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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

December 5, 1974

MR 7

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: KENNETH R. COLE, JR.

SUBJECT: Republican Governor's Conference

BACKGROUND

Because the format at the Conference included full participation by a press pool of three reporters, many of the Governors felt that the press was given an opportunity which they used effectively to direct the focus of each of the sessions of the conference.

Notwithstanding the presence of RNC Chairwoman Mary Louise Smith and Co-chairman Richard Obenshain, the first questions to be raised by the press were, "Why isn't President Ford at your conference?" That question was repeated often during the first session with some of the Governors feeling you should have attended and others feeling that the best way you can help Republican Governors is to be a great President and they wanted you in Washington rather than at their conference. Some of the Republican Governors, including Ronald Reagan, Dan Evans and Malcolm Wilson were absent which drew other press questions.

SUBSTANCE

The Republican Governors adopted a resolution supporting the early confirmation of Nelson Rockefeller as Vice-President although there were two dissenting votes cast by Meldrim Thomson of New Hampshire and Governor-Elect James Edwards of South Carolina.

They adopted resolutions supporting your call for early reenactment of General Revenue Sharing by the Congress in substantially its present form.

They gave Bill Seidman high marks for "telling it like it is" with respect to the economy. The other participants, Paul Hall, President of International Seafarers Union and O.P. Thomas, Chairman of the Board of B.F. Goodrich Company both indicated support for your recognition of the need to fight inflation, recession and our energy problems at the same time. They, of course, made their own pitches for their respective interest groups, labor and management. Both applauded your efforts with the Wage and Price Council and felt that communication between industry, labor and government is the key to success.

As has been widely reported in various news accounts, Meldrim Thomson of New Hampshire was quoted as saying the Republican Party is on a course to self-destruction and Tom McCall suggested the Party consider a change of name to cut off unfavorable connections with the past. The majority was however more optimistic.

CONSLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Republican Governors are very sensitive politically because of their reduced numbers and an early meeting with you and their leadership is recommended to demonstrate your desire to help them rebuild their ranks. Kit Bond was elected Chairman and Arch Moore was elected Vice Chairman.