

Governor's Aides Told to Have Statements Cleared

By EDWIN S. CAPPS
Capitol News Service
SACRAMENTO (CNS) — The administration of Governor Ronald Reagan has clamped a gag rule on its top executives in the news releases that are issued by the departments, the public statements the directors make, and the information the directors give to the press.

Reagan's assistant press secretary, Paul Beck, would not agree with newsmen that this was a gag rule or involved any censorship. But he repeated the directions of Lyn Nofziger, Press Secretary, that department heads were supposed to check with the governor's office before making speeches to make certain

they were passing on the current policy.

And Beck said that all news releases would be sent to the governor's office to make certain the policy was being reported properly.

"The primary reason is so that we'll know what's going on," Beck said. "If a news release involves policy, we want to know about it."

Beck admitted that, if the governor's office did not approve of the statements made by the directors, the press release would not be issued.

REPORTERS attending the daily press briefing by Reagan's press staff were concerned that this might lead to directors or other top officials

freezing if they were asked questions. Reporters asked if such directors might not feel the need to check with the governor before they could answer any questions that might border on policy matters.

"The director ought to be sure of what he's saying before he says it," Beck said.

The order was almost parallel to one issued by former Governor Edmund G. Brown in 1959. This caused a considerable stir on press row in the capitol with the result that the order later was re-manded and directors were told to talk to reporters when they were questioned.

AT THE time, Brown had

said his office wanted to be aware of the news releases of the departments and also wanted, at times, to lend the prestige of the governor's office to a story by having it announced by the governor. Reagan's staff said the governor does not have in mind sending out any of the stories under his name.

But the staff said they felt at least the new directors appointed by Reagan were up on the governor's policies and should keep up with it. No mention was made of how hold-over directors should perform under the new edict.

The orders apparently were having their effect quickly. One reporter called a director to arrange an interview but was told the director would have to clear the interview through Nofziger. The answer shortly afterward was that Nofziger did not approve and there would be no interview.

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