

Ford Appoints Morton to Assist In Policy Matters and Campaign

NYTimes JAN 14 1976

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 13 — President Ford named Rogers C.B. Morton today to serve as a White House counselor, but the President's spokesman said that Mr. Morton would give only "incidental" attention to the 1976 election campaign.

Ron Nessen, the White House press secretary, announced that Mr. Morton, the departing Secretary of Commerce, would join the President's personal staff as a Cabinet-rank adviser on economic and domestic policy matters. He said that the post would entail only "incidental duties of liaison with the President Ford Committee and the Republican National Committee."

Published reports last week said that Mr. Ford had persuaded a reluctant Mr. Morton to become the White House overseer of the President's candidacy for a full term.

Mr. Nessen said today that Mr. Morton, "if asked, will certainly give the President political advice" but that his duties would center more broadly on counseling Mr. Ford on domestic and economic issues.

Mr. Morton told reporters later that he would not choose the word "incidental" to describe his political contacts but that they would "take no overwhelming, major part" of his time.

"If I see the campaign going in the wrong direction," Mr. Morton said, "I won't bury my head in the sand."

Following White House criticism of the conduct of the President Ford Committee under its chairman, Howard H. Callaway, and Mr. Callaway's complaint that the campaign was not given a sufficiently high priority in the White House, Mr. Ford told reporters he was considering naming "somebody of stature" as his liaison with the campaign organization.

Mr. Morton, 61 years old, has held two Cabinet posts and is a former member of Congress and former chairman of the Republican National Committee.

Well-placed aides in the White House and Ford campaign said last week that Mr. Morton would supply the President's candidacy with an element it had lacked—full and authoritative attention to politics in the White House.

By designating Mr. Morton a counselor, with undefined du-



Associated Press

Rogers C. B. Morton after his appointment yesterday.

ties, the President will be able to pay him a \$44,600 annual salary from taxpayer funds. Mr. Nessen noted that the salary would be \$18,400 less than Mr. Morton earned as Commerce Secretary.

Although Presidents have customarily had aides who devoted substantial time and attention to the chief executive's political fortunes, Mr. Nessen appeared reluctant to say that Mr. Morton would fill such a role for Mr. Ford.

He said Mr. Morton would serve only as a "point of contact" with the campaign and party organizations, relieving Richard B. Cheney, the White House chief of staff, and Robert T. Hartmann, another counselor, of the chore.

A senior White House official said later that Mr. Nessen and the press corps had each indulged in some "feigned naiveté" in discussing the matter. "Every President has a political operative," the official said.

Ford Names Byington

WASHINGTON, Jan. 13 (UPI) —Mr. Ford today named S. John Byington, as the next chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Mr. Byington, 38, is a lawyer and pharmacist who is from Mr. Ford's hometown, Grand Rapids, Mich., and is deputy to the President's consumer adviser, Virginia Knauer.

His nomination, subject to Senate confirmation, has drawn opposition from the Consumer Federation of America, which said Mr. Byington "has mouthed the Administration viewpoint on every consumer issue."