

TerHorst Felt Aides Used Him

Post 9-10-74

United Press International

J. F. terHorst quit as President Ford's press secretary because Mr. Ford's advisers used him to deceive reporters about the impending Nixon pardon and because he opposed the pardon itself, sources said yesterday.

The Detroit News, meanwhile, confirmed that terHorst had rejoined its Washington bureau.

TerHorst left the News, where he was Washington bureau chief, a month ago to work for Mr. Ford. He was the first staff member hired by the new President.

An official for the newspaper said terHorst had been hired in the new position of "national columnist" in Washington and would write three columns a week for the paper.

"He went back on the payroll today," said Al Blanchard, national editor of the News.

The News has not yet named a new Washington bureau chief, but Blanchard said terHorst would not reassume that title. He said terHorst had asked for several days in which to tie up his White House duties before returning to the paper.

White House aides said yesterday that terHorst left Mr. Ford's staff because he felt

the President's advisers caused him to lie to reporters about the impending pardon for Mr. Nixon as well as because he opposed the granting of the pardon.

Their disclosures suggested terHorst's resignation involved a dispute over issues of credibility and confidence within Mr. Ford's White House staff. TerHorst resigned nine hours after Mr. Ford announced a full pardon of Mr. Nixon Sunday. He justified his leave-taking by saying he could not "in good conscience" support that decision. "I didn't know how I could credibly defend it," terHorst said.

White House aides and some of terHorst's colleagues in the news media, however, told a different story based on their personal contacts with the press secretary.

Aboard the press charter flight accompanying the President to Pittsburgh yesterday, one White House staffer said terHorst felt his credibility had been destroyed by presidential advisers who lied to him last week when he asked whether Mr. Ford was considering a pardon for Mr. Nixon.

TerHorst was asking on behalf of newsmen who got wind of the story and he passed on the assurances of the advisers that "there was nothing to it," this source said.

Sunday morning, he said, terHorst called the reporters and apologized.

TerHorst had won the admiration of Washington newsmen for restoring candor and an atmosphere of good will to the White House press relations effort.