

Ford Cabinet Aide Brinegar Resigns

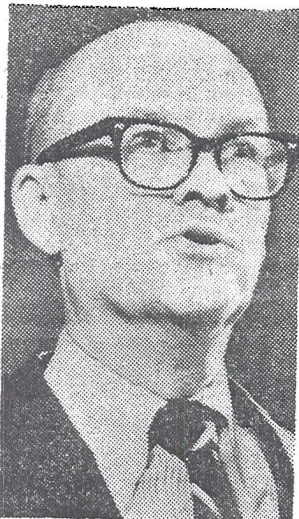
Washington

Transportation Secretary Claude Brinegar resigned yesterday, the third top holdover of the Nixon administration to leave in an apparent reshuffling of President Ford's cabinet.

The resignation, which is effective February 1, follows closely the announced resignations of Attorney General William Saxbe and budget director Roy Ash.

Mr. Ford is expected to nominate a Chicago transportation specialist, John Robson to replace Brinegar. Robson was a political aide to Donald Rumsfeld, Mr. Ford's staff coordinator, when Rumsfeld was in Congress in the early 1960s.

White House sources confirmed Robson's likely nomination and Senate resources expressed pleasure that Mr. Ford was picking a man with such extensive transportation background. Neither Brinegar nor his predecessor, John Volpe, were transportation experts when appointed.



CLAUDE BRINEGAR

The third to quit

Brinegar, former senior vice president of Union Oil Co., was appointed two years ago when Volpe became ambassador to Italy. Despite initial misgivings, Brinegar earned considerable respect in the department as an able administrator.

Major shifts in U.S. transportation policy took place during Brinegar's term, including the first major U.S. commitment to the financing of big city transit systems and legislation reorganizing bankrupt northeastern railroads. The 55 mph speed limit was also imposed during his term.

In an exchange of letters with Mr. Ford, Brinegar, 48, said his term was "exciting, educational, and at times hectic."

"Now is the time for me to return to the private sector," said Brinegar, adding that he would not decide his future plans until January. However, Transportation Department sources said Brinegar had been offered a top position by an unidentified oil company.

Mr. Ford expressed "deep gratitude and personal appreciation" to Brinegar. He said Brinegar was responsible for "articulation of a national transportation policy" for the first time.

United Press

Ford Reorganizes His Staff

Washington

President Ford, announced a reorganization of his staff yesterday that was described as an effort to strengthen his hand in decision-making and increase top officials' accessibility to him.

Under the realignment, which has been evolving since shortly after he took office August 9, Mr. Ford gave four of his "cabinet-rank advisers" responsibility for helping him to deal with "the full range of policy issues."

They are presidential counselors Robert Hartman and John Marsh, legal counsel Philip Buchen and presidential assistant Donald Rumsfeld.

Mr. Ford said those four and five other chief aides now will report directly to him. The others are economic policy coordinator William Seidman, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who also is Mr. Ford's special assistant for national security; press secretary Ron Nessen, and his budget director and assistant for domestic policy — two positions which have just been left vacant.

"I think the President has in fact put his house in order from an organizational standpoint," Rumsfeld told a news conference at the White House after the new operating plans were made public.

Also left open-ended was the role that will be played by Nelson A. Rockefeller

when his vice presidential nomination gets final congressional approval, expected today.

A statement issued by the White House said that Mr. Ford designed the new organizational plan to achieve these five basic objectives:

- To give cabinet officers, members of Congress and key members of his staff adequate access to the President. Critics of President Nixon said that was extremely limited during his administration.

- To "assure high ethical standards and behavior by his staff," an obvious reference to the Watergate and other scandals of the Nixon years.

- To limit White House staff functions to those

which must be performed there and to rely on cabinet officials or agency heads to carry out other functions.

- To achieve "a clearly defined" White House organization in which responsibilities are specifically assigned.

- To see that the White House is an effective working "part of the total government process and not unduly separated" from Congress or the press.

The President also announced that the White House staff is being trimmed by about ten percent. Rumsfeld said that total personnel August 1 numbered 540 and that will be down to slightly under 500 within a month or so.

United Press