

Same Men, New Jobs

Full of holes in every other respect, the Watergate seems to be thoroughly effective in damming up the flow of new talent into President Nixon's Washington. It could, of course, be argued that on a day when two of his former Cabinet members were indicted for conspiracy and perjury, any new appointments would be improvements. Under normal circumstances, the naming of James S. Schlesinger to be Secretary of Defense and John Connally to the shattered White House staff could be defended.

The problem under present abnormal circumstances is that President Nixon has not yet presented any new faces capable of generating new confidence and respect for his post-Watergate Administration. Even before the scandal reached its present proportions, nearly forty posts of Assistant Secretaries in various Government departments were going begging. By now the difficulty of finding new Presidential appointees seems to affect even higher reaches of the bureaucracy.

Mr. Schlesinger is well qualified to manage the Pentagon, though it is unfortunate to plunge him into yet another new situation when he has had only four months to learn how to run the Central Intelligence Agency. The only immediate scar on his record, which should be promptly cleared up, is the dubious assertion before Watergate investigators that Mr. Schlesinger had been willing to go along with a cover-up scheme blaming the intelligence agency, instead of the President's political operators, for the Watergate burglary attempt.

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Mr. Connally's return to official status is more obscure. As Special Adviser to the President, he may have considerable power but little demonstrable responsibility—a potentially dangerous situation. Indications are that he does not intend to move to Washington; he will be available when the President wishes to consult him on foreign and domestic matters, which presumably he has been doing all along anyway. Maybe he will even keep up his numerous business interests. This hardly looks like total commitment to Mr. Nixon's leadership by an ambitious politician who reportedly had been asked to assume more formal responsibilities.

Yesterday's nominations follow upon the earlier appointments of Elliot L. Richardson to be Attorney General and Gen. Alexander M. Haig to be White House Chief of Staff, both replacing fallen victims of the Watergate scandal. Both are veterans of the first Nixon Administration. On the evidence so far, therefore, Presi-

dent Nixon is not opening the windows to clear the air; he is simply changing the slipcovers on the old furniture.