

NOT LONG AGO a reporter was listing individuals to interview for a story on leisure and retirement. Near the top he wrote, "Herbert Hoover." On checking, however, he scratched out the name. Not only is Mr. Hoover, at 85, not retired—he's so busy it's a feat to get an appointment with him.

Our oldest living ex-President needn't continue working a 10-hour day. He earned a fortune years ago (and never has accepted a salary from the Government). Yet he chooses work. And his "retirement" achievements to date have been prodigious.

In 1946, for example, at the age of 72, he was called by President Harry S. Truman to organize postwar relief efforts in 39 countries. One associate still recalls how "The Chief" worked hours in an unheated room in Germany, bundled in blankets and holding a phone in a mitten-clad hand.

At 73, he began the unprecedented task of directing the first and second Hoover Commission studies, both Congressionally established and approved, of our Government's executive branch. When he finished, he was 80.

Long a champion of the Boys' Clubs of America, Mr. Hoover (himself a former poor boy) has been largely responsible, as chairman, for boosting the number of clubs five-fold. He has raised at least \$75 million for various causes in recent years and has served on so many educational and charitable boards that his associates have lost track.

Already author of a shelfful of books, including a best seller about a Democratic President, "The Ordeal of Woodrow Wilson," he is writing three more, part of a series on American citizens' world-wide relief efforts.

His suite in the Waldorf-Astoria Towers in New York City at times seems as busy as his former office in the White House. He has six secretaries. Both the hotel and his staff screen a stream of telephone calls. (In contrast, I phoned Independence, Mo., one day with a question and got former President Truman direct.) Meanwhile, the white-haired,

square-shouldered "Chief," serenely puffing a pipe, pushes on through his busy schedule, remaining punctual almost to the second.

In addition, Mr. Hoover squeezes in periodic doses of recreation. Each year, for instance, he tries to go fishing at least once, perhaps in Oregon or Florida. On occasion, he attends banquets or parties. Last summer, he attended an Old-Timers Day baseball game at Yankee Stadium.

Few persons, even among "The Chief's" long-time friends, fully realize the fantastic pace this octogenarian sets.

A Typical Day's Work

Mr. Hoover rises at 7 a.m. (He lives in New York except in summer, when he moves to the Mark Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco.) He tunes in radio or TV news, shaves and dresses (he employs no valet), and by 8 o'clock or earlier he is reading the New York morning papers in full.

For breakfast at 9 (the hotel prepares all his meals), he usually has invited guests. Within an hour, he is at his desk to check mail (it averages 250 letters a day). He jots down replies by hand. Then he has appointments concerning the Boys' Clubs, or some of the dozen institutions he actively helps guide or manage.

On many days, his time is devoted to his three books, for which he personally is examining 400,000 papers, charts, and documents. He employs no ghost writer; he writes every word in pencil in longhand. When he tires, he stands and stretches.

Lunch is at 1 p.m. in his dining room; again Mr. Hoover has guests. By 2, he usually is in his room for a nap. Within an hour he is working again. The evening papers are brought in about 6. Dinner at 7:30, again with guests.

(There also are periodic family visits. His wife died in 1944, but he has two sons, both engineers, Allan Henry and Herbert, Jr., the latter an ex-

undersecretary of state; six grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.)

After dinner, he may resume work. "We know he works at night sometimes," says chief secretary Bernice Miller, "because we find things on our desks in the morning." Usually, though, dinner is followed by conversations with friends; canasta or gin rummy; or possibly TV, if a special public-affairs show or baseball game is on.

Finally, about 10 p.m., he is on his way to bed. How does the ex-President maintain such a schedule? Why?

After a visit to his office, talks with friends and associates, and an examination of his own comments, I am convinced the secret of Mr. Hoover's vigor and longevity is an unorthodox four-point "nonretirement" philosophy.

He has never set it down, as such. Nevertheless, it can be formalized.

Hoover's Four-Point Plan

1. Regardless of age, only work can make you feel worthwhile.

"Any oldster who keeps at even part-time work," he says, "has something worth talking about. He has a zest for the morning paper and his three meals a day. The point of all this is not to retire from work or you will shrivel into a nuisance to all mankind."

2. Keeping busy aids an oldster's health.

Although Mr. Hoover's physical condition has been above average, it has not been perfect. At 83, he underwent surgery for a gall-bladder condition. But despite the gravity of surgery at his age, within weeks he was up and busy, though at reduced speed. That summer he was President Eisenhower's delegate to the Brussels World Fair, where he delivered a major address. Without such jobs to look forward to, friends say, Mr. Hoover's recovery might have gone more slowly—and prob-

ably caused him considerably more discomfort.

3. Your effort counts, no matter who you are.

A Quaker by birth, Mr. Hoover always has believed strongly in service. He first came to public attention when Woodrow Wilson named him food administrator for hard-pressed people in Europe in World War I. He thinks the world always has more jobs to do than people to do them.

"Nobody has a right to retire," Mr. Hoover believes. "You should take some job that will benefit the community, even if you cannot get paid for it. There is not a town that does not need helpers."

Suppose no job falls your way? "I have been retired either by force or voluntarily from many jobs," he says. "I have always been able to find another one."

4. Only in "retirement" years can you really "give back" to the world.

Herbert Hoover once was the most famous mining engineer in the world; this earned him a fortune. He credits education for his success, and the United States for the kind of life he has enjoyed—including his longevity.

In the freedom of his later years, he has striven to repay what he considers this "debt any successful person owes" to society.

"Repaying that," he says, "has brought me my greatest satisfaction."

In working through his twilight years, does Mr. Hoover fear he is missing something?

Emphatically not. He never has believed happiness lay in leisure. In fact, when an insurance-executive friend prescribed as a rule for happiness, "Work a little harder, work a little longer, work," Mr. Hoover wrote a letter seconding it with: "Sound advice."

Thus he has come to his golden years in happiness, and become the longest-lived ex-President in history. Why then, wonders Herbert Hoover, should he change now?

At 85, our longest-lived ex-President spends his hours in vital work and proves age can have its own fulfillments

By ALFRED BALK

HERBERT HOOVER TELLS WHY: I DON'T BELIEVE IN RETIREMENT

