

ROWLEY LEAVES SECRET SERVICE

Director Since '61 Retiree
With Unit Under Fire

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 24 —

The retirement of James J. Rowley as director of the Secret Service, a position he has held since 1961, was announced Wednesday by George P. Shultz, Secretary of the Treasury.

The retirement of the 65-year-old Mr. Rowley, which becomes effective at the end of this month, comes at a time when the service he heads is under critical fire for its alleged role in ordering lavish



Associated Press

James J. Rowley

"improvements" on the basis of security for President Nixon's two private residences at Key Biscayne, Fla., and San Clemente, Calif.

Mr. Rowley could not be reached for comment on his reasons, and service spokesmen attributed his decision to step down after 35 years simply to a desire for retirement. Retirement at 65 is not mandatory.

Mr. Rowley, whose retirement was announced by Mr. Shultz with "deepest regret" and "highest regard and appreciation for his dedication, initiative and judgment," joined the service in 1938, after a year as a special agent in the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Led Presidential Detail

He moved to Washington in 1939 from his native New York City and joined the Presidential detail, becoming head of this division in 1947. He remained the special agent in charge of the Presidential detail until he became the director.

In his years as the man in charge of protecting six Presidents—from Roosevelt through Nixon—he has seen the service greatly expanded and, after the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, largely reorganized.

The service, in addition to the 100 or so agents assigned to the President and his family, now has the responsibility of protecting the Vice President, Presidential candidates, and visiting dignitaries.

When President Kennedy announced Mr. Rowley's appointment to head the service he noted Mr. Rowley's years as head of the Presidential detail, adding, "and he hasn't lost a President in all that time."

Those years included overseas trips with President Roosevelt during World War II and one that he reportedly recalls as among the most hazardous—President Eisenhower's visit to India in 1959, when the President was mobbed by well-wishers in New Delhi.

Center of Controversy

More recently, Mr. Rowley was the center of a controversy early this year concerning the transfer of Robert H. Taylor, who had been head of the Presidential detail since Mr. Nixon's election in 1968. There were continuing reports that Mr. Taylor was transferred at the insistence of H. R. Haldeman, adviser to the President, who had clashed with Mr. Taylor several times during the 1972 Presidential campaign when the Secret Service agent was unwilling to sacrifice security to political ends, such as allowing a restraining rope to be lowered so as to allow a demonstration.

Mr. Rowley finally issued a statement denying the reports and calling the transfer routine, "in keeping with our policy of rotating supervisory personnel."

And, in June, Mr. Rowley defended much of the work done at the Nixon private homes, telling a House subcommittee that "improvements" was an inaccurate description. Much of the work, he insisted, was required for security purposes.