

Firestone, Hodgson Named Envoys

By Carroll Kilpatrick
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Nixon yesterday announced that he would nominate Leonard K. Firestone as ambassador to Belgium and former Secretary of Labor James D. Hodgson as ambassador to Japan.

Firestone, son of the founder of Firestone Tire & Rubber Co., was a major contributor to the 1972 Nixon re-election campaign. His nomination is expected to set off a battle in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee because of its opposition to ambassadorial posts for big political givers.

Firestone gave \$115,000 to the 1972 campaign and his two brothers, the late Harvey C. Firestone Jr., and Raymond C. Firestone, gave \$48,712 and \$64,441, according to reports filed with the clerk of the House and the General Accounting Office.

Hodgson is senior vice president of Lockheed Aircraft Corp. He was named under secretary of labor in 1969 and in 1970 became Secretary of Labor when George P. Shultz left the post to be director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Hodgson resigned his Cabl-

net post after the 1972 election and returned to Lockheed, with which he had been associated for almost 25 years.

The appointments were announced as Mr. Nixon conferred for about 45 minutes yesterday with Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, who leaves late tonight for meetings with Soviet Communist Party chief Leonid I. Brezhnev and other Soviet officials.

The meetings, regarded as preliminary to a presidential visit to Moscow in June, are to be held at Zavidovo, a government retreat about 130 miles from Moscow. The talks are scheduled to begin Monday.

In other presidential announcements Mr. Nixon said he would nominate Alfred L. Atherton Jr. to be assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs. If confirmed, he will succeed Joseph J. Sisco, now Under secretary or political affairs. Atherton is a career Foreign Service officer.

The President named Leonard F. Valentynowicz, a Buffalo attorney and lecturer at the University of Buffalo Law School, to be administrator of the State Department's Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs. He would succeed Barbara M. Watson, who is resigning.

There has been controversy



JAMES D. HODGSON

... picked for ambassadorships



LEONARD K. FIRESTONE

before in ambassadorial appointments. Last year the Senate Foreign Relations Committee attempted to set guidelines after charges arose that big campaign contributors were being favored for ambassadorial posts.

The committee said it would view skeptically any nominee who contributed more than a nominal sum to a presidential campaign. The "nominal sum" was to be \$5,000 or \$10,000, a committee source recalled yesterday.

The guidelines went to the State Department for com-

ment but were never formally adopted by the committee.

One multimillionaire, race-horse owner Cornelius V. (Sonny) Whitney, has told Senate Watergate committee investigators of making a secret \$250,000 contribution to the Nixon re-election campaign at a time he expected to be nominated ambassador to Spain.

He did not get the nomination, but he did get a refund.

The Finance Committee to Re-elect the President disclosed the contribution and the refund without comment on Sept. 28, 1973, when under

court order it filed the names of persons who gave to Mr. Nixon before a disclosure law became effective April 7, 1972.

It was former Secretary of State William P. Rogers who reportedly rejected a request that he recommend Whitney. The nomination was never made.

Firestone is a director of the Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. He has been with the company since 1931 and was president of its California subsidiary from 1943 to 1970.

He also is president of the Richard Nixon Foundation, established primarily to make plans for a Nixon library.

It was disclosed last year that the foundation, a tax-exempt corporation, paid at least \$21,000 to the President's brother, Edward, to search for a location for the library. He received another \$15,000 in 1973 as a consultant in preparing oral histories of the President's boyhood.

In the discussion of the issue of big contributors for ambassadorial posts, the Foreign Relations committee attempted to draft standards that would not bar big contributors with experience in foreign policy, but informed sources said, Firestone has had business but not diplomatic experience. The committee had in mind

such experienced diplomats as David K. E. Bruce, C. Douglas Dillon, and W. Averell Harriman.

In a news conference Feb. 25, the President said that ambassadorships "have not been for sale" and that they "cannot be purchased."

"I would not approve an ambassadorship unless the man or woman was qualified clearly apart from any contributions," the President said.

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