

McKay's Decision Brought About In Matter Of Hours By Top Political Advisors

By A. ROBERT SMITH
News-Review Correspondent
WASHINGTON — The sudden decision of Secretary of Interior Douglas McKay to pull out of the cabinet and run for the Senate in Oregon was brought about in a matter of hours by President Eisenhower's top political advisors, if not by the President himself. This is the reconstructed background story, as completely as it could be pieced together, of this major political development.

Monday, Mar. 5 — in an hour-long interview with McKay that afternoon in his office, he told me he had no plans for the future except to resign next Jan. 20 and let the President decide whether he wanted to make a cabinet change. Either way would have been OK with McKay, for he said he was looking forward to retiring. In previous interviews, McKay had said he had no desire to run for the Senate, explaining that a man younger than his 62-years should be tackling that job.

McKay seemed relaxed, genial as ever, and profiting personally from the philosophy he applies to his controversy-ridden job. No matter how thick the brickbats might fly, "I never go to sleep at night mad at anyone," he said.

In the month since the late Gov. Paul Patterson died, he had been urged by many to return to Oregon and take on Sen. Wayne Morse. He had held out adamantly against this idea. Mrs. McKay was even more stoutly opposed to it. Up to this day, no one had successfully moved either from that position.

Tuesday, Mar. 6 — McKay told an inquiring reporter for the Associated Press substantially what he had told me Monday about his future plans.

Wednesday, Mar. 7 — McKay had breakfast with Leonard Hall, GOP national chairman. From this point the wheels began grinding furiously. Hall reportedly told McKay that a public opinion firm hired by the Republican National Committee had taken a sampling in Oregon and found McKay much better known by the average citizen than either Phil Hitchcock or Lamar Tootz, the two main Republican contenders for Morse's seat. The day before, Hall told 1500 ladies attending the National Republican Women's Conference here that Morse was a prime GOP target, next in importance to the presidency in this year's elections. Party leaders didn't want to take a chance on a relatively unknown candidate. McKay was told they thought he was the man to do the job.

McKay left the breakfast table unconvinced. During the day he sounded out close advisors. Some encouraged him to run. He said he would have to talk it over with Mrs. McKay that night. That same evening Attorney General Herbert Brownell told a prominent Republican that despite the heat on McKay to run, he was still dragging his feet. Brownell said he was confident McKay would change his mind by the following day. He explained that an 11 o'clock appointment set up by the White House for McKay with the President the following morning would cinch the matter if McKay were still holding out when he arrived at the White House.

In this conversation, Brownell, who is one of the administration's top political masterminds, explained that party political leaders here felt that McKay had not made a satisfactory recovery from the political onslaught of the Democrats on the "give away" charge. Other cabinet members placed on the hot seat by partisan critics, had recovered much better, Brownell added, mentioning Defense Secretary Wilson.

Available evidence points to the conclusion that McKay was pushed into a campaign he personally did not wish to enter by party officials at the Washington level who led him to believe he was the strongest of possible challengers for Morse, that other Oregon candidates would welcome his candidacy and pull out (although they were not consulted) and that he would be doing what the President and the party most wanted him to do if he knocked off Wayne Morse.

Motivating at least some of this pressure on McKay was a feeling held by some of the GOP's top strategists here that McKay had not been able to combat his Democratic critics as effectively as they might have wished and that it would be no less politically valuable to have a new secretary of the interior as the 1956 campaign got underway than to have McKay barnstorming up and down his native Oregon after the scalp of his harshest critic.

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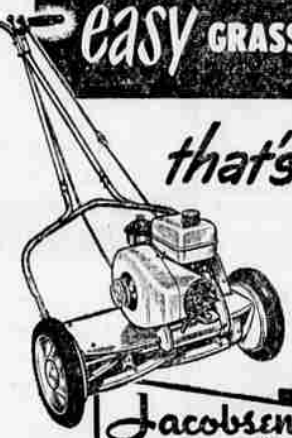


DOWN - TO - EARTH STEWARDESS — Stewardess service, which glamorized air travel, has come to bus line service between San Francisco and Los Angeles, Calif. It's Continental Trailways' answer to decreasing patronage. Helen Voss, one of the line's 10 stewardesses, is shown making two passengers "feel at home" on her bus. Stewardesses serve refreshments, heat baby's bottle and supply pillows, blankets and magazines. Bus service also includes soft music, reserved seats, rest rooms, outlets for electric razors.

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PROUD POP!—Former President Harry S. Truman beams as he clasps the hands of his daughter, Margaret, and her fiancé, Clifton Daniel, a New York newspaperman. Harry is in New York for overnight visit and "quiet dinner" with the engaged couple. They'll wed in Independence, Mo., in April.

GRACE KELLY LEAVES
LOS ANGELES — Actress Grace Kelly left by plane Thursday for New York to depart soon for Monaco and her marriage to Prince Rainier III in April. The Prince sailed from New York on the Ile de France on March 16.



NEA Telephone

Administration Rejects Women Benefits At 62

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Eisenhower administration turned thumbs down Thursday on House-passed proposals to provide social security retirement benefits for women at age 62 and payments to the totally disabled starting at age 50.

Secretary of Welfare Folsom also rejected the accompanying increase in the social security tax from 2 to 2 1/2 per cent immediately to help finance the broadened benefits.

He said this would mean a tax increase of \$1,700,000,000 over the first full year.

"The old-age and survivors insurance (OASI) system is in excellent condition," Folsom said in testimony prepared for the Senate Finance Committee.

"For all practical purposes, the system is in approximate actuarial balance. It will thus be self-supporting, under present estimates, providing taxes are increased as scheduled and benefits are not increased without a corresponding increase in revenue."

Folsom urged extension of OASI coverage to make it as "nearly universal as practicable." He endorsed provisions in the House bill and in other pending legislation which would extend the coverage to self-employed attorneys, dentists, osteopaths, optometrists, veterinarians, the military services, federal employees and various other groups.

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