

Brinegar Quitting Cabinet; Is 3d Nixon Holdover to Go

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 18—Secretary of Transportation Claude S. Brinegar announced his resignation today, effective Feb. 1. He thus became the third Cabinet-level holdover from the Nixon Administration to resign since last Friday.

Further underscoring the shift to a Ford Administration, the White House also outlined a reorganized Presidential staff, reduced slightly in size from former President Richard M. Nixon's and formed with a view that the White House and the rest of the Government are "not unduly separated," according to Donald H. Rumsfeld, the staff coordinator.

Mr. Brinegar, whose resignation had been expected and who announced it shortly before the White House confirmed it, said in a letter to President Ford that his two years as Secretary of Transportation "have been exciting, educational, and at times, hectic."

He said that progress had been made in improving the nation's transportation system, that "now it is necessary for me to return to the private sector." The 49-year-old Mr. Brinegar, a former senior vice president of the Union Oil Company, said that he would not decide on his plans until next month. Mr. Ford expressed "deep gratitude" for Mr. Brinegar's work.

No successor was announced, although John E. Robson, a Chicago lawyer, who is a former Under Secretary of Transportation and former political adviser to Mr. Rumsfeld, is regarded as a leading contender for the post.

The White House has also not announced replacements for two other Cabinet-level officials whose resignations were announced in recent days—Roy L. Ash, director of the Office of Management and Budget, and Attorney General William B. Saxbe, who is to be appointed Ambassador to India.

James T. Lynn, Secretary of Housing and Urban Develop-

ment, is expected to be named to replace Mr. Ash in the key budget post and Edward H. Levi, president of the University of Chicago, is believed to be the White House's choice to be Attorney General.

Melvin R. Laird, a former White House official and a close friend of Mr. Ford, told reporters today that he expected Mr. Levi to be nominated and confirmed by the Senate despite some opposition from conservative Senators. Mr. Laird said that the President wanted a new Attorney General who had not been identified with the Washington political scene.

Later today Mr. Rumsfeld outlined to reporters how the White House staff had been reorganized since Mr. Ford took office Aug. 9 to reflect Mr. Ford's method of operating. Among other things, he said, the White House staff will drop in size from 540 on Aug. 1 to under 500 within a month or so. This number includes consultants to the President as well as staff members of other departments and agencies detailed to the White House for temporary periods, he said.

According to the revised organization chart, which contained few surprises but offered a glimpse of how the White House now operates, nine key staff members are to report directly to the President.

They are: the Director of Management and Budget; L. William Seidman, assistant for economic affairs; Kenneth R. Cole Jr., assistant for domestic affairs; Secretary of State Kissinger, who also is the President's national security adviser; Mr. Rumsfeld, the staff coordinator; John O. Marsh Jr., counselor to the President in charge of Congressional relations; Ron Nessen, the press secretary; Robert T. Hartmann, counselor to the President in charge of speech writing and political affairs, and Philip W. Buchen, the President's legal counsel.