

National News

New energy chairman stresses water goals

The incoming chairman of the Senate Energy Committee, James McClure (R-Id.) told a packed press conference on Nov. 25 that his immediate goals as chairman would be oversight of federal policies in the areas of public lands, minerals policy and water policy. McClure also reaffirmed his strong support for the Breeder Demonstration Project, licensing of reprocessing plants and a vigorous nuclear export policy for the U.S.

McClure underlined his outlook in comments on federal water policy: "[I] will emphasize that federal support of water projects should be viewed as an investment in the future, which provides wealth for the nation as a whole as opposed to merely consuming resources as so many other federal programs. . . . It has long been [my] view that the availability of water is largely determinative of whether our nation's economy will continue to grow and prosper, and as chairman [I] intend to take steps to turn around the no-growth policy advocated by the Carter administration in the area of water resource development."

Senator McClure endorses nuclear-based growth

Speaking Nov. 17 at the annual conference of the American Nuclear Society in Washington, D.C., Sen. James McClure (R-Id.), incoming chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, stated: "Nuclear is not just an energy alternative. . . . There are consequences of failing to exercise the nuclear 'option.' It is not just an issue of the dangers or safety of nuclear energy, but a question of war and peace. People talk about the morality of nuclear power. Where is the morality in telling developing countries that people will not live any better in the future because we will not develop the technology to ease their burdens? . . . [or] telling the minorities in this

country who want to share in the economic growth and promise of America that they cannot? Their hope and our hope is that our children will live better than we did. . . . Dramatic changes on Jan. 20 will give us the opportunity to be more in line with what our allies are telling us. . . . In the next few years we may see a move toward limiting nuclear weapons. Then we will need incinerators to turn up the plutonium [in weapons] and you know what the best incinerators will be. We should be turning our swords into plowshares."

French spokesman calls for U.S. nuclear effort

European and U.S. nuclear industry representatives met in Washington the week of Nov. 17 at the annual conference of the Atomic Industrial Forum.

Michel Pecqueur, general director of the French Atomic Energy Commission, who spoke at the AIF meeting Nov. 17, stressed the importance of a nuclear-centered energy policy, both for France and for the United States. "It is my conviction that there is no solution to the world energy problems without a substantial contribution of nuclear energy.

"Even in this country, where a wide variety of energies and technologies are readily available, I am convinced that nuclear energy is a 'must.' With the regard I have for the ability of the American people . . . I can claim my confidence in the future of nuclear energy in this country."

Pecqueur called for a "voluntarist development policy" that would lead to a "16 percent share of the world primary energy balance, at the end of the century, for nuclear energy." "Such a policy," Pecqueur continued, "would naturally imply a parallel growth of the electricity share in energy consumption, especially for industrial applications," which requires "considerable investments: they can only be funded during periods when the world economy is sound enough to mobilize the necessary financial abilities. At the bottom of the crisis, it would be too late."

Farmer-labor committee forms on economic policy

Sixty labor and farm leaders from throughout the U.S. met in New Orleans, La. Nov. 24 to form a committee that will formulate an economic development policy for the nation and will present their recommendations to the Reagan transition team. The meeting included representatives from the AFL-CIO, Teamsters and other unions, and the American Agriculture Movement.

Participants called for a reduction of interest rates and for a GAO report supporting agricultural parity to be released to the public. In addition, the meeting formed a committee to draw up joint farmer-labor proposals in energy, food prices, transportation and education to present to Reagan's advisers.

The main speakers at the meeting included Frank Le Roux, head of the Commodity Credit Corp, in the Kennedy administration, and Uwe Parpart of the New York-based Fusion Energy Foundation. Le Roux, in his presentation, told the gathering that labor must come to understand the economics involved in the process of agricultural production. He compared parity for farmers to Davis-Bacon standards for labor.

Reagan advisers respond to Wirzsup Report

"Surely coping with the gap between the Soviet Union and the U.S. in scientific education is a number-one priority. I have lived in Eastern Europe, and I know what is going on there. What Wirzsup says is perfectly true." Thus commented Dr. Petr Beckmann, noted authority on nuclear energy, and a member of President-Elect Ronald Reagan's Advisory Panel on Energy Policy, in answer to a query on his views on the Wirzsup report.

The Wirzsup Report, released earlier this year by researcher Izaak Wirzsup of the University of Chicago, shocked many Americans by documenting an enormous

gap between the United States and the Soviet Union in scientific education. According to Wirzsup, the average Soviet high school graduate completes a course of study including 6 years of geometry, 2 years of calculus, 4 years of physics, 3 years of chemistry, 2 years of biology, a year of astronomy, and 5 years of mechanical drawing, far outclassing his American counterpart. Overall, the Soviet school system now produces 34 times as many scientifically qualified graduates per year as the United States.

Wirzsup concluded his report saying: "It is my considered opinion that the recent Soviet educational mobilization, although not as spectacular as the launching of the first Sputnik, poses a formidable challenge to the national security of the United States, one that is far more threatening than any in the past and one that will be much more difficult to meet." There has so far been no official response from the Carter administration to the Wirzsup report.

Another Reagan adviser, William O. Baker, retired chairman of the board of Bell Labs and a member of Reagan's 15-man Science and Technology Task Force, said, "the group feels very strongly about the need for improved scientific education. . . . Edward Teller has very strong views on this matter."

House agrees to expand farm credit system

One of the final measures passed by the House before they adjourned Nov. 21 for the Thanksgiving holiday was the bill (S. 1465) authorizing the farmer-owned cooperative Farm Credit System to broaden its lending services to farmers, ranchers and fishermen, including for the first time the authority to finance agricultural exports by cooperatives. With an annual loan volume of approximately \$50 billion, the Farm Credit System is the largest single lender to American agriculture and has acted to shield the farm sector from violent short-term fluctuations in financial conditions. It is now a wholly member-borrower-owned institution.

The provision for export financing by the system has been one of the most controversial aspects of the bill. Financing capability is one of the principal roadblocks to the farmer cooperatives marketing their own grain internationally in direct competition with the five major grain companies who now monopolize the trade. "The importance of the bill is obvious," declared Rep. Ed Jones (D-Tenn.), chairman of the House Conservation and Credit subcommittee of the Agriculture Committee. "By making it possible for the banks for cooperatives to finance exports by member co-ops, we will be helping farmers to get more for their products and helping the nation's balance of trade. Also, this bill will lead to expanded credit for processing and marketing by farms and fishermen; it will provide more liberal mortgage credit for some young farmers; and there will be a specific statutory definition of the rules under which the Farm Credit System serves as a link to national money markets for some other rural lenders."

The bill was approved by voice vote and will be sent to the Senate, which had earlier approved a somewhat different version.

Three-way meeting on Democratic leadership

The outgoing Senate Majority Leader, Robert Byrd of West Virginia, met with House Speaker Tip O'Neill and former Carter campaign chief Robert Strauss on Nov. 21 in Washington. O'Neill emerged from the meeting to blast the current party leadership under John White for having obstructed party support of local candidates. O'Neill announced that he will invite all candidates for party chairman to address a meeting of the House Democratic caucus.

Strauss reported that he has been in touch with aides to Walter Mondale and Edward Kennedy, and that all parties agree that the new chairman should neither be an ally nor an enemy of the probable 1984 presidential candidates.

Briefly

● **WILLIAM VAN CLEAVE**, who is Reagan's senior defense adviser, is opposed by members of the Reagan transition group who actively seek his ouster, according to a Capitol Hill staffer close to the fight.

● **LAURENCE SILBERMAN**, the former ambassador to Yugoslavia, has quit as head of the transition team for the CIA. Silberman was excluded from important briefings given other Reagan staffers by the CIA. Republicans wonder why former CIA director George Bush seems not to have pressured the agency to include Silberman.

● **ALFONSE D'AMATO**, the Senator-elect from New York, has called on his fellow Republicans not to run a candidate against New York City Mayor Ed Koch, a Democrat, when Koch seeks reelection in 1981. The announcement has reportedly dismayed many supporters of D'Amato, who ran on a platform opposing lax enforcement of drug laws and against "gay rights." Koch is a supporter of both.

● **LUIS ARCE GOMEZ**, foreign minister of Bolivia, met with Reagan advisers and conservative congressmen, and declared that he proposes that the U.S. government buy up Bolivia's cocaine exports to prevent the drug from falling into "illegal hands." The implicit alternative is that Bolivian cocaine will flood the United States.

● **THE SPACE SHUTTLE** will be launched in March or April 1981, "It will be a struggle all the way" to meet the planned 1982 schedule for full operation of the vehicle, according to an official of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Part of the difficulty results from the need to replace 37,000 tiles that form part of the heat shield for the shuttle, after it was determined that they would not stand the stress or re-entry.