

OCT 19 1964

STATINTL

RICHARD WILSON

Lax Security Methods Still Prevail

Senator Thomas Dodd of Connecticut is an old friend of President Johnson. He was for Johnson for President in 1960. But he has not been very successful in getting the President to pay much attention to the charges of the Internal Security Subcommittee of the United States Senate that security procedures in the executive branch, particularly the State Department, are lax and dangerous.

Mr. Johnson now has reason to know that even the man closest to him might, without the President's knowledge, have weaknesses which made him especially vulnerable to blackmail and were of such a nature that his resignation was called for immediately. This case is not unique. It happened before in the case of a trusted associate of a previous President who quietly resigned a few months after his appointment, much to the sorrow of those who had known his devotion to public service.

This man, as well as President Johnson's special assistant, was too vulnerable to hold a position of close intimacy with the President of the United States. In neither case was this vulnerability known at the time of appointment.

These cases alone should be enough to demonstrate that great care must be taken in the selection of all personnel having to do with the national security. No shadow can fall

across them, cruel as this may seem in human terms.

This is what Senator Dodd has been trying to demonstrate and he has much evidence on his side. Scores of employes have been given "emergency clearance" in the Department of State, without any particular emergency, and thus have been spared a thorough examination of their records prior to employment. Easy-going security procedures have replaced those of the Eisenhower administration. When one employe, long recognized for the evenhandedness of his administration of security procedures, told the truth to the Senate Internal Security Committee on State Department practices he was ostracized and suspended for disclosing secret information—information which, in itself, was innocuous but disclosed the casual methods of clearing applicants for employment.

The violent reaction of security officials of the State Department in this case—the Otepka case—was enough to illustrate the attitudes of mind which have grown out of the long-term reaction to "McCarthyism." Because Senator McCarthy, 14 years ago, adopted extreme methods and sometimes let caution and decency go to the winds, the post-McCarthy attitude seems to be that any qualified man has a "right" to avoid a rigorous inspection of his affairs before given a sensitive gov-

ernment position. No one, of course, has any such right, nor any right to public employment at all, nor any right to forgiveness of his past acts.

The Warren Commission recently held to strict account both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Secret Service for failing to take preventive measures against the assassin of President Kennedy. We could see that it would have been much better, in this one case, if police-state methods had prevented the assassination.

If the Secret Service had information, as reported, on the aberrations of President Johnson's special assistant, it could be criticized again for having failed to take the action which would have avoided the President's present embarrassment.

What all this illustrates is that there is an urgent need for well-executed internal security procedures. This has been illustrated time after time, both in this country and in England, which of all nations prize highest rights and dignity of the individual.

Perhaps the fact that President Johnson has had closest to him an associate who could not be trusted to remain there any longer will turn the President's attention to the broader aspects of the internal security problem. Senator Dodd is in a position to give the President sound information and sage, un-McCarthy-like advice.

© 1964