

Last Johnson Day in Office Quiet After Busy Week

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 19—A President knows his time has come when the moving men haul his desk off to his memorial library as an object of historical interest.

He also knows he is leaving office when all his friends assure him that history will call him great, when his newspaper critics say nice things about him and when those who really dislike him have had the grace to shut up.

The stolid oak desk President Johnson brought to the White House from his Senate majority leader's office was shipped off to Texas the week before last.

The Frederic Remington painting of a cowboy busting a bronco has gone back to the Smithsonian Institution from its hook over the fireplace in the Fish Room.

The appearance on Pennsylvania Avenue of large numbers of Chesterfield coats, a garment favored by Wall Street lawyers and brokers, has signaled that the others will move in soon.

Some of the White House telephone operators apparently decided a few Republicans had already infiltrated. When a White House aide asked for the national committee headquarters last week, the operator hesitated and asked, "Democratic?"

Wide Use of 'Great'

The word "great" has been dinning in Mr. Johnson's ear for several weeks now. He has not seemed to mind and has responded by applying the same adjective to several of his close associates at the farewell ceremonies and other special happenings of a Presidential leave-taking.

This morning Mr. Johnson attended services at the National City Christian Church and heard the minister, Dr. George R. Davis, read a farewell prayer that the President had composed for the nation.

"In these hours now, our thoughts are not of ourselves, but of our country," Mr. Johnson wrote. "May we, as a nation, deserve no enemies and be worthy of all our friends, striving without ceasing for a day when mankind shall not know war anymore . . . deliver us from the follies of power and pride."

In the last week Mr. Johnson's spirits have risen in proportion to the diminishing days before departure. Some of the grayness of age in his face has disappeared and the lines have seemed less severe.

An earlier, complicated mood has eased into the occasionally serious but usually almost care-free one of a man who has had his way with the world, likes most of what he has done and knows that those who follow him cannot destroy his accomplishments now.

Sundry groups and societies have been trooping to the White House to award him a medal or a keepsake.

He has joined Franklin Delano Roosevelt as a holder of the Gold Medal for Distinguished Achievement of the

Holland Society of New York, an organization of descendants of Dutch settlers of America.

He was presented with the one-hundred-thousandth teacher's certificate issued by the Massachusetts Department of Education in recognition of his contribution to education.

And he received the annual Gold Medal of the Pan-American Society. Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy got it too.

Many of the delegations have seemed genuinely to want to thank him. Others have appeared as bent on having their picture taken with Mr. Johnson while he is still President as they have been in expressing gratitude.

Tom Walters, president of the National Association of Retired Civil Employees, gave Mr. Johnson copies of the organization's magazine and then asked an aide, while still in Mr. Johnson's hearing: "Now whom do I see to get the pictures?"

Although last fall few candidates asked Mr. Johnson's help during the election, this month the schedule has been replete with Senators and Representatives coming for a good-by and a photograph.

Workmen Oblivious

The carpenters and electricians preparing for the inauguration have been oblivious to decorum. At one ceremony in the East Room, the President awarded Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, retiring chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Distinguished Service Medal and praised him as "a soldier for every season."

The general was so overcome with emotion that his knees trembled, his hands shook and tears came to his eyes, but outside the carpenters hammered on mercilessly.

And the contractor in charge of erecting the reviewing stands in front of the White House has been brash enough to assign already a distinguished place in history to Mr. Johnson's successor. "Sorry for the inconvenience of construction,"

a sign on the sidewalk says. "We are making way for another great man."

The President's constant companion during his final days has been his 19-month-old grandson, Patrick Lyndon Nugent. Mr. Johnson has nicknamed the little boy "Khrushchev," because of the chubbiness the blond child shares with the former Soviet dictator.

"Khrushchev" has accompanied the President to most ceremonies. He has already squatted down beside his grandfather or stood off to one side, fidgeting at his short pants in an imitation of the way the President habitually hitches up his trousers.

Patrick Lyndon will probably miss the indulgence his grandfather permits him with the White House telephones. His favorite form of amusement is pushing the buttons of the direct lines to the President's aides. When the aides snatch the receiver off the hook with a quick, "Yes, sir," and there is no answer or a few mumbles in the background, they know that "Khrushchev" is on the line again.

Mr. Johnson is a man who rewards loyalty and he has not let his authority expire without paying off some of these debts to the faithful. Harold Barefoot Sanders Jr., his principal legislative aide, was renominated for a judgeship on the District of Columbia Circuit Court earlier this month amid rumors of an arrangement with President-elect Nixon to make certain that the appointment was confirmed this time.

For Secretary of State Dean Rusk there was a special reward. His unflinchingly dogged resistance to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the other critics of the President's Vietnam policy has earned him a special place in Mr. Johnson's esteem.

Mr. Rusk received the Medal of Freedom with Distinction, the highest award the President could give a civilian, and

Mr. Johnson announced he was setting aside \$200,000 from the future royalties of his and Mrs. Johnson's memoirs to endow annual fellowships for a man and a woman student at the University of Texas in honor of Mr. Rusk and his wife, Virginia.

The President told a farewell assemblage of Mr. Rusk's senior assistants at the State Department that the Secretary was "this decade's man of the ages."

Then, in a swipe at the Eastern intellectuals who have harried Mr. Rusk over Vietnam, he said:

"He is the man, who above all others, knows what it takes to achieve a peace settlement because he has brushed up against the grindstone of international affairs and got a polish that you don't get just from going to Harvard or Yale."

Whirl of Activity

Mr. Rusk, a 1931 graduate of Davidson College in North Carolina, was a Rhodes Scholar and holds an honorary degree from Harvard, but nothing from Yale.

Mr. Johnson kept the White House in the usual whirl of activity throughout most of the final week. "He's two minutes from the left basement," one of the harassed secretaries in the press office told George Christian as the President strode off to another ceremony.

"It'll be nice to work again for somebody who keeps to a normal schedule," one of the chauffeurs said in anticipation of Mr. Nixon.

On Saturday he had his picture taken with Carl Yastrzemski, the star of the Boston Red Sox, and wandered about the White House thanking the kitchen help, the messengers, the drivers and other staff.

During a farewell visit with a group of reporters who have covered him regularly, a photographer stumbled against one of the stand-up ashtrays in the oval office and sent it swaying and clattering. "You won't have my ashtrays to kick around any more," Mr. Johnson said.

All the while he pondered whether to sign proclamations adding another 7.5 million acres in Alaska, Utah and Arizona to the national park system as a grand gesture for conservation.

After the church service this morning, the President and his family had coffee and chatted with the congregation. Dr. Davis, the minister, said Mr. Johnson had previously told him he had composed a prayer for the nation and he had asked the President to send it over to be read this morning in place of the pastoral prayer. It arrived typed on a plain sheet of paper with a note from the President.

This afternoon, the President worked in his oval office for a while before getting ready for a last dinner in the White House mansion tonight with his wife and his personal aides and their wives.

He leaves tomorrow with the satisfaction of knowing that his leaving has been as noisy and possibly noisier than Mr. Nixon's coming.