In what A. Philip Randolph, only Negro vice president of AFL-CIO, called "a masterpiece of noncommittal noncommitment," the executive council issued a pious statement of sympathy, but no support and no financial aid.

The whole statement was not widely printed, if at all, but Mr. Meany was quoted to the effect that the majority of the council felt the August 28 demonstration would harm the chances of passage of civil rights legislation.

That he sounds like an employer who tells his workers not to join a union because it might harm their chances to get a raise, is no accident. The AFL-CIO as a whole has become part and parcel of the establishment. It sees no evil, hears no evil and speaks no evil of that establishment. Its role is to preserve the status quo, to preserve the so-called "balance" between labor and profit-making industry, and if that "balance" be an imbalance, then so be it, because to do anything else would require leadership to get out of the plush chairs and do something, all of which is contrary to the nature of entrenched bureaucracy.

When Meany boasted to the National Association of Manufacturers some years ago that he never in his life called a strike, went on strike or walked a picket line, he wasn't kidding. He could shift from president of the AFL-CIO to president of a corporation without blushing or bat of an eyelash.

As for the August 28 demonstration, it takes either childish naiveté or conscious desire to sabotage the demonstration, to say that it will harm the passage of civil rights legislation. Certainly, any gathering of Negroes and others in Washington for the purpose of getting civil rights legislation will cause purple rage in the breasts of southern racists in Congress. They would continue to vote against civil rights even if it meant sure civil war.

Those legislators who know in their hearts that it is absolutely immoral to deny full civil rights on the basis of color, national origin or creed are going to vote for civil rights legislation with or without demonstrations.

The votes that have to be won are those that will be cast by the members of Congress who are politically rather than morally motivated. They are not going to be moved by namby-pambyism or Uncle Tomism. They'll get off the dime when they see and hear the strength and size of the Civil Rights movement.

(Harry Bridges is on vacation. His column "On the Beam" will be resumed on his return.)