

# Too Many Maybes Among Leaders

THERE seems to be too much "maybe" in government. It reflects both uncertainty as to the right course to follow and willingness by some officials to respond to pressures brought by special interest groups.

It does not inspire public confidence for politicians to be hesitant in making needed right decisions because they are afraid they might make someone or some group unhappy. Equivocation is apt to leave both sides displeased, instead of just one.

Since there are blocs on all sides of almost any issue, not all of them can be acting in the country's best interest. It is no service to our nation to aid in the propagation of destructive ideas.

The declivity of our leadership did not come upon us suddenly. In 1971, a writer in *Fortune* magazine observed:

"There is a considerable body of evidence suggesting that the nation's regard for its leaders, particularly its political leaders, has sunk

to an alarmingly low level." He noted that there was a sense of yearning for direction from men at the top.

We have changed presidents a couple of times since then but the problem persists. President Carter, in his recent appeal for national unity, pointed to "a lost sense of trust and a loss of confidence in the future."

Confidence is essential

When a leader displays uncertainty as to what is right and which direction to turn, people tend to look for other directions. Sometimes they follow those headed in the wrong direction.

Unless a leader is capable of demonstrating ability to make sound judgments on matters before him, he does not inspire confidence among those who depend upon his decisions.

Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower once listed qualities of leadership: selfless dedication, courage and conviction, fortitude, humility, thorough homework, pow-

er of persuasion and "inner qualities of heart and mind."

It may be assumed that most Americans want to support the officials they elect, and want a president whom they can support.

In order to merit support, officials must appear to be headed, at least generally, in the direction people think they should move.

A leader doesn't need to start out as a compromiser. Usually, opposing forces will keep him from going too far to the right.

In electing our leaders, we Americans too often are swayed by minor, irrelevant traits of candidates, rather than choosing primarily on the basis of knowledge, experience and skill as an executive. Important too are the deeper qualities of integrity and sincerity.

If we expect to have strong, well-qualified leaders who will steadfastly steer us toward peace, right and independence without excessive regulation and taxation, we need to consider this course before we vote. Afterward is too late!