

PRESIDENT ASKS LABOR'S SUPPORT; RECEPTION IS COOL

Polite Hostility Greet's Plea
for Phase 2 Backing at
A.F.L.-C.I.O. Parley

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BAL HARBOUR, Fla., Nov. 19—President Nixon appealed to organized labor here today to cooperate with his Phase Two economic controls, but declared that he would proceed with his program "whether we get that participation or not."

The President addressed the biennial convention of the American Federation of Labor

Excerpts from Nixon's talks will be found on Page 16.

and Congress of Industrial Organizations a day after the convention mandated its representatives on the Pay Board to adopt a policy of noncooperation.

Discarding a prepared text to speak, as he put it, "straight from the shoulder," Mr. Nixon thanked the union leaders for support of his foreign and defense policies and recognized "disagreement" with his economic policy. He emphasized his view that a prosperous peace would depend upon curtailment of inflation and said, "The future of America is in the hands of 80 million American wage earners."

The audience packed into a conventional hall in the Americana Hotel, reacted with polite hospitality, punctuated occasionally by derisive laughter.

As Mr. Nixon was shaking hands with some of the delegates after his speech, George Meany, the federation's president, gavelled the convention to order. No sooner had Mr. Nixon left the hall than Mr. Meany announced that the convention "will now proceed with act two." This touched off laughter, cheering, whistling and applause that far exceeded the minimal response to the President's 30-minute address.

Although he had been scheduled to remain at his Key Biscayne home until Sunday, the President left Florida abruptly this afternoon for Washington. Gerald L. Warren, deputy White House press secretary, said that the President "just decided to go back" to join Mrs. Nixon at a performance tonight of the classical Khmer dancers from Cambodia.

The President "was not upset" by the labor convention's reaction to his address, Mr. Warren said.

White House officials reportedly had debated at length the proper tactic to approach what Mr. Nixon knew would be an unfriendly audience. But Presidential aides

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denied speculation that Mr. Nixon had intended all along to abandon his prepared text, a brief recitation of legislative programs that had benefited American workers.

Advisers Question Move

Mr. Nixon told the convention that some of his advisers had questioned the wisdom of an appearance before the delegates.

Political sources speculated that Mr. Nixon was seeking to make political capital of a confrontation that White House officials described as courageous and was attempting to reach the rank and file of the unions through a determined presentation to their leaders.

"We do have differences," Mr. Nixon said in his closing remarks, "but regardless of what those differences are, because I know you are for America, you can be sure every one of you will always have a friend in the White House."

Mr. Nixon was applauded briefly and unenthusiastically when he entered and left the convention hall, when he proclaimed his faith that, "when the chips are down, organized labor's for America," and when he explained that his forthcoming diplomatic journeys to Peking and Moscow were to seek a lessening of tensions that could produce "nuclear destruction."

The most sustained and seemingly genuine response to the President's remarks came when he noted that Mr. Meany had sharply criticized Mr. Nixon's Phase Two program at the convention yesterday.

Quoting news accounts of Mr. Meany's attack, Mr. Nixon recalled that the federation leader had said, "If the President of the United States does not want our membership on the Pay Board on our terms, he knows what he can do."

As Mr. Meany looked on, the President continued:

"Well, you know, President Meany is correct. I know exactly what I can do—and I am going to do it."

Sees Majority Support

The President said that the controls, under a tripartite Pay Board with labor joining business and public members, and a Price Commission composed of public representatives, were intended to be fair to all elements of society.

"Whatever some of you may think," he went on, "a great majority of the American people and a majority of union members want to stop the rise in the cost of living, and that's what we are going to do."

"In order to stop the rise in the cost of living, we want the participation of business, we want the participation of labor. We want the participation of consumers and all the other areas of the society," Mr. Nixon said. "We hope we get it."

"But whether we get that participation or not, it is my

obligation as President of the United States to make this program of stopping the rise in the cost of living succeed. And to the extent that my powers allow it, I shall do exactly that."

The President did not touch directly on the issue that has alienated the labor leaders—the Pay Board's refusal to accept labor's demand for retroactive payment of previously negotiated wage increases that were withheld during the 90-day wage and price freeze that ended at midnight Saturday.

After threatening to resign from the Pay Board, the labor officials decided—and won a mandate from the convention yesterday—to remain on the board but to refrain from voting on most issues and to support member unions that defy decisions of the board.

When Mr. Nixon asserted that the freeze had been "a remarkable success," laughter erupted from some members of the audience.

New Statistic Cited

He cited statistics showing a two-month drop in the Wholesale Price Index and a new figure reflecting a rise of only one-tenth of 1 per cent in the Consumer Price Index, the smallest increase in four years.

"And so it was worth doing," Mr. Nixon said of the freeze. "And if you don't think so, go home and ask your wives who go to the grocers."

At that point, a number of the labor officials groaned aloud and some laughed again.

For the most part, however, the convention delegates sat in silence as Mr. Nixon credited labor support for a narrow victory in the Senate for his antiballistic missile program, expressed gratitude for blue collar demonstrations in support of his decision in 1970 to send American troops into Cambodia and pledged that his diplomatic overtures to China and the Soviet Union would not result in "concessions at the expense of our friends."

The President dismissed speculation that his trips to Peking and Moscow were election year "political junkets" and said that "no one in this room would go to such a conference with his eyes more open than mine will be open."

Appealing to the conservatism of the labor federation on foreign policy issues, Mr. Nixon warned that "others who will appear before you" would have the United States cut its defense spending.

Half an hour after Mr. Nixon spoke, Senator George McGovern of South Dakota, a candidate for the Democratic Presidential nomination, took the same platform to denounce Mr. Nixon's economic policy, assail the Nixon Administration for high unemployment and urge the defeat of the President in next year's election.

Despite organized labor's antipathy toward Mr. McGovern's dovish foreign policy views, Mr. Meany said after the Senator spoke: "Now we've heard the real gut issue."



Photographs for The New York Times by MIKE LIEN

SMILING ENTRANCE: President Nixon arriving to address the A.F.L.-C.I.O. convention in Bal Harbour, Fla., as George Meany, head of the organization, led the brief applause. The group is not cooperating with Phase Two.



APPLAUDING MEANY: Delegates reacting to remark: "We'll now proceed with act two."