

Dunlop resigns labor secretary position

WASHINGTON (AP)—Secretary of Labor John Dunlop submitted his resignation to Pres. Ford late Tuesday, informed sources said, doing so because he felt his effectiveness had been undermined when Ford reneged on a promise to sign a bill sought by organized labor.

The sources said the President, in a private White House meeting, tried to talk Dunlop out of quitting. The secretary held firm in his decision to resign, but said he would remain in his post until Jan. 31.

The formal announcement of the resignation is expected today.

White House officials confirmed

only that Ford and Dunlop met for 35 minutes, but they refused to provide details.

Press Secretary Ron Nessen, under questioning by reporters, acknowledged in early evening that Dunlop had asked to meet with Ford.

"It was a private meeting. I can't say anything more," Nessen said.

Labor sources said Dunlop had made clear in private Monday night that he would inform Ford of his decision Tuesday. These sources said Dunlop had decided to quit.

Speculation on a successor to Dunlop has focused on W. J.

Usery Jr., director of the Federal Mediation Service, who is held in high regard by both labor and management.

Dunlop's resignation had been expected since Ford announced before Christmas that he would veto a bill which would have increased construction-site picketing power for unions.

Dunlop supported the legislation and had earlier won Ford's endorsement of it. When he vetoed the bill, Ford conceded it had contained everything he asked for when he promised to sign it. But he said he changed his mind, saying it would lead to chaos in the construction industry.

Political observers said the veto came in an effort to mollify conservative supporters of former California Gov. Ronald Reagan who is challenging Ford for the Republican presidential nomination.

Openly disappointed, Dunlop spent the last several weeks trying to determine whether the President's action undercut his effectiveness with labor. Aides had said Dunlop's decision would be based not on anger, but on a careful evaluation that the veto had left him in an unworkable position.

The President formally vetoed the picketing bill Jan. 2, triggering the resignations Jan. 8 of the nine

labor members of the Collective Bargaining Committee in Construction, which Dunlop headed. One union leader declared that Dunlop no longer spoke for the administration.

The bill, which would have allowed workers to picket an entire construction site, even though their dispute involved only one subcontractor, was opposed by building contractors, right-to-work supporters and leading Republican conservatives.



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