

Hoffa Yields Reins Of Teamster Union

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Teamsters Union's jailed president, James Hoffa, will not run for re-election as chief of the world's largest labor union, it was announced today.

Vice President Frank E. Fitzsimmons, who has been Hoffa's hand-picked stand-in, made the announcement.

Fitzsimmons said he will run for president at the union's convention in Miami Beach July 4.

HOFFA, WHO ruled the union with an iron hand for a decade before going to federal prison four years ago, sent word through attorneys from his prison cell in the Lewisburg, Pa., federal penitentiary that he was withdrawing from the presidential race and endorsing Fitzsimmons.

Hoffa is serving a total of 13 years on federal convictions of jury tampering and mail fraud involving a Teamsters pension loan scheme.

"It has been a difficult decision for Jimmy," said the 63-year-old Fitzsimmons, long-time friend and associate

of Hoffa's decision not to run and unanimously endorsed Fitzsimmons' candidacy.

HIGH UNION sources speculated for months that the government would not release him until he agreed to step down from the presidency of the union that wields powerful control in the nation's trucking industry.

It was not clear whether Hoffa agreed to resign before the Teamsters convention opening in Miami Beach July 5, thus making Fitzsimmons union president immediately, or whether Hoffa will hold office until the new election.

Either way, Fitzsimmons—handpicked by Hoffa as his stand-in at the last convention five years ago shortly before Hoffa went to prison—is regarded a cinch for endorsement by the dozen other Teamsters vice presidents. "There's a new Frank Fitzsimmons," said one source, referring to

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Fitzsimmons' obvious joy over Hoffa's decision.

ONE SIGN OF potential opposition to Fitzsimmons came as a group of Teamsters from New York picketed the union's headquarters for a time, claiming that Fitzsimmons had tried to impose a contract on them without membership vote.

Ted Daley, secretary-treasurer of Local 445 in Yonkers, New York, leader of the pickets, said he would oppose Fitzsimmons if he runs for Teamsters president at the union convention.

Daley, who said his Yonkers local has some 8,000 members who work in construction, commented "I certainly would not vote in favor of him."

Daley said he called off the picketing at the request of other members of the Teamsters' policy-making executive board. He said he did so "out of respect for the executive board — except Fitzsimmons."

HOFFA KEPT other Teamsters leaders waiting for the decision up to the union's last executive board meeting in Hollywood, Fla., last month. Hoffa sent word then he wanted more time in a last bid for freedom on the basis of a purported deposition from the chief prosecution witness, Edward

Grady Partin, whose testimony sent him to prison. Partin denied making the alleged deposition recanting much of his testimony.

The 63-year-old Fitzsimmons, a long-time friend of Hoffa from their early Detroit days in the union, has run the union since Hoffa went to prison in 1967.

Others in the Teamsters' hierarchy reportedly preferred Fitzsimmons' looser control, allowing them more sway in their own union districts. Hoffa, in contrast, had tightly gripped most power in his own hands, sometimes bypassing other officials to deal directly with union members.

Hoffa reportedly hoped his stepping aside will increase his chances for parole.

HOWEVER, Chairman George J. Reed of the parole board said there had been no communication from Hoffa since the board turned him down March 31 and said it wouldn't reconsider until next year.

The Justice Department said Atty. Gen. John Mitchell had a visit yesterday from William Loeb, publisher of the Manchester (N.H.) Union-Leader, who has received loans from the Teamsters through Hoffa and has been active in efforts to free him.

The Justice Department, however, declined to say what Loeb and Mitchell discussed.



Frank E.
Fitzsimmons

James R.
Hoffa

of Hoffa since their early Detroit days in the union.

"HE HAS devoted a lifetime to the Teamster movement, and the Teamsters and his family have been his primary interests," Fitzsimmons said.

He said 13 other top officials on the union's executive board accepted Hof-