

23 Remarks Announcing Changes in the Cabinet and the Executive Office of the President. *January 27, 1972*

Ladies and gentlemen:

As you can see from the three men who surround me, this announcement is not a surprise. Having read many of your columns and dope stories I know that you have been speculating about the change that would be made in the office of the Secretary of Commerce.

Secretary Stans is leaving the Cabinet, and his resignation, of course, will be completed when his successor is approved. In his leaving the Cabinet, I, of course, have very deep regrets, because of all the people in our official family, Secretary Stans is one of my closest personal, as well as political, friends. He has served splendidly in the position of Secretary of Commerce. He has initiated a number of new programs which have been covered in the 15,000-word report that I presented to the Congress just a few days ago. And he, I know, in any position that he undertakes, can be expected to do a very, very competent job.

As you know, I have known him through the years of the Eisenhower Administration, and then in California when we worked together in an unsuccessful political campaign, and then finally in 1968 when he was helpful in our campaign to a very great degree, and then through 3 years in the Cabinet family.

Due to the fact that I do have this role that I have announced that I will not discuss partisan matters until after the convention, I will not announce directly the position that he is going to undertake. I will simply say that the Secretary of Commerce, once his successor is approved, will become the chancellor of the

exchequer of one of the two major parties.¹ I am sure he will be very successful in that operation as he has always been in handling fundraising activities in the past.

As a successor, we have Pete Peterson. One who is known so well to you, who leaves his present position, I am sure, with regret, but who will be able to carry on many of the ideas that he has worked on in the Council on International Economic Policy, to carry them on as Secretary of Commerce.

He is a young man, remarkably successful in business, one who has an understanding of world affairs, international affairs and also what makes the business community tick. I think—and Secretary Stans and I both agreed on this when we selected his successor—we believe we have here a man who can move into this position and will do a very outstanding job as the new Secretary of Commerce.

And then to replace him, we have another Pete, Pete Flanigan, who has been on the White House Staff and one of our closest associates going back over 15 years. He has a great deal of experience in private business in the international economic field.

I should say also that the position that he undertakes is undertaken with the total approval of the various Cabinet officers who will be working with him, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Commerce, and others.

¹ On February 15, 1972, Maurice H. Stans became chairman of the Finance Committee to Re-Elect the President.

And in discussing this matter just recently with Secretary Connally, we felt that there couldn't be a better replacement for Mr. Peterson as Chairman of this extremely important Council at this time when so many international economic problems would be before us, than Peter Flanigan.

So with that, I will leave these three gentlemen to say whatever they like to the members of the press at this point and we will turn the meeting over first, of course, to Secretary Stans. And I express my thanks to him for his past service to this Government, in political campaigns, and for the future service which I know he will render to one of the two major parties.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. He spoke without referring to notes.

The remarks of Secretary Stans, Mr. Peterson, and Mr. Flanigan were as follows:

SECRETARY STANS. Mr. President, thank you very much. Thank you.

I don't think I will make a very long pitch here, because I don't see any potential large contributors in the room anywhere, at least not in money terms. [Laughter]

I think it is well known that I leave the Department of Commerce with some reluctance, because we had a great many things going on there that I think were very successful, and others which were about to come to fruition. But I really and sincerely feel in my personal dedication to President Nixon that I can serve my country best by working for his reelection so that he can carry out for another 4 years the programs that he has instituted in these 4 years.

From the time that he lost the election in 1960, I believe that Richard Nixon had the capability to be a great President. I worked for him in campaigns in 1962, 1966, 1968, and I am going to do it again in 1972 for the reason I have already described.

I am extremely pleased that Pete Peterson will be my successor. I have worked with him since he has been in the White House as head of the Council on International Economic

Policy. I have found him extremely able, affable, and a person who has a great many constructive ideas. I think that he will make a great Secretary of Commerce.

I want to say, too, that I am very proud of the organization that I leave to him in the Department of Commerce. The career people and the non-career people have done a great job of carrying out the President's policies, and my objectives, and I think we have a momentum and a respect for the Department that hasn't existed for a long time. I hope that is true and I hope that is your finding.

So of all the people that I know, I am particularly pleased that Pete Peterson is the one who has been chosen by the President.

I will say the same thing for Peter Flanigan. I worked with him even longer in some of the political campaigns before 1969, and since he has been in the White House since the beginning of 1969. We have had a great many difficult matters to cope with, and I have had nothing but great respect for his tremendous mental capabilities, his resourcefulness, and ingenuity in difficult issues.

So I leave the Cabinet, of course, as anyone does, with great reluctance, but for a purpose which I think is a very important one.

Next Tuesday I plan to hold a press conference at the Department of Commerce to deal with the individual issues and specifics of our programs as we leave them, and of course, will be delighted to see any of you there.

Mr. PETERSON. I am obviously flattered by the President's generous offer to serve as the Secretary of Commerce. I am very inspired, Maury Stans, by your record.

I am also impressed with my successor. I think Peter will obviously out-perform his predecessor, and I am very much looking forward, Peter, to working with you, but as a member of the Council that you will be the Executive Director of.

We have started some important programs on the Council. I know Peter will do a fine job of carrying on.

The President has asked me if I wouldn't devote a good deal of my energy to the whole question of America's competitive position, its program for increasing its productivity, because however necessary it is that we get an improved monetary system, an improved trading system, ultimately how we fare in the seventies and

eighties is going to depend upon how successfully we can compete and how productive we can become.

As impressed as I am by both my predecessor and my successor, I must say I am much less impressed with our ability to keep a secret, at least in this particular instance. Now I would like to introduce Peter Flanigan to you. Congratulations, Pete.

MR. FLANIGAN. Thank you, Pete.

I am apparently the "Chance" in this Tinker to Evers to Chance, or as I am following Pete Peterson, maybe I am the "repeat." [Laughter]

I am also told that Pete can't answer questions because he is subject to confirmation and because of protocol, I can't either, therefore. I am happy to say I don't have to be confirmed for this job, but nevertheless, those are the rules that Ron [Ziegler] laid down. [Laughter]

I look forward, of course, to working with Pete Peterson. We will miss the Secretary here in the business of government, but I know from

experience how effective he is in the business of politics, and nothing could be more important than what he is doing there.

At this moment, this point in our national life when international economic competition has become a major force, both for the health of our economy at home and in our relations with countries abroad, I am honored and flattered that the President has asked me to carry on the outstanding work that Pete Peterson started as Director of the Council on International Economic Policy.

And the end of that effort, the entire purpose, is to be sure that we get fair treatment for American workers and American industry in international trade and in that way contribute to the President's quest for a peaceful and a prosperous world. Certainly the groundwork that has been laid at the Council and the successes to date are effective. I look forward to trying to match that record. Thank you very much.