

Johnson a Teetotaler But Smokes Heavily And Delights in Folks

New Defense Secretary May Get Dictatorial Powers Over Armed Forces

By JIM G. LUCAS, Scripps-Howard Staff Writer
WASHINGTON, Mar. 7.—Because he stepped into a job no one else wanted, Louis A. Johnson, 58, the new Defense Secretary, finally got one he has wanted for years.

Mr. Johnson, a former Assistant Secretary of War and American Legion Commander, will succeed James V. Forrestal on Mar. 31. President Truman said Army Secretary Kenneth Royall, Air Secretary W. Stuart Symington and Navy Secretary John L. Sullivan would stay.

Mr. Johnson has been chairman of the Democratic National Finance Committee, a job Mr. Forrestal and others turned down. And Mr. Johnson raised \$1.5 million for the presidential campaign.

Mr. Johnson is tall (over six feet), heavy (about 200 pounds) and partly bald. His voice is a moderate tenor, and he uses it to call people by their first names soon after they meet. He doesn't drink.

Liquor Cabinet Dry

On his 58th birthday recently, the girls of the Democratic National Finance Committee threw a surprise party in his office. They brought in a cake, a pot of coffee and, as a gift, a liquor cabinet.

The cabinet never had any spirits, although Mr. Johnson continues to remind himself he ought to buy some for guests. He enjoyed the party immensely; ate three pieces of cake and playfully demanded the girls sign his birthday card "with love."

He smokes heavily, a special Havana favored by Winston Churchill. He's proud of his law firm, Steptoe and Johnson, which still lists his name second although the senior partner has been dead for years. He likes to recall the friends he's made; a letter from Indian premier Pandit Nehru is framed on his office wall.

He probably could have got his choice of jobs. But he wanted only one—the one he finally got. He has been interested in the military since soon after the World War I armistice when he wrote General Pershing about what was wrong with the army.

Probable Staff

Undoubtedly he will be more President Truman's man than Mr. Forrestal was. Both Mr. Johnson and Mr. Truman were World War I doughboys—both came out majors—and they see things alike.

Several moves are afoot to give the Defense Secretary more power just as Mr. Johnson takes office. Some would make him virtual dictator over the Army, Navy and Air Force. The Hoover Commission wants him to have absolute authority over the joint chiefs of staff, over the \$15 billion military budget and the three service secretaries.

Mr. Johnson probably will bring in his own staff. He rates three administrative assistants. One of his first appointees probably will be Paul Griffith, Scranton (Pa.) Republican and, like Mr. Johnson, a former Legion commander. Mr. Griffith served with Mr. Johnson in the Legion, the War Department and in India.

Mr. Johnson was an assistant secretary from 1937 until 1940. He said he was promised the secretary's job if President Roosevelt could ease out Harry Woodring, former Kansas governor. Mr. Roosevelt never could and the switch was never made.

Relations Cooled

Relations between Mr. Woodring and Mr. Johnson were cool for more than two years. Mr. Woodring, Mr. Johnson later told a congressional committee, was a "sincere pacifist." Mr. Johnson was for preparedness.

The assistant secretary drew up an industrial mobilization plan; Mr. Woodring read it about in the papers. The World War II draft was prepared by Mr. Johnson and Charles Edison, then Assistant Navy Secretary.

In 1947, Mr. Johnson told the Senate War Investigating Committee that Mr. Woodring, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins and Lt. Gen. Breton Somerville, former head of Army Service Forces, blocked his mobilization plan.

In 1939, Senator H. Styles Bridges (R., N. H.), now ranking Republican on the Armed Services Committee, criticized Mr. Johnson for "undermining" Mr. Woodring. Senator Bridges may oppose confirmation of Mr. Johnson.

Go to India

He subsequently served as chairman of the U. S. advisory mission to India, and was active behind scenes in Sir Stafford Cripps' British-Indian independence negotiations.

In 1942, the Alien Property Custodian made him president of General Drydock Corp. He still serves as board chairman. Since then, he has practiced law in Washington and West Virginia.

Mr. Johnson was born in Roanoke, Va., and attended the State University where he was a champion wrestler, orator and president of his law class. At 26, he was elected to the West Virginia legislature.

He was thinking of running for governor when World War II came. He entered the Army, and served as a combat captain for a year. In 1932, he was elected national American Legion commander. He is now a reserve lieutenant colonel.

He is married, and has two daughters. He spends his weekends in West Virginia, but during the week is in his Washington office only a few blocks from the White House. When President Truman announced his appointment he was in New York on business. He has been president of Rotary International and head of the Clarkspur, W. Va., Elks. He is a Mason and an Episcopalian.

CONVICTION UPHELD

WASHINGTON, Mar. 7 (UPI)—By a 4-to-4 vote, the Supreme Court today affirmed for the second time the conviction of Carl A. Marsani for concealing Communist ties while he was a State Department employee.

Why Men Turn for Second Look



RITA HAYWORTH: "... legs have a high sweeping in-step indicating a love of travel and excitement..."

BETTY GRABLE: "... a less passionate instep, a gradually sloping line that reveals love of home life..."

JANE RUSSELL: "... long, efficient foreleg which shows a love of outdoors, physical activity and nature..."

pulchritude (cheesecake paintings, etc.)

have it all over palmistry. Above are three Hollywood lovelies

whose character she discerns by diligent "leg-reading." (Read Erskine Johnson, Page 18.)

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N. H., police yesterday and

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Florence, 30, and his son, Rich-

ard, while they slept in their beds.

After the shooting, Cobb gave

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sleeping potion, then shaved,

dressed and ate breakfast before

driving to police headquarters,

police said.

Cobb said he had been feeling

"strange" since receiving a bump

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They warned that the cakes of

ice rushing downstream might

jam and cause dangerous flood

conditions "anywhere at any

time."

The river was climbing relent-

lessly to a new crest at St. Jo-

seph, Mo., where it was expected

to hit 21 feet today.

At Atchison, Kas., the river

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