

Elephants and Donkeys by William Jones

Jackson makes a bid for Dukakis's VP post

Jesse Jackson, in something of an unusual move, expressed a keen interest in getting the vice presidential slot if Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis wins the Democratic presidential nomination.

Until recently, Jackson has been rather reticent about the idea, going so far as to scold campaign advisers who began raising that prospect after the New York primary. But in statements made on May 31 before the New Jersey State Senate, Jackson made it clear that he thought he deserved serious consideration for the vice presidential post. "If I were to win the nomination," said Jackson, "with the kind of campaign that Dukakis has run, he would deserve consideration, and would get it. If he wins, I have earned consideration."

Jackson is already exerting some of his political muscle in attempting to shape the party platform. The platform committee will consist of six people appointed by Jackson, six appointed by Dukakis, and six named by Democratic National Committee chairman Paul G. Kirk.

Jackson said he and Dukakis have established a warm personal rapport, but that the success of their platform negotiations relies more on Dukakis's willingness to commit to specifics. "I do not foresee a confrontation," Jackson said, although the threat of breaking the black vote away from Dukakis if Jackson doesn't get what he deems a suitable reward, was a clear undertone in Jackson's remarks.

In response to Jackson, Dukakis said that he indeed deserves to be con-

sidered for the VP slot because of his strong showing, but added that he does not feel himself under any obligation to choose Jackson as his running mate.

Will Baker join the Bush campaign?

James Baker III, Secretary of the Treasury and ardent supporter of Republican presidential contender George Bush, has been under some pressure to lead the vice president's election campaign. Many Bush supporters believe, however, that Baker ought to stay just where he is in order to try to prevent a financial blow-out until after the elections in November. With the economy teetering on the brink, a pre-November blow-out in the fragile financial markets could plunge the country into a major depression and smash the vice president's political aspirations.

If the "invisible hand" of Mr. Baker were removed from the rudder of federal fiscal policy, while Baker himself hits the campaign trail, the Reagan "economic miracle" could blow up in Bush's face. Not that there is any assurance that Baker will really succeed in staving off a crash so long. The odds are in fact against him. But the Bushmen seem intent on trying every trick in the book to keep things together until November, and Jim Baker will probably remain their point man.

Bush trying to keep Reaganites on board

Republican sources in California report that the vice president is having a difficult time getting the conservative wing of the Reagan campaign on board the Bush bandwagon. They don't seem

to "cotton too much" to George, in spite of Bush's attempts to take upon himself the mantle of the "Reagan Revolution" (a revolution which itself has pretty much petered out in the President's new-found euphoria for what he used to call the Evil Empire).

Without the support of the old Reagan backers, the chances of the vice president winning the election are pretty much nil. Some people say that Bush could make his peace with the Reaganites by choosing Jack Kemp as his vice presidential nominee. Others say that there might be a split in the Republican Party along the lines of the Goldwater-Rockefeller split during the 1964 elections.

Republican conservatives like Howard Phillips of the Conservative Caucus have described Bush as "the candidate of the Wall Street wing of the Republican Party." Bush, who claims that he already deserves the support of the conservative wing of the Republican Right, does not look like he's even going to make an attempt to try to placate them. But without them, his candidacy just might be doomed from the start.

State budget deficit hurts Dukakis's image

The administration of Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis, already hit by charges of fiscal mismanagement, disclosed at the beginning of June that the state's budget deficit would reach \$300 million this year, \$50 million more than estimates of several weeks ago. The governor has stressed continually during the presidential campaign his abilities as a fiscal manager. These figures could seriously undermine Dukakis's slogan, "Do for the nation, what we did for Massachusetts."