

Labor Would Back Ford, Says Meany

Chicago

George Meany, president of the AFL-CIO, predicted yesterday that trade unions would support Vice President Gerald Ford if he ascends to the presidency because of President Nixon's removal or resignation from office.

Mr. Nixon's preoccupation with House impeachment proceedings and his defense before a possible Senate trial are aggravating a bad economy, Meany said, and it would be better for the nation if Mr. Nixon resigns rather than wait for impeachment to run its course.

"I don't think, if the President resigns, it would be a shock to the nation," he said at a news conference. He said resignation may be a quicker road to curing the ills of inflation than im-

peachment because of what he described as a lack of confidence and a lack of integrity in the President.

Asked if labor could get along with Ford, generally regarded as a conservative in thinking, Meany replied: "A conservative with integrity is far better than what we have today in the White House . . . All I want to see is the President go away."

Meany did describe Ford's performance in defending Nixon policies and conduct as "horrible," but added, "I'm willing to just take this as political loyalty."

Meany's comments were made shortly after the AFL-CIO's 35-man Executive Committee released a statement saying it does not intend to lobby in Congress as it considers the impeachment question.

Associated Press