

Public employes not 'strike-happy'

HOUSTON (AP)—The president of the new public employes department of the AFL-CIO said Tuesday public sector unions are not strike-happy but will not hesitate to strike when necessary.

"They would rather enjoy the benefits of collective bargaining than be forced to take strike action, which is a symbol of the breakdown of the bargaining process," said William Howard McClelland, who also is president of the International Association of Fire Fighters.

"But we also know that when no agreement is forthcoming between negotiators, and when there is no mutually-accepted alternative to impasse, then in this day and age, there will be strikes."

McClelland participated in a public sector labor relations seminar at the National League of Cities convention.

He said the new AFL-CIO Public Employee Department still is in the

process of formation but already represents 2 1/4 million workers.

McClelland said George Meany, AFL-CIO president, publicly rejected the concept of strikes in the public service not so long ago but just last month told the new department, "As far as I'm concerned, if you treat public employes bad enough, they'll go on strike."

McClelland said that in the case of firemen some strike crises result from a belief by city management

that such workers somehow have an obligation to subsidize city governments through low wages and long hours.

"Let me say very frankly that the days are over when the fire department could be considered a nice soft spot in the city budget," he said.

Donald R. Weinberg, personnel director for Washington, D. C. said compulsory arbitration is a possible answer to disputes involving public employes.

"Public unions will press hard for bread and substantial chunks of it," Weinberg said.

"It could all result in layoffs and prolonged strikes because of severe budgetary problems experienced by state, county, and local governments."

Sam Zagoria, director of the League's labor-management relations service, said establishment of the new AFL-CIO department is quite significant.

"It means 25 unions have thrown their lot together for unity in public sector labor legislation with the full strength of the AFL-CIO behind it," Zagoria said.

"We are in a different kind of era, an era of substantial change."

Zagoria added that cities are being "eaten up" by inflation as tax revenues decline.

"Cities undoubtedly are in very heavy trouble," he said.

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Israeli ships given secret commitment

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
Israel said Tuesday that Egypt gave it a secret commitment to let Israeli cargo pass through the Suez Canal once the waterway will reopen.

Israeli ships have never been allowed through the canal, which was completely blocked by war debris during the 1967 Middle East war. Egypt says the waterway will reopen next year.

Foreign Minister Yigal Allon told the Israeli Parliament in Jerusalem that the commitment on cargo was an unpublished part of the disengagement of forces agreement signed last January.

He said Egypt agreed that ships flying the Israeli flag would be permitted through the canal after a further peace step had been reached. But he did not say what that step was.

Allon also said Israel would welcome renewed diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and other Communist bloc nations, but said no feelers from those countries, which broke with Israel during the 1967 war, have been received.

In another development, Israel accused Egyptians of digging channels on the east bank of the Suez Canal that could be used for launching missiles.

A military spokesman in Tel Aviv said Israel filed a complaint with the U.N. Emergency Force and that U.N. observers sent a team to check it out. There was no immediate comment from Egyptian or U.N. officials.

The charge came 24 hours after Egyptian and Soviet officials in London reported negotiations for the delivery of a 460-megawatt Soviet nuclear reactor to Egypt were nearing completion.

It also followed a declaration by Israeli President Ephraim Katzir on Sunday that the Jewish state has the capability of producing atomic weapons "within a reasonable length of time," but would not be the first to introduce them in the Middle East.

Egypt's ambassador in London, Saad el Shazly, said in a television interview Tuesday that no country, Egypt included, would allow neighbors to possess nuclear capabilities without having the right to build its own nuclear potential.

Under the U. S. sponsored disengagement signed in January, Israel and Egypt were to refrain from installing long-range artillery or missiles within 18 miles of the cease-fire lines.

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