

hearings. Simultaneously, a wave of planted rumors has swept through Capitol Hill and business circles that Carter will oust McIntyre and name Schlesinger or Blumenthal to the Budget post. Apparently, rescuing the discredited Schlesinger from the Energy Department is the preferred alternative; the office of Proxmire's Fabian crony Rep. Henry Reuss (D-Wis.) told callers this week, "It would be a shame to take Blumenthal out of Treasury — he's doing such a great job."

The Justice Department, where another old Georgia hand, Attorney General Griffin Bell holds sway, is another prime target. syndicated columnists Evans and Novak today opened fire on Bell's ouster of Mondale agent Peter Flaherty from Justice, while admitting that Flaherty had been using the Lance "scandals" to ad-

vance his own political career and was constantly seeking to sabotage Bell's control of the department. Portraying Justice as a dissension-ridden mess, the columnists told Carter he had "only himself to blame."

Other pundits are bombarding the President with variations on the line established by the *Washington Post*. In its lead editorial Dec. 15, the *Post* ordered Carter to stop thinking — "the job description for a President does not call for a planner or designer" — and to sell whatever British garbage comes down the pipe — "a President has to build agreement." The next day, columnist Garry Wills told Carter his problem was exactly the reverse — he was a patient "persuader like Herbert Hoover."

— Don Baier

Energy Bill On The Rocks; But Schlesinger Policy Intact

White House spokesman Rex Granum admitted in a news conference early last week that there is virtually no chance that a joint House-Senate conference committee of the Congress can agree on a compromise energy bill this year. With Congress only days away from adjournment until mid-January, conferees considering the natural gas section of the bill have failed to reach agree-

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ment despite a series of compromise proposals and counterproposals, and the conferees considering the "centerpiece" tax portions of the bill have not met since Senator Russell Long, the spokesman for Senate conservatives demanding increased incentives for energy production, attacked lobbyists representing Energy Secretary James Schlesinger. He announced that he and the Administration were "poles apart" more than a week ago.

Although the White House is holding out hope of agreement in principle with Long before the year is out, the *Washington Post* charged in a front-page article Dec. 14 that chances for passage of the bill in 1978 were poor, and that in view of previous repeated White House assertions that the success of President Carter's first year in office would be measured by the progress of the energy bill, "1977 must be judged a failure for Jimmy Carter."

The same Eastern establishment press which cheered the Administration's populist attacks on Congressional conservatives as "ripoff artists" for the oil and gas industry, this week frantically advised the President to change gears and court the conservatives. Reversing its stand of only two weeks before, a *New York Times* lead

editorial instructed Carter to accept Russell Long's proposal for an energy development trust fund as the price of an agreement. Syndicated columnists Evans and Novak, who had recently written that the Administration had "certainly proved it can handle Russell Long," warned Carter he would have to accept phased deregulation of natural gas before Long would act. Pollster Louis Harris, a well-known manufacturer of instant public opinion, released a survey purporting to show that Americans enthusiastically backed a compromise bill.

Fundamental U.S. political realities, however, dictate that Carter's only chance to salvage the energy issue lies in quick action to jettison discredited neo-Malthusian Schlesinger, replacing him with an advocate of full-scale nuclear development. So far the Administration has given no sign it understands this.

Schlesinger spokesman John Ahearne reaffirmed to an audience of 100 environmental lobbyists in Washington last week that Schlesinger's "pronuclear" stance was a charade, and that the Administration was "cutting back on nuclear research and shifting our priorities to solar energy development." According to informed Washington sources, Schlesinger's second-in-command at the energy department, John O'Leary, recently told representatives of the major firms involved in the business of constructing nuclear reactors that the Administration "could do nothing about" environmentalist assaults on nuclear power which have all but stopped new orders for nuclear plants. An *Associated Press* wire from Moscow last week reported that O'Leary, being given a tour of a Soviet nuclear plant which could supply power for three cities the size of St. Louis, commented only that "this plant could never be licensed in the United States" because the Administration was determined to keep a "hands off" policy toward the environmentalists.