

Mondale 'Conservationists' Routed As Senate Scuttles Energy Package

In a humiliating defeat for the political tendency allied with Vice-President Walter Mondale, the U.S. Senate has scuttled the Administration's no-growth omnibus energy package. "The energy program is in shambles," Senator Abraham Ribicoff (D-Conn.), one of the proponents of the "conservation, not production" orientation, bitterly told a Treasury Department representative. "Shouldn't the President and (Energy Secretary James) Schlesinger go back to the drawing board and come up with a new program?"

The rout of Ribicoff and the rest of the Senate's hard core of Fabian liberals was made all the more painful by the fact that their most prominent ally, Vice-President Mondale, was forced to act as political hatchetman against the Fabian filibuster tactic over which he himself had earlier presided. The public wailing and gnashing of teeth by liberal spokesmen in the aftermath of the energy package's dismemberment in the Senate expresses their fear that the White House may abandon them completely.

Call For Public Pressure

The effective defeat of the Administration bill, has opened the door to a serious energy program — one of rapid development of nuclear power, on the scale required to defeat the economic havoc being wrought by the Anglo-American financier backers of the Mondale group.

But the same Senators who helped gut the zero-growth Administration bill, although privately eager to see a high-technology program introduced as legislation, are currently unwilling to *publicly* step forward with such a program themselves. These primarily conservative Congressmen are hoping to strike a compromise with the "conservation" formulas that will promote some sort of energy production. They are relying on the old no-win rules of political horsetrading and "clever" short-term advantage, when political leadership is what is urgently required.

To help bring these privately prodevelopment legislators out of the closet, the U.S. Labor Party is cir-

Schlesinger: Let's Have A Real Cold Winter

In defiance of the U.S. Senate which last week repudiated the Carter Administration's well-head tax on domestic oil, Energy Czar James Schlesinger told a national TV audience the Administration would 'do it any way.' Schlesinger delivered his threat Oct. 2 on the ABC-TV show "Issues and Answers" saying that a \$15-billion-a-year duty on imported oil could be enacted without legislative approval under the Trade Adjustment Act.

To back his threat, Schlesinger said: "The American people still have not recognized the nature of limits. In their heart of hearts they don't really believe that we're running out of gas and this could interfere with the freedom and independence of the nation..."

"Reality has a way of dissipating all the ideologies that you see scattered around the country. It's going to get worse, and I suspect it's going to get worse a lot sooner..."

"I think we'll be able to grapple effectively if we have a real cold winter... Otherwise we'll be skating on thin ice."

Schlesinger continued his ranting at the International Energy Agency meeting last week, warning that Western nations will face a major political and economic crisis in the mid-1980s as the world's "oil wells start to run dry and a physical scramble for energy developed." In a statement before the 19-member nation Paris meeting, which the U.S. officials acknowledged was intended as a bludgeon against Congress on behalf of "the international case" for the President's energy program, Schlesinger said the U.S. would see "a degree of political and social unrest of the kind we did not see in the 1930s."

While Schlesinger spoke in Paris, the Senate Finance Committee reaffirmed its rejection of the well-head tax. At an Oct. 6 meeting, the committee, under the guidance of Sen. Robert Dole (R-Kan), voted 10-to-6 to prevent Schlesinger from exercising Administration prerogative to impose the \$15 billion dollar duty on oil imports.

culating its own proposed legislative energy package on Capitol Hill, the Nuclear Development Act of 1977, as and the companion Energy Development Act of 1977, as exemplars of the program needed. The NEDA bill (see full text below) aims to "restore the United States to its long-held position as the world's greatest industrial nation" through "the provision of efficient, low-cost energy by means of the most rapid introduction of energy-dense technologies," primarily nuclear fission and fusion, while the EDCA bill is geared to developing a credit flow to all those areas of the economy tangential to energy production.

Several Senators have immediately responded by saying that they are open to introducing the bills — *if* they can first get a mass show of support from the American population. These Senators, and the U.S. Labor Party, are requesting that a flood of postcards, letters, telegrams, and support messages be directed to Senators Russell Long (D-La.) and Herman Talmadge (D-Ga.), respectively the chairman and second-ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, which will have a crucial role in deciding what, if any, energy bill will come out of Congress.

"We hope to have these bills introduced before the current session of Congress concludes," a Labor Party spokesman explained. Congressional offices on the Hill are now saying that Congress will set aside its previous schedule for adjournment Oct. 15, and stay in session until at least Thanksgiving, and possibly even until Christmas.

Filibuster Flops

The energy package, which had breezed through the House of Representatives last July, hit the dust in the Senate Oct. 3 when the Fabians' filibuster against their conservative opponents' bill to deregulate natural gas prices was broken. Vice-President Mondale had presided over a two-week-long transformation of the Senate into a circus as his Fabian allies, unable to defeat the deregulation bill in a straight vote, loaded it down with over 500 amendments and demanded debate and sometimes roll-call votes on every one... all apparently with implicit White House sanction. But on Oct. 3 Mondale aboutfaced and helped Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) steamroll the filibuster by refusing all other debate and declaring one amendment after the other

"out of order." The next day the deregulation bill passed handily, 50 to 46.

Spokesmen for the Vice-President privately concede that Mondale was acting under orders. But as if to add insult to injury, Mondale was compelled to publicly claim he had taken the step on his own — and thereby set himself up, not President Carter, as the lightning rod for the Fabians' outraged complaints.

In addition to the deregulation bill, the Senate walloped the Administration package with a series of other defeats. The Senate Finance Committee tentatively agreed to eliminate all of the major taxes proposed to conserve oil and natural gas, including the wellhead tax and the oil and gas users' tax, and the utility rate bill gutted earlier by the Energy Committee has proved unsalvageable.

Finance Committee Chairman Long admitted Oct. 6 that the Senate will send a "skeleton energy tax bill" to the House-Senate Conference Committee, and appears to be hoping for some sort of compromise between a gutted Senate version of the bill and the virtually intact House version. But the prospects to be expected from this sort of wheeling and dealing are shown by the fate of the vital Clinch River fast-breeder reactor.

After the House voted overwhelmingly only three weeks ago to flout the Administration's request for a funding cutoff and restore the Clinch River project to full \$150 million funding, a joint House-Senate conference bowed to pressure from Senators Frank Church (D-Id.) and Henry Jackson (D-Wa.) and knocked the sum down to a meager \$80 million. Worse, they agreed that the Clinch River breeder would not enter the construction stage because of the (bogus) "plutonium danger." The breeder project's supporters rationalized this defeat by saying that the President would have vetoed any higher appropriation.

On the same day, the White House announced that it was deferring approximately \$85 million in funds already appropriated by Congress to the U.S. Energy Research and Development Administration, including the Los Alamos neutron facility. One source in the Office of Management and Budget pinned the decision on Energy Secretary Schlesinger, whose continued campaigning for an "energy crisis" and stringent energy cutbacks shows that the Mondale orientation is still powerfully represented in the Administration.