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Gov. William Donald Schaefer joins Lt. Gov. Melvin A. Steinberg (right), Cabinet members, state employees and 300 students from across the state in singing of holiday songs.

Schaefer comes to carol, but sings blues

By James Bock

Gov. William Donald Schaefer came dressed as a choirboy ready to carol, but he wound up moaning the layoff blues.

A gloomy governor shared his yuletide funk yesterday at his fourth annual holiday party for state employees — the first with the threat of layoffs hanging over 1,800 of them — after joining in singing "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town."

Outside the state office building at 201 W. Preston St., however, a few dozen union members likened Mr.

Schaefer more to Scrooge than to Santa with their own version of the song:

You better watch out

It's time to shout

It's time to try and

I'm telling you why

Schaefer's trying to rob your job.

"It's our ultimate Christmas carol," said Sue Esty, the staff member at Council 92 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees who wrote

See **SCHAEFER**, 4A, Col. 2

Schaefer comes to carol, but ends up singing blues

SCHAEFER, from 1A

the lyrics. "It's more in tune with what state employees are feeling right now."

In case anyone cared, Mr. Schaefer made it clear he wasn't feeling so good himself.

Two minutes into conventional remarks at the lunchtime gathering, the governor was briefly interrupted by a union activist who shouted "No layoffs! No layoffs! No layoffs!" before security men strong-armed him out the door.

Then Mr. Schaefer shifted gears and spent the remaining four minutes of his off-the-cuff talk pouring out his state of mind about proposed cutbacks to the crowd.

"If you think there's any joy, any happiness in my heart, you're wrong

— everyone here that thinks I was singing those songs and that I was bursting forth with joy," he said.

"You see, every one of you is important to me and while you don't think you are, you are. . . . And so while you can boo me and while you can say I could do other things, if I could, I would," he said.

The governor's talk received applause and a small chorus of boos.

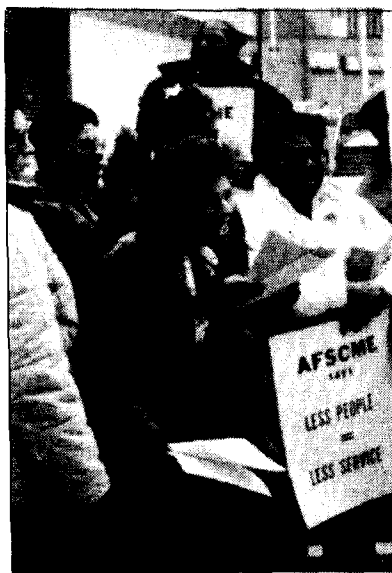
Union protesters said they weren't impressed with the governor's remarks.

"It was a bunch of bull----," said Cynthia Sessoms, a District Court clerk. "I thought it was a political move to try to placate the people, but it was just words thrown into a vacuum. In terms of appeasing people, if anything it may have inflamed them more."

Two protesters were forcibly removed from the holiday party, but neither was charged, said Capt. Johnny L. Hughes of the state police.

Except for the protests and the governor's gloom, the party went on as planned, with songs of the season and awards for tree-trimming.

The governor, dressed in an an-



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Unionized workers picket outside the state office building.

kle-length black cassock and a white surplice, walked through the door of a mock State House, followed by Lt. Gov. Melvin A. Steinberg and Cab-

net members, all similarly attired.

They joined a chorus of 300 students from across the state, under the direction of Morgan State University's Nathan Carter, in belting out six holiday standards, including Schaeferized version of "Jingl Bells":

*Maryland, Maryland
Happy holidays
Oh what fun we're having here
In Baltimore today
Governor Willie Don
Schaefer tried and true
. . . Singing just for you!*

While the governor was clearly more focused on trimming the \$42-million state deficit than on trimming Christmas trees, Paul E. Schurick, a spokesman, said no consideration was given to canceling the festivities.

"It's the season that, even when facing difficult circumstances, you have to be positive, be upbeat," he said. "The biggest mistake we could make would be to ignore the holiday season. This is even more important than in good years."

After the party, Mr. Schaefer applying his "Do It Now" philosophy to spending cuts — urged legislative leaders to act quickly. Legislative approval is required for some cuts.

"You've got to do it and do it rapidly in order to make up the deficit," he said in an interview.

But Bill Bolander, executive director of AFSCME Council 92, accused the governor of "pushing the panic button on this thing." He said he was not convinced that the budget shortfall was serious enough to warrant sacrifices by state employees.

AFSCME officials met yesterday with Mr. Steinberg, Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr., D-Prince George's, and Sen. Laurence Levittan, D-Montgomery, chairman of the Budget and Taxation Committee. Mr. Bolander said he urged them to "make no quick, rash decisions."

AFSCME is suggesting that Governor Schaefer and other top officials forgo salary increases. The governor's pay is due to jump from \$85,000 to \$120,000 effective next month.

Asked if he would do so, Mr. Schaefer bristled and said: "I don't like that, I don't like that. You got a raise last year? You want to give it up? Then don't ask silly questions."



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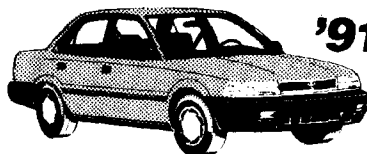
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