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'Simon-izing' Roy Ash... A Move for Richardson?

Within two days of his appointment as new energy czar, Deputy Secretary of the Treasury William Simon was the target of a humiliating and massive put-down by Roy Ash, fast-rising and highly controversial head of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Ash, skilled as an enemy-picker and bureaucratic in-fighter both within the administration and on Capitol Hill, let it be known that Ash and his OMB staff would "run" the energy program—and that Simon would handle "policy" matters.

Moreover, one inside operative told us that Ash's OMB men had pulled the energy crisis files accumulated during five-energy czar John Love's ill-fated five-month tour in the hostile White House, at least temporarily denying the files to Simon.

But Simon is no one's patsy. When informed that Ash said his duties would begin and end with "policy," he replied with two old and honorable Anglo-Saxon words: "Bull s--t." The power struggle, one of an unlimited number of lesser struggles by which Ash has managed to elevate his power, then went to President Nixon.

But Mr. Nixon, preoccupied by self-preservation and notoriously uninformed about the energy crisis, won't have to settle it. That will be done by Secretary of the Treasury George Shultz.

Shultz, who was instrumental in having his deputy, Simon, put in charge of the energy crisis, has no intention of permitting Ash to interfere with Simon's operations. The word in the White House late this week was that Schultz will cut the mighty Ash down to size.

He'll have plenty of help from both inside the administration and in Congress. When Ash testified before the Senate Government Operations Committee Thursday, Sen. Henry M. Jackson of Washington, a key energy expert, tried to make him squirm.

Was it not true, he asked Ash, that the White House had impounded some \$40 million last summer that the Democratic Congress had appropriated in a vain effort to force the administration to set up research and development of new fuels? Well, Ash replied, the money was "reserved," not "impounded."

Jackson and other congressional en-

ergy experts blame Ash for undercutting former White house energy czars James Akins (now ambassador in Saudi Arabia) and Love. Ash's personal lobbying in Congress against Jackson's Alaska pipeline bill amendment (to restore investigatory powers to the Federal Trade Commission) angered congressional leaders. They accuse Ash of trying to persuade Mr. Nixon to veto the pipeline bill in the interest of big business' fear of the Jackson amendment.

Within the administration, Ash's OMB infuriated the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and its hard-pressed boss, Russell Train. OMB slipped a White House position paper to Congress seeking more delay on automobile clean-air emission standards without first clearing it with EPA.

But in taking on the redoubtable Simon, whose neat hairpart and trim Wall Street appearance conceal a toughness of total self-confidence, Ash may have stuck his neck out too far.

A serious proposal that former Atty. Gen. Elliot Richardson consider moving his official residence next door to

New Hampshire from the ancestral home in Boston, and run for the Senate next year, has been made by pro-Richardson New Hampshire Republicans.

Richardson was noncommittal when one leading New Hampshire Republican broached the idea soon after Richardson was victimized by the White House in the Saturday night massacre of Oct. 20.

A frequent, long-time New Hampshire skier and summer visitor, Richardson would run for the seat of retiring Republican Sen. Norris Cotton. Two of the state's most prominent Republicans are eyeing Cotton's seat: Rep. Louis Wyman will definitely run; former Gov. Wesley Powell is considering running. Some Cotton intimates think he might end up running himself.

A Senate seat for Richardson would give the former Secretary of Defense, Health, Education and Welfare, and Attorney General a public showcase, Republican friends say, in case he wants to run for President in 1976.