

Big Corporations Place 'Inside' Men

By Jack Anderson

In the name of better understanding between government and industry, the Nixon administration has been quietly planting business executives in key government positions where they can help their companies.

Any big corporation that wants to keep on the good side of government would like to have an inside man working in the government policy councils. President Nixon provided this opportunity for several corporations by setting into motion the President's Commission on Personnel Interchange in 1969.

The purpose, of course, was presented in noble terms. There would be an exchange of executives between government and industry to teach businessmen the bureaucratic ropes and, thereby, to promote understanding.

The commission has been used by the big corporations, however, as a Trojan Horse to infiltrate the government. At least 50 top business executives will be placed this summer in government jobs where they may be able to influence decisions affecting their companies.

Phillips Petroleum, for example, has already planted Robert Bowen inside the Treasury Department office which deals with oil and energy problems. Another oil executive, Tenneco's Ed Bridges, is working on East-

West trade at the Commerce Department. The oil companies, of course, have a multi-million-dollar stake in East-West trade. Here are other examples from the commission's internal files:

- The Bank of America tried to place Joe Mason, "a bright young attorney," on the potent Securities and Exchange Commission. Wrote the bank's assistant vice president, T. M. Quigg: "A year's tour with the (SEC) would be extremely beneficial to Mr. Mason." The SEC has been approached, we're told, about taking Mason.

- From Coca Cola headquarters in Atlanta, Coke's director of taxes, Paul Dillingham, wrote the commission: "We would very much like to participate in the Interchange Program provided the nominee from our company can be placed in the U.S. Treasury . . ." The commission and Coke, however, quarreled over the conditions of the placement, and the application was withdrawn.

- The prestigious accounting firm, Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Co., also had specific ideas where it wanted to place a young executive named David Cole. "We prefer," wrote the firm's James Smith, "that Mr. Cole be placed in either of the following positions: (a) as an assistant to the commissioner of internal revenue . . . (b) as a member of the staff of the assistant secretary of the treasury for

tax policy, Mr. Frederic W. Hickman." The firm, however, may have to settle for a placement at the SEC.

- In a reverse exchange, the Pacific-Sierra Research Corp. hired on loan from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base a specialist who was immediately put in charge of a research project that the company wants the military to fund. The company president, Frank Thomas, specified that he wanted to hire William J. Parker under the exchange program. A cursory review by the Air Force found the loan of Parker to Pacific-Sierra would create "no problem involving a conflict of interest." Yet only two weeks later, Parker reported to the commission: "I will be the program director for a major research effort currently under negotiation with DOD (Defense Department)."

The commission's chief matchmaker, whose job it is to wed big business with big government, is Jay Leanse, himself an ex-businessman. Less than a year on the job, the soft-spoken Leanse finds his staff in revolt, his budget \$70,000 in the hole and his chief White House sponsor, John Ehrlichman, in political disgrace.

Insiders also charge that Leanse has mishandled a most unusual "educational" fund. This fund, totalling over \$60,000, comes not from Congress but from the corporations and federal agencies par-

ticipating in the program.

For every participant in the program, the sponsor is billed \$1,000 to cover "educational" expenses. These expenses last year included everything from a \$463 wine-and-cheese party to a \$6,500 bill for brochures which the government refused to print as too gaudy.

Leanse has promised to explain to us how his chief assistant, Michelle Vale Sender, was able to earn a full week's salary last April while honeymooning in South America. Mrs. Sender's time card shows her either in the office or traveling on business. Leanse, admitting there may have been some oversight, claims Mrs. Sender is "very loyal." She must be if her records are accurate. On the day Mrs. Sender got married, her time card shows she worked eight hours. Mrs. Sender herself was unavailable for comment. Leanse explained she is on leave, traveling in Europe.

Footnote: Leanse told my associate, Mike Kiernan, that he's trying to carry out the exchange program's lofty purposes. Although he acknowledged that three times more executives are going into government than there are bureaucrats on loan to business. Leanse said he is seeking "a better balance." In the case of Robert Bowen, Treasury officials assured us he "will not take part in policy decisions nor will he have access to individual company data."