

Committee Fights Fund Impounding

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House Agriculture Committee moved rapidly Monday toward a showdown with President Nixon over impounding funds appropriated for rural programs.

It held a quick holiday hearing on a bill to require the President to turn loose about \$120 million appropriated by Congress for rural water development grants. The grants would supplement loans through the Farmers Home Administration.

Another hearing was scheduled for Tuesday to hear the administration's side of the story, with indications the committee would act later this week, and probably favorably, on the bill.

Monday's witnesses supported the legislation, claiming many small rural communities could not proceed with their programs unless they received grants of half the projected costs.

L. C. Carpenter, vice-president of the Midcontinent Farmers Association, Columbia, Mo., said Congress has financed the grant

program since 1965, with an estimated 2,650 rural water and waste disposal systems having been given financial aid.

James Farley of Farley, Mo., representing Public Water Supply District No. 2 of Platte County, Mo., said his district has been advised to seek grants from revenue-sharing funds administered by the state.

"There is no assurance there will be any revenue sharing funds available for this program," he said. "The demand for revenue sharing funds far exceeds the supply of such funds, and while the need for water in this area is great, the number of customers to be served by the enlarged system simply don't have enough clout on a statewide basis to make much of a dent in the state legislature."

Meanwhile, Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton, D-Mo., introduced in the Senate an amendment to deny use of the Economic Stabilization Act as authority for presidential impoundment of money appropriated by Congress.

THE BATTALION

President Hints Support For Labor

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Nixon courted AFL-CIO leaders in a 40-minute visit Monday and it paid off with a strong hint of labor support for his tough new approach to stem U.S. foreign trade losses.

"Whether we go along depends on the details," cautioned 78-year-old AFL-CIO President George Meany in discussing Nixon's yet-to-be-announced trade legislation. But Meany said of Nixon's approach, "I think the whole idea has a whole lot of merit."

Nixon thanked the labor leaders for supporting his efforts to achieve "peace with honor" in Vietnam, commiserated with them over the effect of rising food prices on workers and explained he moved quickly to devalue the dollar last week because there was not time to wait for Congress to act, according to Meany and other informants in the closed meeting.

"He presented, from the viewpoint of a trade unionist, a very practical approach to trade" that would involve asking Congress

for the power to use a series of options to bargain with other nations, Meany said.

Meany said he told Nixon that "any nation that closes the door on us, on our products, we should turn around and close the door on them," as a bargaining lever, and that Nixon appeared to be moving in that direction.

In addition to economic issues, Nixon said he expressed his appreciation during the meeting for the support "most of the leaders" of organized labor had given "our programs of national defense and to achieve peace with honor . . ."

Meany said afterwards at a news conference: "I think he brought the war to an honorable conclusion."

Meany said there were some things on which the AFL-CIO disagrees with Nixon, including proposals for a lower federal wage for teen-agers and his budget cuts for some social programs.

In the closed meeting with Nixon were the 35 members of the AFL-CIO Executive Council,

plus another 30 or so union presidents, representing nearly 14 million workers in the 119 unions.

After the meeting, press secretary Ronald Ziegler said the President told labor leaders that the problem of rising food prices "will be with us for at least another six months" but after that would level off because of steps planned and already taken to increase domestic food supplies. Nixon referred specifically to rising meat prices, Ziegler said, and noted that meat import quotas already have been lifted.

Nixon indicated that he frowned upon food rationing as a measure to hold down prices. Ziegler said the President observed that rationing had been "tried and had not worked."

Ziegler said Nixon stressed that the way to cope with the food price problem was to increase supplies.

The press secretary, who sat in on the meeting and said that

no questions were asked by the labor leaders after the President finished his comments, said that Nixon promised an "open door policy" in consulting with labor leaders on economic issues.

As for his proposed trade legislation, Ziegler said Nixon described a "safeguard system to deal in over-all trade policy in the best interest of the United States."

Legislative-Executive Showdown Predicted By Minnesota Senator

A "high noon showdown one of these days" over the U. S. legislative struggle was predicted Friday by Senator Walter F. Mondale.

The Minnesota Democrat who is widely discussed as a 1976 presidential nominee would not speculate on the date of the clash. "I think the American people are more decent and want to hear the truth more than some want to believe," Mondale said in a Student Conference on National Affairs address.

The conference concluded Saturday its four-day examination of controls imposed on society, with a wrapup speech by New York psychoanalyst Dr. Rollo May.

In an unstoppered attack on Nixon administration policies, Mondale listed three current threats to American liberties. He discussed increasing power of the executive branch, growing government intimidation of licensed electronic media and the press, and use of police state tactics.

"If the president gains the power he is attempting to obtain, what we know as the representa-

tive form of government will be shattered," he said.

Mondale seemed most incensed with executive attempts to gain power of the federal purse. The senator mentioned President Nixon by name only once in his 80-minute talk.

"His impoundment of appropriated funds wiped out 100 programs that Congress signed into law," Mondale said, "on a unilateral — and I think unlawful — decision on his own without telling anyone about it."

Scuttled programs the senator mentioned included education, housing for the poor and elderly, disaster loans and environmental protection.

"Everything designed to give a chance to people who are kind of outside the system, the poor, aged and those of different color or origins, was cut out," he said.

"We should have been listening to the poor 100 years ago, and we'd all have been better for it," Mondale claimed. "If we believe in equal opportunity, America will have one set of laws under the Constitution, rather than an extra set for special interests."

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