

Carey May Soon Choose A New Commerce Chief

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ALBANY, May 5 — Governor Carey is close to taking care of several problems at once by naming William D. Hassett, a Republican businessman from Buffalo, to be the state's new Commerce Commissioner, aides say.

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Not the least of the problems he hopes to solve is how to persuade the Republican-led Senate to confirm the naming of the current Commerce Commissioner, John S. Dyson, as a trustee of the New York State Power Authority. Mr. Dyson is then expected to be named chairman of the authority, which provides low-cost power to municipal governments and a limited number of industries.

The difficulty is that Mr. Dyson has repeatedly infuriated the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, John J. Marchi, Republican of Staten Island. Last year, when Mr. Dyson's use of his own picture in a business-promotion advertisement led the Legislature to try to ban public officials from using their faces in advertisements, Mr. Dyson protested by coming to a Finance Committee meeting in a Lone Ranger mask — and Mr. Marchi stormed out.

This year, Mr. Dyson criticized as "sophomoric" the fiscal committee people who wanted to cut his budget.

Hopes to Sway Marchi

Senator Marchi's committee also happens to pass judgment on gubernatorial nominations, and he said he was reluctant to confirm Mr. Dyson to anything else ever again. The Governor is hoping that offering to replace Mr. Dyson with Mr. Hassett, who is well-liked and well-trusted by the Republicans, could change Mr. Marchi's mind. And a top aide to Mr. Marchi said he thought this approach could work.

The choice would achieve another goal of the Carey administration as well: the consolidation of many of its economic-development functions. Mr. Hassett is already chairman of the Urban Development Corporation, which is increasingly becoming the economic-development arm of the government, and he also serves as chairman of the Battery Park City Authority.



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William D. Hassett

The Governor tried that consolidation last year by appointing Mr. Dyson to head the U.D.C., but the nomination was scuttled by the Republicans shortly after the mask incident.

At that time, they said that because the corporation was financing more business expansion, conflicts of interest could be created when a man encouraged the expansion of certain projects as Commerce Commissioner and then financed them as chairman of the Urban Development Corporation chairman.

Apparently, the Senate believes Republicans are better at avoiding those conflicts than Democrats.

In another shift, Thomas A. Coughlin 3d, Commissioner of the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, has reportedly informed top administration officials that he intends to leave that post later this year.

He is said to be in line for a job with the United Cerebral Palsy Foundation.

It is not always easy to discern Governor Carey's positions on some subjects. Not the least confusing has been his varying degrees of support for different types of casino gambling. At one news conference not long ago, reporters tried to get the Governor to explain whether he favored publicly run or privately run casinos, and Mr. Carey weaved and dodged deftly.

"Now I am thoroughly confused," one reporter cried in despair.

"Then I have succeeded," the Governor replied.

Lest one think this talent is reserved for the press corps, Mr. Carey reportedly told a group of legislative leaders recently: "You all know my position on casino gambling. And if anybody here can tell me what it is, please do."

Your far-flung state tax dollars will be at work later this year in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Mr. Dyson, the Commerce Commissioner, has asked Raymond B. Harding, a special assistant to the Governor who is prominent in the Liberal Party, to represent the state at a seven-day trade fair. Mr. Harding, who was born in Yugoslavia, said he has good ties with the Yugoslav Government's representatives here and hoped he could spur increased Yugoslav investment in New York. Also on his agenda is a stop in Rome on the way back for "a bit of vacation on my own."

Mr. Harding said he was chosen for the task because he was the only known administration member at a higher level who could speak Serbo-Croatian.

There is nothing like a child's innocence to put things in their proper perspective, according to the new Chief Judge of the State Court of Appeals, Lawrence A. Cooke. Judge Cooke's family joined him for the recent swearing-in ceremonies here in Albany, an event his 5-year-old granddaughter, Megan, summed up simply in an oral school exercise the next day:

"On the first day of this month, daddy and his daddy went up to Albany. On the second day, we went up, too — and on the way back we had a hamburger at McDonald's."