

Shuttle voyage an empty symbol

Teachers in outer space?

In 1980 President Reagan promised to do away with the Department of Education. Monday, the President promised to make a teacher the first civilian to ride the space shuttle.

It sounds like the plot of a bad science fiction movie: An incumbent President, hoping to get the vote of the education set and at the same time get rid of a "bothersome" government department, decides to send one of the people it represents into the stratosphere.

"When that shuttle lifts off all of America will be reminded of the crucial role teachers and education play in the life of our nation," Reagan said. "I can't think of a better lesson for our children and our country."

The Battalion Editorial Board can think of several better lessons. What Reagan seems to be giving teachers of America is the gravy, without the meat.

A better gift would be higher salaries or loans to be used by teachers to enhance their educations. Surely our children would receive more benefits from that than from teachers in space.

— The Battalion Editorial Board



Reagan the vital issue in election debate

by DAVID BRODER
Columnist for the Washington Post

The evident strength — and the only potential vulnerability — of Ronald Reagan in this presidential year is summed up in the words of Bob Hughes, the veteran Republican chairman of Cuyahoga County, Ohio.

"The issue in Cleveland will be Reagan," Hughes said. "He so dominates the political scene, he's the colossus. Reagan is the candidate, Reagan is the platform, and Reagan is the only issue for the average voter."

That Reagan has attained this status is the measure of his success in the past four years, and the definition of the small risk he and his party face in the 11 weeks until Election Day.

The press has been focusing on the financial disclosure problems of Demo-

cratic vice presidential candidate Geraldine A. Ferraro and the criticisms other Democrats have made of the management of Walter F. Mondale's presidential campaign.

But in the view of Republican pollster Robert Teeter, these are almost irrelevancies. Mondale is the "generic" Democratic candidate, he says, no better or worse than the rest of the breed, in the voters' eyes. Reagan is the unique product, and therefore the focus of attention and decision in a way that no President has been since Franklin D. Roosevelt and Dwight D. Eisenhower.

No one who was in Dallas last week can have any doubt that Reagan has rendered the rest of the Republican Party irrelevant. There are ghosts of the old "establishment" past, clustered

around the comfortable figures of Vice President George Bush and Senate Majority Leader Howard H. Baker, Jr. (R-Tenn.).

But for now, this party is Ronald Reagan's to do with as he wishes and to lead where he wants it to go. It can create no political or governmental strategy of which he is not a central part.

In the eyes of the ablest Republican strategists, Reagan has similarly fastened his hold on the political opposition.

"They cannot argue that he has been a failure," said one of those strategists. "All they can do is argue that his way is not their way. And the more they convince people that they are different from Reagan — as they have tried to do on taxes and dealing with the Russians,

for example — the more people will say that they prefer Reagan's way."

If Reagan is the issue in this election, what is there really to debate?

In terms of the institutional presidency, Reagan has unquestionably restored the authority of the office and has made it once again the center of the national government that the Founding Fathers intended. What can be debated is whether his internal management of the presidency rests on a genuine command of issues and facts, or is overly dependent on the guidance he receives from his often quarrelsome staff and Cabinet subordinates.

In terms of the economy, Reagan has unquestionably restored a sense of well-being to millions of families by breaking the pattern of stagflation and ushering

in a period of growth that has real after-tax incomes. What can be debated is whether a continuation of the same policies will continue to produce pleasing results — or will fall victim to budgetary and trade deficits and into another severe recession.

In terms of the society, Reagan unquestionably engendered a feeling of patriotism and pride. What can be debated is whether the growing inequality between races and classes that he despise his denials is just temporary growing pains or a symptom of social justice which will bring conflict and wake.

In terms of the world, Reagan has unquestionably increased visible American military strength and forced the Soviet Union to reconsider its relationship with the other superpower. What can be debated — after the mixed record of Grenada and Central America — is whether he has evolved any coherent strategy for making that power the cause of peace and protect national interests, or whether he is barked on a course that will inevitably destabilize the world.

Reagan has been brilliantly successful at projecting his successes and disguising the risk factors his policies contain. But if this election is as close on Reagan as it appears to be, the inevitably that debate will now finally place.

Public scrutiny the price of race for election

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

Mildred Schmidlapp came home from lunch the other day and told Bert Schmidlapp the "girls" wanted her to run for mayor of Five Corners.

"Are you out of your mind?" said Schmidlapp. "If you run for public office I'll have to produce my tax returns."

"What's wrong with that?" Mildred wanted to know.

"Everyone will know how much money I make."

"So, what's the big deal? You didn't do anything wrong when you filled out your tax returns, did you?"

"Everyone does something wrong when he makes out his tax returns. How could you do otherwise with the crazy forms they require you to fill out?"

"Well, as long as it's an honest mistake people won't fault you."

"I'm not worried about people. I'm worried about the IRS. You release my tax return to the public and I'll have 20 agents down here going over every facet of my business."

"I don't see why I should give up my

political ambitions because you're afraid of the IRS."

"Look, I run an honest car dealership in this town — at least as honest as any other car dealer. But in order to meet my bills I can't give all my money to Uncle Sam."

"Then what you're saying is you have something to be afraid of if your tax return is made public."

"Everyone has something to be afraid of when his tax return is published. The only thing the IRS has going for it is fear."

"Why didn't you tell me this before?"

"Because you didn't give a hoot how I ran my business in the past. Now you decide to run for office and suddenly you want to know where the bread for the table is coming from. Why do you want to become mayor anyway?"

"If I do a good job it will be a natural step to the Governor's Mansion."

"My God, if you run for governor, they'll not only have the IRS but the FBI after me."

"Don't tell me you have anything to

hide from the FBI."

"How do I know? They could set me up in a sting operation. They'll try to get me involved in a stolen car ring. Those guys will stop at nothing to set you up."

"I didn't say I'd run for governor right away. But it would be a good spot to launch my campaign for the Oval Office."

"That's where you're heading?"

"What's wrong with wanting to be the first woman president of the United States?" Mildred said.

"Nothing if you don't mind the IRS trashing our records, the FBI tapping our phones, the media camped under our bed, and the public afraid to do business with me because of conflict of interest."

"But you've always been supportive of women running for political office," Mildred said. "Now you're talking out of the other side of your mouth."

"When I said women, I used it in a generic sense. I never thought you would toss your hat in the ring."

"The only reason I'm doing it is that I believe I'd make a very good mayor, and the machine in this town has been in office long enough."

"The machine you're talking about buys all its police cars from me."

"Well, it's wrong. The contract should go to the lowest bidder. That's one of the things I'm going to campaign for."

"That's just great. You take on the machine and they'll see that no one buys a tire from me."

"Honest government is more important than selling cars."

"I agree. So how do I make a buck while you're running for mayor at Five Corners?"

"That's your problem. If I'm going to run for public office I shouldn't know how you make a living."

Homes immune to tax reforms

By ELAINE S. POVICH

Columnist for United Press International

No matter what Congress does about tax reform next year, the American Dream of home ownership — and tax deductions for home mortgage interest — looks like a safe bet to continue.

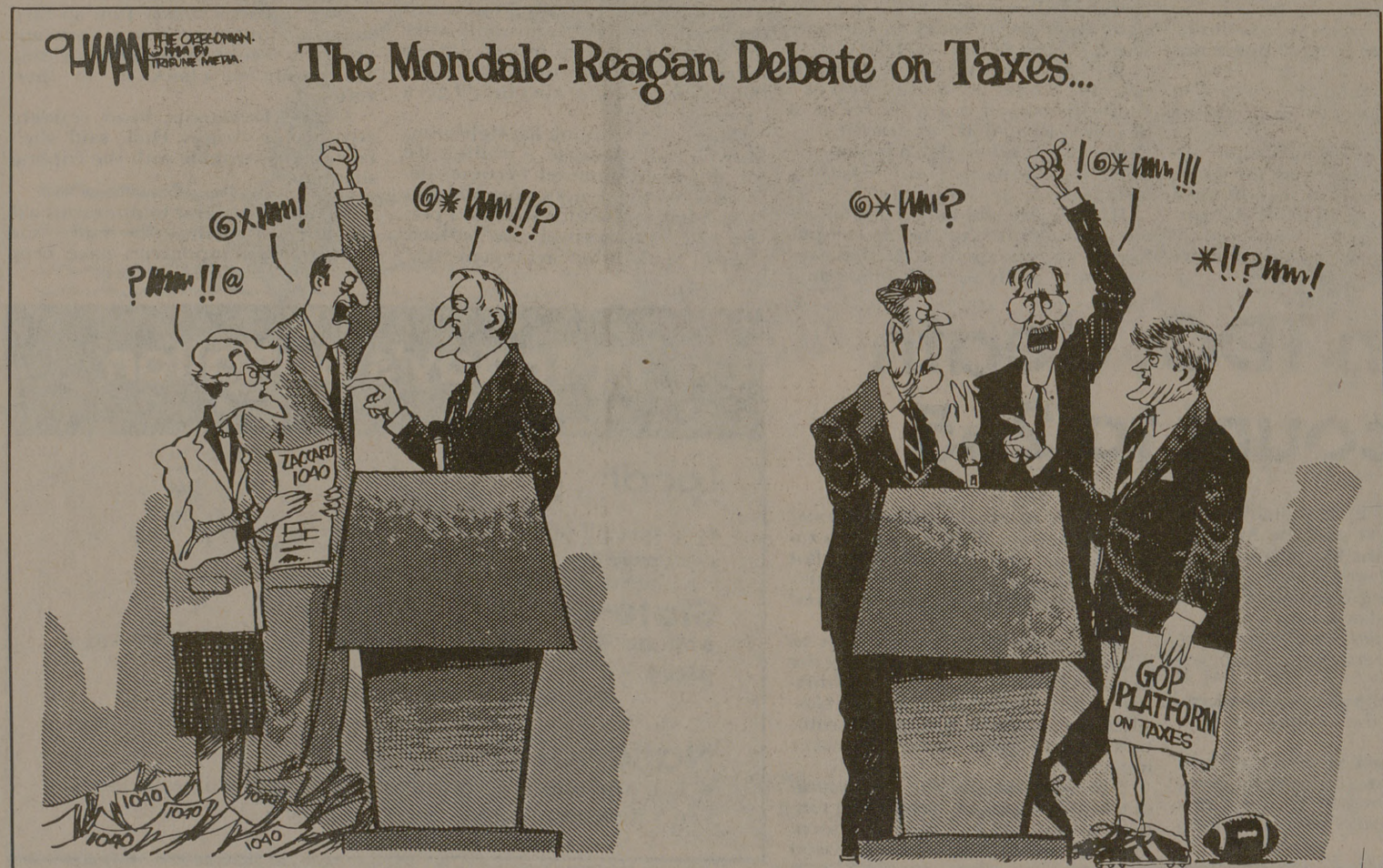
The Senate Finance Committee, in two days of hearings on tax reform proposals, was nearly unanimous in keeping the "half-acre-and-white-picket-fence" ideal alive.

The committee is studying modifications of a "flat tax" plan that would equalize tax rates and eliminate many deductions.

The strongest advocates of retaining the home mortgage interest deduction come from the housing industry.

But even the rental housing industry, which could realize some benefits if home mortgage interest deductions were scrapped, knows enough to face reality.

Expect those opposed to radical tax reform to continue those arguments next year.



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