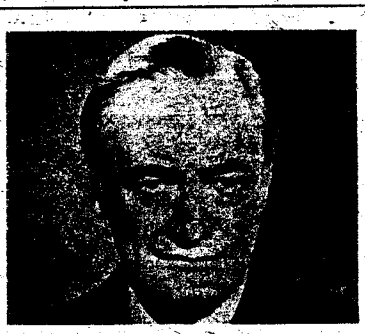

BRITAIN'S SPY CHIEF

In Great Britain when the government wants to hide information from its people, it issues a "D-notice" to newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations. "D" stands for "Don't." Don't reveal this. Don't reveal that. It's all part of the Official Secrets Act.

As a result of such "D-notices," the British public did not even know the name of the man who heads their foreign intelligence network. That's akin to our not knowing that James Schlesinger is now chief of our Central Intelligence Agency.

The Englishman who heads DI-6, Britain's spy network abroad, is Sir John Ogilvy Rennie, 59, officially listed as a Deputy Under Secretary of the Foreign Office. He is the same John Rennie who in the 1940's worked in New York with the British Press Service and the British Information Service.

Rennie's name was disclosed to the British newspapers a few weeks ago only because it was first printed in the German magazine "Stern," which reported that Rennie's son had been picked up on a charge of possessing Chinese heroin.

"Stern" revealed that Charles Rennie, 25, is the son of Sir John Rennie in charge of Britain's overseas intelligence network.

English newspapers carried the news that a Charles Rennie and his wife, Christine, 23, were held for trial at the Old Bailey on the heroin charge and referred to Charles Rennie as the son of the head of DI-6 (formerly MI-6) the espionage service. But they did not name his father because Sir John's identity is covered by a D-notice.

Since the publication of John Rennie's name in "Stern," however, Rear Admiral K.H. Farnhill, in charge of the committee responsible for D-notices, informed the British press that it, too, would be permitted to reveal the identity of the man whose department controls the movement and activities of British spies abroad.

It is expected that Sir John Rennie will soon resign and be replaced by a successor whose identity will be withheld from the British people.