

Topics

Dreams, Plans and Realities

The Permanent Government

With his appointment as ambassador-at-large, Elliott Richardson has clearly taken the lead in the race to become president of the Establishment in this generation.

His predecessor, now emeritus, is unquestionably Wall Street attorney John McCloy. Still going strong at 81, Mr. McCloy has chaired more banks, college boards, foundations and study groups than anyone and also served as president of the World Bank, High Commissioner to Germany, Assistant Secretary of War and adviser to Presidents of both parties. The crucial test of Establishment eminence, first decreed by Richard Rovere, is service for Government of either party.

Mr. McCloy's strongest rival in the past generation was Averell Harriman, another spry octogenarian. He served Franklin Roosevelt as ambassador to the Soviet Union, Harry Truman as ambassador to Great Britain and Secretary of Commerce, John Kennedy as Assistant Secretary of State, and Lyndon Johnson as Vietnam peace negotiator. Significantly, however, no Republican administration called upon him. Having flunked the bipartisan test, Mr. Harriman has to settle for what might be termed the Longevity Award.

In recent years, observers had considered several leading possibilities of the McCloy succession: Leon Jaworski, former president of the American Bar Association, former Watergate prose-

cutor, and head of the Establishment's Texas branch; former Gov. William Scranton who chaired Mr. Nixon's Commission on Campus Unrest, served as Mr. Ford's U.N. Ambassador, and has turned down more proffered cabinet posts than anyone in recent memory. Father Theodore Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame and former chairman of the Civil Rights Commission, was an unorthodox entry, but clearly in contention.

But Mr. Richardson has clearly overtaken the field. He served in the previous eight years as Under Secretary of State, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, Secretary of Defense, Attorney General, Ambassador to London, and Secretary of Commerce. And he is only 56.

Fantasy

What would have happened in the Senate if President Carter had nominated Theodore Sorensen to be Attorney General and Griffin Bell as Director of Central Intelligence?

Downhill Planning

City planners should be planners for the city, not representatives of boroughs, districts, community boards or ethnic associations. It was most unfortunate that New York's charter reform required at least one member of the City Planning Commission from each borough, a provision now bearing the expected bitter fruit.

In place of the retiring Chester Rapkin—one of the nation's most respected planners, teachers and urbanists—City Hall is being offered only the names of politicians and community leaders by “unrepresented” groups in the Bronx and Staten Island. And the professional and civic groups that know the difference between local activism and planning competence seem to be offering no alternatives.

In abandoning the concept that the Planning Commission should operate beyond politics, the city is undermining both its purpose and processes. Even within the new and questionable system, however, better nominations are in order.

The Welfare State Enhanced

New York State's ban on pay toilets is a preeminently civilized measure, and we applaud the Court of Appeals for upholding it. Though our society has done much to meet diverse human needs, when it comes to public conveniences there is nothing to brag about. Travelers can testify that on this count, we do not stand high among the advanced nations. The visitor, or indeed the native, who has difficulty finding a public toilet in any of our cities may attribute the lack to oversight; to find one and then be barred for want of a coin must stir suspicions of sadism. So away with the locks. Even in a market economy, welfare measures have their place.