

The Choice for H.E.W.

Elliot Lee Richardson

By CHRISTOPHER LYDON

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WASHINGTON, June 7 — Early in 1969, Elliot Lee Richardson, then the new Under Secretary of State, was making courtesy calls on Capitol Hill. As he left the office of a senior Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Senator remarked mischievously to a friend: "Remind

Man you a little bit of
in the the late George
News Apley?" The comparison with the hero of Mar-

quand's satirical novel, a man virtually imprisoned in the stuffy folkways of the Boston aristocracy, is less than fair but inevitable. True, the career of Mr. Richardson, moving now from a short but celebrated tour with the State Department to become Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, is a striking contrast to Apley's provincialism.

Nonetheless, at a time of diminishing regional distinctions in American life, Mr. Richardson is unmistakably a Boston type and often seems to be a survivor of another era.

Rich, brilliant, and identified through an illustrious family tree with great Boston institutions in law, education, medicine, banking and politics, he has moved to continually larger roles in public affairs with the assurance—some would say arrogance—of a born ruler.

Many Key 'Assignments'

Reporting to his Harvard classmates at their 25th reunion four years ago, Mr. Richardson said that his career had been divided into at least 16 highly varied "assignments." These did not include his later assignment as Attorney General of Massachusetts and, after President Nixon's election, as the nation's second ranking diplomatic officer. Among his earlier roles, he was:

¶An Army officer in Europe during World War II, decorated with the Bronze Star for heroism and nicknamed "Lucky" and "Canonball" for his seeming exultation in the perils of combat.

¶Student president of the Harvard Law Review, law clerk to Federal Judge Learned Hand in New York and later to Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, who made Mr. Richardson a special favorite among this many protégés.

¶Assistant Secretary of H.E.W. during the Eisenhower Presidency and drafter of the first tentative efforts in Federal aid to education and in Medicare. It was then that he first met Vice President Nixon and came to admire the future President as what he called a strong "stand-up guy" in what he believed was an otherwise flabby Administration.



Associated Press

Rare combination of intellectual subtlety and bureaucratic agility.

Between those primary assignments, Mr. Richardson was also a trial lawyer with Ropes & Gray, proud, old Boston firm; the first campaign director to raise more than \$10-million for the Boston United Fund; and an active trustee of the Massachusetts General Hospital, whose director, Dr. John H. Knowles, was courted, then rejected after a bitter fight last year, as chief medical officer of the department Mr. Richardson will now inherit.

During the last 18 months in Washington, Mr. Richardson, 49 years old, has dazzled older hands with his ability to master not simply the conceptual problems of foreign affairs but the snarled lines of the State Department's internal management.

Despite intense pressure from old friends and college classmates, 15 of whom led a formal protest to his office last week, he has never been a dissenter on policy issues. But he has also impressed people here as a tough-minded realist, immune to the Administration's own propaganda, and probably the most effective administrator at Foggy Bottom in the last decade.

In still another tribute to his versatility, there was informed speculation in Cambridge until his new job was announced that Mr. Richardson would be invited to succeed Nathan Pusey as President of Harvard next year. The foundations of the rumor are uncertain, but it illustrates the sense among his friends that no big public enterprise is beyond his grasp.

No Lack of Confidence

Mr. Richardson has often said that a Harvard Law Review man can do any job well. Adelberg Ames, a Boston doctor who may be his closest friend, says that the view represents more than conceit. In an interview today, Dr. Ames said: "He really believes that problems are amenable to analysis, and it doesn't really matter what the problem is as long as you have the technique for analyzing it. With the right approach, all problems are soluble. I think he feels he has that general ability, and I think he feels it's an important ability to have."

Mr. Richardson, who was born July 20, 1920, is married to the former Anne Hazard and is the father of two boys and a girl.

He seldom rests, but when he does relax it is with a special flair: dancing the kazatsky at parties, painting accomplished watercolors around the family summer compound in Eastham, Mass., on Cape Cod, canoeing in the wilds of Northern Canada, walking the moors of Scotland or bone-fishing off the Bahamas.

¶The frosty prosecutor of Bernard Goldfine, the gift-giving textile tycoon, and many lesser practitioners of Boston-style corruption. That brief stint in the United States Attorney's office during 1959 and 1960 left a lasting, though possibly inaccurate impression of Mr. Richardson as pre-eminently a public scold. When he ran for (and won) the state Attorney General's office in 1966, one senior Democrat commented with reverence and fear: "The best medical blood in America courses through Elliot's veins, but all that boy wants is to put people in jail."

¶Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts in 1965 and 1966, during which he sought special responsibility for administrative reforms in health and welfare programs and for enactment of a sales tax to pay for more state aid to education. The son, grandson and brother of eminent doctors, he said then that the liberation of human resources was his first concern.