

Kleindienst: 'Very Privileged'

By Donnie Radcliffe

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Attorney General Richard Kleindienst didn't look like a man who, at the boss' request, was about to hand in his resignation.

He laughed, joked, speculated about the future and had only good things to say about President Richard Nixon, who has asked for the resignation of all presidential appointees and many members of the White House staff in what is expected to be a major administrative shake-up following the election.

But if Kleindienst had any inkling that his resignation might not be accepted, it was difficult to tell from listening to him Thursday night at a McLean party celebrating the departure for London next week of 50 culture-bound Wolf Trap Associates.

To some people standing around him, he sounds as if maybe it was all over.

"Just the fact that I was deputy attorney general

and then Attorney General was enough for me. I want to help him (President Nixon) be a great President and if that means leaving the Cabinet, then I'm willing."

Talking almost philosophically, Kleindienst said he felt "very privileged" to have been on the Nixon team, adding that "I epitomize what made this country what it is—I came from a labor union family, worked my way through law school, came up through ranks." A native of Winslow, Ariz., he is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School.

"I'm ready," he said, to stay on in the job on "one condition—if the President wants me—and with that one condition, I'd be happy to be here."

Justice Department sources said recently that advisers were urging President Nixon, if re-elected, to replace Kleindienst in an effort "to change the whole image of the Justice Department." The sources cited the

ITT controversy and Watergate charges as damaging the credibility of the department in those areas.

Of the Watergate affair, Kleindienst said "of course, I'm under orders of the court not to discuss it." Then he added that there have been "indictments and they will be prosecuted."

"The criminal justice process will be completely fulfilled."

The Attorney General was given a hero's welcome when he arrived at last night's party, given by Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Clark Thomson.

He promptly received a welcoming kiss from Mrs. Jouett Shouse, Wolf Trap Farm benefactor and organizer extraordinaire of the London outing for the associates, of which Mrs. Kleindienst is national chairman.

"She's my master," Kleindienst joked of Mrs. Shouse. Then they began to make final plans for the Wolf Trap Associates' rendezvous in London next week.

Labor Secretary and Mrs.

James Hodgson, who were scheduled to be at Thursday night's party but did not attend, are also going on the Associates' London trip.

Kleindienst, who leaves for London today to meet with members of the British government, will join the Wolf Trap Associates next Wednesday for a week of receptions, private dinner parties, opera, symphony, dance and other specially arranged events.

Kleindienst said he "honestly" did not know what lay ahead, in terms of long-range plans.

The pro forma resignations requested by the President have been written not only by Kleindienst but by his subordinates as well, he said.

"I've gotten all those together and they will be transferred to the White House by 5 p.m. Friday."

Beyond that, he said, "I'll always make my living by practicing law. I've had a very fine life."