select a nonpartisan group of twelve eminent citizens, representing a diverse set of interests and viewpoints, to act as an "issue board." This group probably should be established in the early spring of 1976.

* The board would develop a master list of fifteen major issues.

* After formulation of this list, a nationally-recognized pollster would take a scientific sample to ascertain voters' opinions concerning the relative importance of these issues. A simple ranking of the fifteen issues by those sampled would be the most efficient method for establishing their order of importance. Voters included in the sample would be allowed to add their own issues to the list. The poll probably should be taken in early summer.

* The top three issues as determined by the poll would be selected for use in the discussions in the fall. However, if all three issues were related to the same general subject, e.g., the economy, one could be dropped and another substituted from the masterlist by a two-third votes of the nonpartisan group. This would insure that the discussions would not cluster in one subject area.

If the use of the nonpartisan group proves acceptable for selecting the issues, it could also provide the basis for selecting the panel of experts. Once the five issues are chosen, the group would assume responsibility for selecting the experts. To insure that a broad spectrum of opinion is represented by the experts, a two-third majority of the advisory group would be required to appoint a member to a particular panel.

Determining the eligibility of candidates could be difficult if there are several third party aspirants. A simple and effective approach, however, might be to make eligibility contingent on a candidate meeting two of the following three criteria:

* Being placed on the ballot in at least 90 percent of the states;

* His/her party's candidates in the prev-

ious election receiving at least 5 percent of the vote; and/or

* Receiving 5 percent of voter support as determined by a scientific sample taken in early August.

A minimum standard such as this would be necessary to insure that only significant candidates for the Presidency participate in the discussions. It would be desirable, of course, to allow candidates from very small parties to join in the discussions; however, this really would not be possible under television time constraints.

If adopted, the system of televised discus-

sions described above could increase substantially the common data base concerning candidates' executive credentials available to the electorate. Should such discussions prove to be useful the basic approach probably could be modified/expanded in several ways to provide voters with much more information of value. For example, in conjunction with the discussions between candidates and experts, a separate series of television roundtable discussions could be added in which the panels of experts answer their own questions. These roundtables could give the electorate an additional means for evaluating the positions of the various candidates. ■

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February 27-29, 1976 at the Stouffers Hotel in Washington, D.C., will feature issue panels on redressing the balance between risk and security; neighborhood revitalization; individual rights versus the public interest; and energy and the environment. Further information will be available from Golden.

- Acting after a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Governing Board in New York City October 18, Ripon president Jared Kaplan wrote President Ford urging "the Congress and your administration to support legislation that would provide a federal guarantee for appropriate state or municipal securities, on the condition that the City of New York immediately adopt an expense budget in which current expenditures do not exceed current revenues." Commenting on the probability of default despite expense cutbacks, Kaplan said, "We believe the [city] budget can be balanced within one year, rather than within the proposed three. Were this to be done, we hope the federal government would act quickly to guarantee the appropriate securities. Only the backing of a federal guarantee will enable a sufficient amount of bonds to be sold, thus generating the cash so desperately needed to meet the city's obligations." Regarding the political implications of Ford's default position, Kaplan said: "We urge you to reject the counsel of those who would premise federal action upon short-term political calculations. Such an approach can be pursued only at the great peril of a potential national economic collapse following the city's default."
- Former Ripon national officer Bruce Chapman won election as Washington secretary of state in the November elections and Minnesota Ripon member Walter Rockenstein won reelection to the Minneapolis City Council.
- GOP congressional candidate Bob Olsen was the speaker at the Nashville Chapter's October 15 meeting. Republican National Committee Chairman Mary Louise Smith was scheduled to be the speaker at the November 17 meeting of the Washington, D.C. chapter. Terrence Brunner, executive director of the Better Government Association, was the speaker at the Chicago Chapter's September 16 meeting. The scheduled speaker for the November 20 meeting of the Denver Chapter was State Rep. Don Friedman(R). The Denver chapter has scheduled its' Conference on Energy for February 6-8. State Senate Majority Leader Warren Anderson (R) was the New York Chapter's speaker in September; State Sen. Roy Goodman and City Housing and Development Administrator Roger Starr debated the pros and cons, respectively, of the proposed city charter amendments at the chapter's October meeting.
- Nancy W. Hunt, New York chapter executive vice president for policy, and Glenn Gerstell, New York chapter board chairman, were unopposed candidates in the September GOP primary elections for district leader and associate district leader respectively in Manhattan's East Side. In an adjoining district, New York chapter executive vice president for political action Carmen L. Steele, was also a successful candidate for district leader.
- Michael Stafford, New York Ripon member and counsel to State Sen. John R. Dunne(R), and Ripon Vice President for Publications Clifford Brown were panelists at the November 8 meeting of the Association of New York State Young Republican Clubs in Syracuse.

RIPON FORUM

Published semi-monthly by the Ripon Society, 1609 Conn. Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C. and other mailing offices.