

Reagan cabinet goes to work

California lawyer assumes attorney general post

By JEFF BAKER
Of the Emerald

Who is William Smith and what will he do as the nation's Attorney General?

The first question is answered with quizzical shrugs, and the second is met with a variety of speculation that boils down to a gloomy "wait and see."

Little is known about Smith. His biographical sketch shows a quintessential California corporate lawyer, a charter member of Reagan's "kitchen cabinet" who coaxed the reluctant actor into politics and shepherded him into the governor's seat, and a member of the California Board of Regents during the strife-torn 1960s.

The most salient fact about Smith is that he is Reagan's personal attorney. Presumably he shares Reagan's views and would defer major policy decisions to the president.

New York Times columnist William Safire recently raked Smith over the conservative coals for attending Frank Sinatra's birthday party. Safire questioned the propriety of the

nation's chief law enforcement officer hobnobbing with a man with Mafia friends.

Sinatra is in charge of Reagan's inaugural entertainment, a job he performed for John Kennedy in 1961.

"Reagan comes into office as a Law and Order man," says journalism Prof. Jack Hart. "So did Richard Nixon, and look what happened to him."

Smith's appointments will be more important than anything else he does, Hart predicts.

The justice department has

scores of courts, judges, and attorneys working from Washington, D.C. "right down to the grass roots," who influence public policy in myriad ways.

When a new administration takes over, there is a huge turnover in the justice department bureaucracy in Washington and around the country. The 100-odd U.S. Attorneys around the country hand in their resignations and wait for reappointments. But "traditionally, they all resign and are replaced," Hart says.

The most notable exception to that tradition is the U.S. Attorney for Oregon, Sidney Lezak. Lezak was appointed by President Kennedy in 1961 and has weathered numerous political storms. He is the longest serving U.S. Attorney in the country.

This year, Lane County District Attorney Pat Horton is being considered for the post. Eugene lumberman and Reagan crony Peter Murphy tossed Horton's name into the transition pot, where it has yet to surface.

"Lezak obviously has political connections. He'd have to, to remain in office as long as he has," says Josh Markee of the Lane County district attorney's office.

"Horton would be honored to be chosen, but he's definitely not running for it."

It's not Reagan's possible execution of the law, but his philosophical slant that has given liberals the chills.

"I think we'll retreat from the drive toward open government," Hart says. "Republican philosophy is that government agencies ought not to be harrassed by records requests."

"We may see a tightening of access to information under the Freedom of Information Act."

Still, Hart is not ready to condemn Reagan before he gets a chance to act.

"Conservatives are sometimes freer to enact liberal policy than liberals. Protection of press accessibility and restriction of subpoenas came under (Nixon Attorney General John) Mitchell."



Energy secretary evokes fear, cautious optimism

By LESLIE FARRIS
Of the Emerald

Reactions to Pres.-elect Ronald Reagan's choice for energy secretary range from fear to cautious optimism among members of local energy groups.

Much of the energy activists' fear stems from energy secretary-designate James Edwards' advocacy of a pro-nuclear, free enterprise approach to the energy shortage. Additionally, many say they question the former South Carolina governor and dentist's qualifications for a post in the cabinet.

"I fear a dentist in the energy department is grossly inappropriate when what we need is a true scientist — a person who's trained, qualified and competent in energy," says Brian Niemeyer, energy coordinator for the Survival Center.

"His lack of knowledge is reflective of Reagan's overall position on the environment and his (Reagan's) interest for big bucks with no concern whatever for future generations."

R. Lance Spinks, executive director of the Oregon Alliance for Adequate Energy, says his group is cautiously optimistic about Edwards' nomination. Edwards' two-year term in the South Carolina Senate, his four-year term as governor and his experience as a dentist should work to the advantage of consumers, he says.

Spinks says his group also is encouraged by Edward's establishment of the South Carolina Energy Research Institute, a privately funded organization that studies alternative energy sources.

"It is yet to be seen, however, if Edwards will be able to adjust to the intricate operation of government on the federal level," Spinks says. "We hope that

Edwards will rely more on technocrats than merely on bureaucrats."

During last week's confirmation hearings, Edwards said he would recommend that Reagan deregulate oil and gasoline prices "as soon as it is feasible." He told members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which voted in favor of confirmation, that deregulation would ease the energy shortage by encouraging greater production of domestic oil.

When asked about profits flowing to the oil com-

panies, Edwards replied, "I'm not one of those people that believes that profit is a four-letter word."

Olive Bowers of Citizens for Safe Energy says Edwards' comment indicates oil company profits probably won't be taxed or the money returned to energy consumers. And poor people who can't afford high energy prices will suffer most, she says.

"If Reagan's not going to do that — have something like Carter's windfall profits tax — we'll all be a little colder," Bowers says. "Poor people will be hurting, and old people will be freezing in their apartments."

Spinks, however, is more optimistic about the consequences of deregulation. He says he hopes the higher prices will encourage the American public to end its dependence on petroleum as a fuel source and to speed up development of alternative energy sources.

"While Edwards' beliefs in unleashing private enterprise are well-intentioned, that alone will not solve this country's current energy dilemma," Spinks says. "Nor do we (the OAAE) agree with his recent assessment that we can solve all of these energy problems in just four to six years."

Niemeyer says he'd rather see a deeply evaluated, comprehensive approach to the energy shortage. Under a free-enterprise system the West would be wide open to mineral exploration that could prove harmful to the environment, Niemeyer says.

Also during the Senate confirmation hearings, Edwards said he strongly supported further development of nuclear power, including fuel reprocessing and the development of a breeder reactor.

Reprocessing is controversial because it produces plutonium that can be used in nuclear weapons. Breeder reactors also use plutonium.

Bowers says fuel reprocessing and breeder reactors could threaten the country's security because it takes just 20 pounds of plutonium to make a Hiroshima-size weapon.

"That means more plutonium will be produced, it will be transported on the highways and will be easier to come into the hands of terrorists," Bowers says. "And Hanford (Washington) may be one obvious place to build a breeder reactor."

Spinks says that while the breeder reactor program may continue to grow "within reason," the energy industry probably won't invest much money in its development because of public opposition.

Bowers says that, by appointing a pro-nuclear energy secretary, Reagan has chosen to ignore the prevailing public sentiment on nuclear power.

"I have been suprised at how totally conservative Reagan's cabinet selection has been," Bowers says.

"I though he might at least make some token gesture to the center."



Graphic by Sioux Anderson

Pro-energy group pledges rational policy

A "pro-energy" non-profit citizen's action group recently announced its formation in Eugene.

The Oregon Alliance for Adequate Energy aims to educate the public about Oregon energy needs and to promote a "rational" energy policy on the federal, state and local levels, says Executive Director R. Lance Spinks.

"We (OAAE) find it unfortunate that many groups who say they represent the public do nothing but work for their own nearsighted, anti-energy views," Spinks says. "We will be realistic in our planning for the future, for Oregon's future."

OAAE will work on a series of projects including development of a legislative watchdog program, support of alternative energy projects, support of new energy explorations on public lands and licensing of new thermal power plants in Oregon. A steering

committee will be polled regularly to direct OAAE projects.

Spinks says the group will work closely with business and government to ensure the Northwest Power Bill is effectively administered.

"OAAE is not radical, it's more conservative-based," he says. "I want to be able to talk to energy groups who are more to the left but, at the same time, I want to have a firm enough standing to go into business and government offices and communicate with them on a credible basis."

Spinks says his group currently has 237 members from Eugene, Salem, Portland, Seattle and Northern California. Membership is open to the public at \$5 per year — \$2 for students and senior citizens.

Interested persons should write ENERGY, P.O. Box 7254, Eugene 97401, or call Spinks at 484-4024.