

Parole Denial Ends Hopes

Hoffa Grip on Teamsters Broken

By NEIL GILBRIDE

WASHINGTON (AP) — James Riddle Hoffa's 13-year reign over the giant Teamsters union appears all but ended after the U.S. Parole Board denial of his appeal for freedom.

Hoffa, serving an eight-year jury tampering sentence, will retain the title of union president for several more months, but Teamsters sources said he will almost certainly be replaced at the union's July convention in Miami Beach.

A new Teamsters president also could mean early negotiations for a return of the 2-million-member Teamsters to the main body of American labor, the AFL-CIO which expelled Hoffa's union in 1957 on corruption charges.

ACTING Teamsters President Frank E. Fitzsimmons, Hoffa's old Detroit sidekick and handpicked stand-in, is rated the frontrunner to succeed Hoffa in his own right.

Hoffa will not become eligible for parole again until June 1972, when Fitzsimmons, or some other successor will have had nearly a year to consolidate a hold on the union presidency. Presidential terms currently are for five years.

Hoffa at the last Teamsters convention in 1966 managed to rewrite the union constitution to make it virtually impossible for other union leaders to oust him. But the parole denial appeared to dash Hoffa's last hopes of retaining control of the union after more than four years in prison.

THE PAROLE refusal yesterday crushed Hoffa's pledge to the union's 2-million mem-

bers shortly before federal marshals whisked him in handcuffs to the penitentiary in 1967: "I'll be back, God willing, sooner than our enemies would have you believe."

The board didn't divulge its vote nor its reason for denying parole.

A parole would have almost certainly put Hoffa back in the driver's seat of the world's largest, richest, most powerful labor union, in the view of most Teamsters sources.

Under Fitzsimmons, the union had begun a slow drift

away from Hoffa's tight national control to a more decentralized, operation with increasing roles for the 12 other vice presidents. Many reportedly would shy away from creating any new strong man president like Hoffa, who would dilute their power.