

Ford Talks Here — Proposes Huge Energy Corporation

By George Murphy

President Ford, declaring "the time has come for energy independence," yesterday called for a \$100 billion government corporation aimed at giving the United States enough energy to sustain itself "in ten years or less."

Speaking to the national convention of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Council at the Hyatt Union Square Hotel, Mr. Ford said:

"This Energy Independence Authority will have the power to take any appropriate financial action—to borrow and to lend—in order to get energy action.

"It will serve as a catalyst and a stimulant, working through — not in place of — American industry."

White House officials ex-

plained later the \$100 billion would be raised through a combination of government-backed bonds and through public selling stock.

Although no final financing program has been worked out, White House spokesmen said the administration is considering raising \$25 billion through stock and \$75 billion through a long-range program of federal government-guaranteed bonds.

Mr. Ford, looking refreshed and natty in a blue suit, was warmly received by 600 delegates to the council, in convention here preliminary to the national AFL-

CIO convention in October.

Their warmth was in contrast to that of AFL-CIO president George Meany's occasional cool comments on the President's policies.

The delegates' applause interrupted Mr. Ford's speech six times, most loudly when he stated and varied the theme, "American jobs for Americans."

The President said his energy proposal, if adopted by the Congress, will have the following effects:

- "It can stimulate economic growth.
- "It can create new jobs.
- "It can give us control over our own destiny.
- "It can end runaway energy

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prices imposed by foreign nations.

• "It can give foreign nations a new look at what Americans can do with our great resources when we stop talking and start acting."

(The plan for the \$100-billion agency, originally proposed by Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, has reportedly opposed by several of the President's more conservative advisers, who were said to have warned him against a massive new addition to the federal bureaucracy and of the dangers of corruption such a new bureaucracy would entail.)

In his speech yesterday, the President criticized Congress' refusal to act on his energy proposals, saying "frankly, we can't wait any longer for Congress to act on my comprehensive energy program.

"Long-range security, jobs, and energy are inseparable. The time has come for action on energy independence. "I will shortly ask the Congress to erase all doubt about the capacity of America to respond."

Then, going over the head of the Democratic-controlled Congress, Mr. Ford said:

"I speak today to the great majority who believe in American capacities rather than in American incapacity.

"I speak to all Americans who know this is still the same nation that made up its mind during World War II to develop synthetic rubber—and did so; who know this is still the same nation that decided to harness the atom by the Manhattan Project and accomplished that objective; who know that this is still the same nation that said it would put the first man on the moon—and did so.

"People said all these projects were impossible. But Americans have done the 'impossible.' "

The President said the proposed Energy Independence Authority would "have a ten-year life and be self-liquidating."

He said the agency "is designed to achieve what many regard as the impossible—energy independence by 1985.

"But it is a program to secure our jobs, our standard of living, and the national interest of the United States.

"This new government corporation," Mr. Ford said, "would be an independent federal authority reporting directly to the President. This concept is bigger than partisanship.

"I am determined," he said, "to appoint as its directors Americans of stature without regard to partisan considerations."

The Energy Independence Authority, the President said, will seek "new technologies to support or directly produce or transport American energy;

"Technologies to support American nuclear development," and

"Electrical power from American coal, nuclear and geothermal sources."

The President's plan could run into Congressional opposition from environmentalists, particularly with reference to the increased use of coal, which they consider to be a "dirty" fuel as far as air pollution is concerned.

Mr. Ford had been introduced to the delegates in the hotel's Plaza Square ballroom by council president Robert Georgine. The President drew laughter when he acknowledged the introduction by noting Georgine as "a gin rummy player of some note" who — if he pursues this path — may so influence his organization "that it'll wind up being the AFL-CIO-IOU."

After his speech to the labor leaders, Mr. Ford addressed the World Affairs Council at the St. Francis Hotel.