

LABOR PERISCOPE

AFL-CIO to dump Carter for Kennedy?

Sources in the Building Trades Department of the AFL-CIO report that the top leaders of the federation have already made up their minds to dump President Carter as the Democratic Party 1980 presidential candidate and to urge Ted Kennedy to run.

The AFL-CIO Executive Council, which just concluded its summer session without endorsing any candidate, has decided to make the move sometime within the next several weeks. The federation's decision is said to be approved by several building trades leaders, including department president Robert Georgine. It is expected to be announced in a 60-million-piece mailing now being prepared.

The announcement may coincide with an announcement of a Kennedy candidacy, now expected by some sources to occur soon after the conclusion of the papal visit to the United States next month.

AFL-CIO spokesmen officially deny the report, stating only that the federation as a body has not endorsed any candidate for President. But building trades leaders already view the recently passed Executive Council resolution on energy, which downgraded nuclear energy, as an overture to the antinuclear Kennedy forces. The same tendency was signaled by an advertisement placed by the building trades department in a newsletter of the pro-environmentalist Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee.

These leaders say that any open move toward Kennedy will trigger defections in the building trades and other progrowth, pronuclear unions like the steelworkers. An independent candidate like the Labor Party's Lyndon LaRouche stands the most

to gain from such an exodus.

There was little hint of the impending break with Carter earlier this week as many labor leaders, including AFL-CIO Secretary Treasurer and heir apparent to George Meany, Lane Kirkland, participated in a Labor Day picnic on the White House Lawn. Six labor leaders led by Glenn Watts of the Communication Workers, recently endorsed Carter for re-election.

If the reports of the Dump Carter move are true, political observers here state that there will likely not be any prior signal. This will heighten the impact of the Dump Carter announcement while leaving some time to bargain for concessions from the administration on domestic policy.

McBride knuckles under to U.S. Steel job elimination plan

Lloyd McBride, president of the United Steelworkers, said in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* Aug. 29 that he will fully cooperate with U.S. Steel's retrenchment policy—a policy which has produced 5,000 steel layoffs since the beginning of the summer and portends at least another 5,000 before the end of the year.

McBride told his interviewer, "There isn't any way in the world that the industry is going to escape a recession, and I haven't any illusions about what the industry will do. They've made it clear that they won't subsidize unprofitable plants ... and neither will they continue in product lines that aren't profitable."

The interview with McBride comes in the context of the opening of the steel union's bargaining period with the nation's ten largest steel producers this October. McBride's message was that the union leadership

will not challenge the unfolding "shakeout" of "marginal" steel facilities and the resulting severe job losses in the upcoming contract negotiations.

With this public acquiescence to U.S. Steel's "planned shrinkage" policy for steel, McBride is compounding the suicidal tactic adopted by the steel union in recent months. Recently, the leadership of the USW backtracked from its earlier support for nuclear energy, while mooted support for the gross inefficiencies of solar power and coal gasification—the form of energy production most favored by the U.S. Steel leadership and before them by Nazi Germany.

Chavez gets quick fix from United Brands

Cesar Chavez and his United Farmworkers received an important boost last week when the nation's largest lettuce grower, Sun Harvest, Inc., suddenly agreed to a new contract with the UFW.

The announcement of the agreement came at a low point in the fortunes of Chavez and his UFW leadership. Observers termed the pact a "lifesaver," and expected it to help settle a violent and previously ineffective eight-month strike against California's lettuce growers. Sun Harvest split away from the other growers two weeks ago.

Sun Harvest is a subsidiary of the United Brands conglomerate headed by Detroit's Max Fisher. Law enforcement officials estimate that at least one-half of the cocaine entering the U.S. is carried in United Brands' ships.

Chavez, a stoop-labor advocate who was originally groomed by Saul Alinsky to serve as a foil against the Teamsters, is slated to play a major role in 1980 presidential politics, trying to hold the Mexican-American population first in the camp of pro-environmentalist Gov. Jerry Brown of California, and later, in that of Senator Edward Kennedy, a long-time Chavez ally.

—L. Wolfe