

SF Examiner NOV 22 1971

Connally Angry; Meany Charges Conflict Staged

Examiner News Services

MIAMI BEACH — George Meany, denying that President Nixon was treated rudely at an AFL-CIO convention session last week, has accused the President of trying to contrive a clash for propaganda purposes.

The administration has charged the labor delegates were discourteous when Nixon spoke at the AFL-CIO convention here Friday.

But Meany, the AFL-CIO president, accused the White House of "a little lack of courtesy" of its own. "I still think we have the constitutional right to laugh," Meany said today of the 20,000 delegates' behavior during the Nixon speech.

Nixon himself provoked one incident by unexpectedly bolting into the crowd to shake hands, Meany said, and "I committed the cardinal sin of saying, 'Well, let's go on with the second act.' But that was my reaction," Meany said.

'Contrivance'

"I have the impression the President did not come here to make a speech. He came here to contrive a situation under which he could claim that he had been unfairly treated," Meany told the convention to frequent applause, laughter and a standing ovation.

"I recall something that happened in San Jose, Calif., during the 1968 campaign when he was supposed to be badly abused by some students," the labor leader said.

"But after some investigation, all of the press out there agreed pretty much that the whole incident was very carefully staged."

Meany said he was proud of the conduct of the delegates in showing respect to the office of the President and the man who holds that office.

"But this does not mean that we have to be subservient, nor does it call on us to

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WASHINGTON — (UPI) — Treasury Secretary John B. Connally accused AFL-CIO President George Meany today of "arrogance, boorishness and discourtesy" toward President Nixon. Connally predicted labor's rank and file would help make Nixon's new economic policies work despite Meany's opposition.

Connally delivered his stinging attack on the 77 year old Meany in a news conference at which he also ex-

Democrats dangle lure for GOP on campaign fund checkoff—See Page 2

pressed dismay that the Pay Board had approved a soft coal contract agreement more than three times higher than its own guidelines.

It was the sharpest administration attack yet on Meany, who has been the most vocal labor opponent of President Nixon's wage-price freeze and the subsequent Phase II of long term economic controls.

Coal Prices

As Connally met with reporters, the Price Commission was considering how much to allow mine owners to raise the price of coal to offset the increased wage package, an estimated 39 percent increase over three years compared with a 5.5 percent annual guideline.

Connally said the new policies had convinced consumers that the inflationary spiral was over and that the economy was on the upswing.

He said this success occurred despite Meany's efforts to "undermine and undercut" the economic program against the wishes of his own union membership.

"We must make abundantly clear that we cannot per-

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Nixon Staged The Conflict, Says Meany

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submit to something we consider unjust," Meany said.

"This is still a democracy. This is still not a monarchy," Meany concluded, as he was greeted by a standing ovation by the 2000 convention delegates.

Meany said Nixon was "warmly applauded" when the AFL-CIO president introduced him to the convention, and at least eight times during his speech.

Meany conceded there was "some laughter" when Nixon claimed his Phase I control had curbed prices, but added:

"This laughter was of a type that indicated disagreement with the President," Meany said.

"We still have a Constitution and a Bill of Rights, and I believe we have a constitutional right to laugh."

Sen. Hubert Humphrey charged last night that Nixon had deliberately tried to provoke union leaders into an ugly confrontation.

Meany confirmed he refused Nixon's request to speak the day before because it was too short notice; that he ruled out live television coverage because cameras would have displaced 80 or 90 delegates; and denied a White House request for the band to play "Ruffles and Flourishes" because there was only chamber music.

"I don't think you can play 'Ruffles and Flourishes' on a violin," Meany said.

Meany said the AFL-CIO followed the schedule laid down by the White House until Nixon himself departed from it after his speech and began shaking hands with delegates.

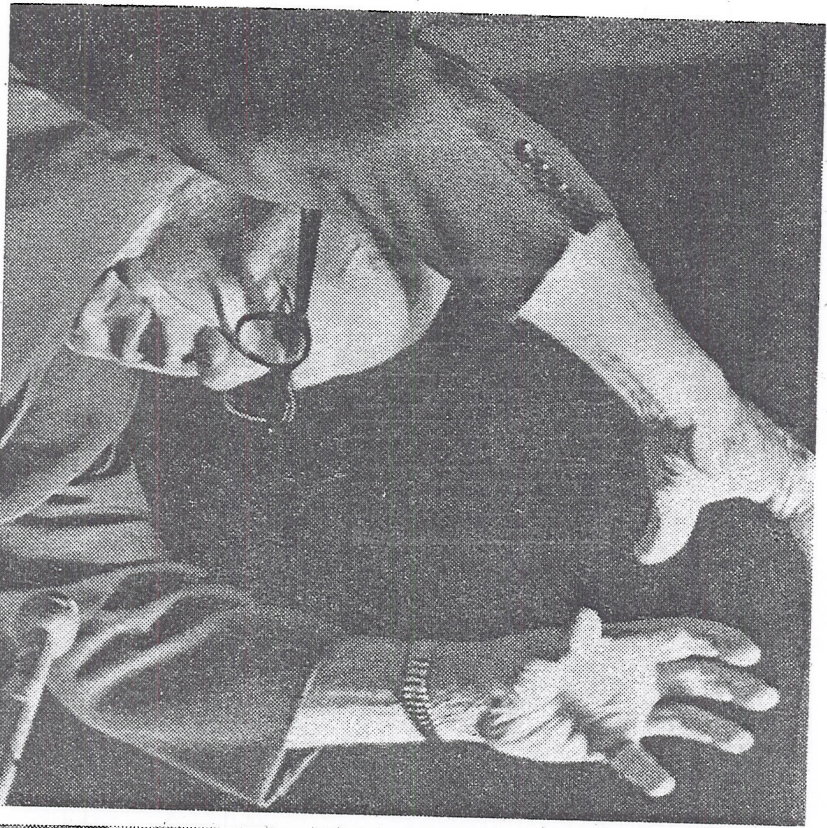
The escort committee was sitting here and he just went right by them," Meany said.

White House aides had complained there was no escort committee.

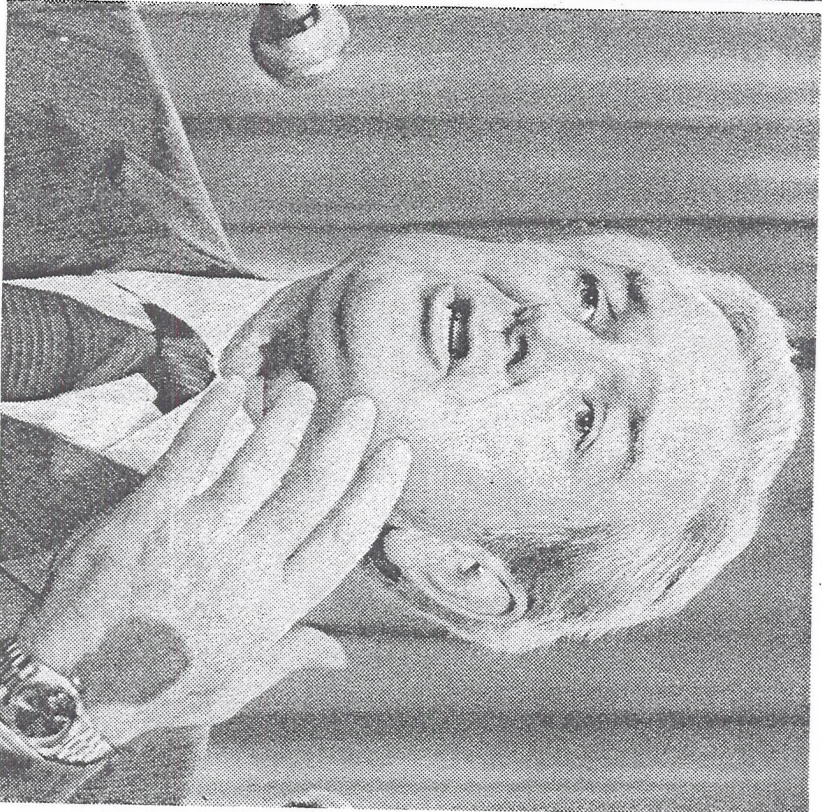
Nixon was supposed to return to an office behind the platform, but "he turned and went into this roped-off area," Meany said; presidential security agents themselves removed the rope, he added.

The convention unanimously re-elected Meany to another two-year term as chief of the federation of 117 unions with nearly 14 million members.

Big Guns in a Battle of Words



George Meany rips into President Nixon at Miami Beach . . . John B. Connally rips into George Meany in Washington



Rank and File Support Policies, Says Connally

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mit one man to put himself above the interests of all the working people of this country," Connally declared.

Connally said the administration had granted most of labor's requests in setting up post-freeze policies and that union members generally supported the new economic strategy.

Turning to the frosty reception the AFL-CIO convention accorded Nixon when he went to Miami Beach Friday to address the some 2000 delegates, Connally said "... In my humble opinion, the actions of Mr. Meany reflect-

Water Study Fund

WASHINGTON — (AP) — The Senate passed today a bill increasing to \$250,000 the annual federal aid allotment available to each state for water resources research centers.

ed an arrogance, a boorishness and discourtesy that ill becomes a leader of the labor movement in the United States."

Connally said the convention's 28.5 percent boost in Meany's pay, from \$70,000 to \$90,000 a year, showed "flagrant contempt of the program at a time when we are asking others to make sacrifices."

Connally said the Cost of Living Council, which he heads, would not overrule the pay board's decision to allow an estimated 16.8 percent first year wage increase to take effect in the soft coal fields.

But he said he was "very disappointed" in the decision and hoped it would not set a precedent for future contracts.

On the international front, Connally said he would not propose a revaluation of the dollar by increasing the price of gold when leading finan-

ministers gather in Rome at the end of the month to draft a new system of international exchange rates.

But he predicted there would be "some realignment" of major currencies by 1972.