

cabinet

Richardson Gets A New Top Job

AGENTS of the FBI seemed to be underfoot everywhere in the White House at midweek, to the open irritation of President Nixon. "A clumsy way to handle things," he was reported to have said.

But it was one of the minor changes in a major shake-up that meant a realignment of the Cabinet and as well as what many had long called the President's super-cabinet (and others the "Teutonic Barrier").

Attorney General Richard Kleindienst was out and he was instantly replaced by Elliot L. Richardson, who had become the President's chief fireman. It would be a record-tying three Cabinet jobs in the same year for meticulous, ramrod-straight Richardson, with an imposing reputation for tight organization.

Cleanup Job

Richardson had been Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare until three months ago when he was asked to shake up Defense. He had barely got his feet wet by the time President Nixon ordered him to take over the Attorney General's job and get the Watergate mess cleaned up.

It was not a totally unfamiliar chore for him. President Eisenhower had appointed him United States Attorney for Massachusetts in the late 1950s, where he became the chief prosecutor of Bernard Goldfine, whose gifts to Eisenhower's assistant, Sherman Adams, had forced Adams to resign. Goldfine was sentenced for tax evasion.

The ouster of Halderman and Ehrlichman and posting of FBI agents at their office doors to prevent anyone removing documents from their offices without permission of the agents, was expected to be the biggest immediate change in the White House, however.

More Accessible?

For one thing, it seemed to leave the President's Oval Office more accessible. The President also indicated the changing atmosphere by calling two Cabinet meetings in a matter of days. And to replace his counsel, John Dean III, he picked Leonard Garment, his long-time law partner in Mudge, Rohe, Guthrie & Alexander of New York.

Garment, who had been a special consultant, was very different from any of the out-going men. A quick-witted, fun-loving, fast-talking raconteur with decided liberal leanings, he had specifically asked President Nixon NOT to give him Dean's thankless job. But Mr. Nixon insisted he needed someone of proved "loyalty" as counsel.

Presumably others of "proven loyalty" ready to step into the changing White House were Vice President Spiro Agnew, who had been quiet and wandering about the country for months. He emerged from the Oval Office at midweek hinting the President had in mind giving him new responsibilities: "He's got some very interesting new ideas . . . setting new policies. It's very exciting."



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RICHARDSON



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KLEINDIENST