

1)

It is wonderful to be here this evening on an important occasion:

The inauguration of a new President. _____

This is an especially exciting time. Most of all, there is speculation about the new Administration. _____

I cannot disclose my source, but ~~it can be disclosed~~ ^{*Background*} _{*I have it*} on reliable authority that President Cormier has already made some tentative decisions. All these men, I understand have already had highest-level experience as columnists: For secretary of Defense, Clayton Fritchey;

2)

For Secretary of State, James Kilpatrick;

For Secretary of Agriculture, Jimmy Breslin;

For Secretary of the Treasury, _____;

For HEW, Bill Buckley

Arms Control and Disarmament, Joe Alsop;

Ambassador to Saigon, Joe Kraft;

Ambassador to the UN, David Lawrence;

Director, Civil Service Commission, Henry Fairlie;

~~Director, U.S. Travel Service, _____.~~

And, to head the Bureau of Standards, the Louella Parsons and Hedda Hopper of the political world -- that dynamic, if sometimes madcap duo, Rowland Evans and Bob Novak.

*C.I.A.
Drew Pearson*

4)

But there is one thing, Frank, ~~which you will have to~~ beware.

It is the credibility gap.

For instance, do you really expect anyone to believe that your election was the result of hard work and dedication? What was the real reason? What were the sinister influences at work behind the scenes . . . what were the deals . . . where was the hidden power which brought you to your position?

5)

Also, how could you belong to an organization in which so many members do not share your philosophy? Doesn't it make you feel a little unclean?

* * *

6)

I've been doing a good deal of traveling lately, as you know.

And, during the course of my travels, I have seen a good deal of speculation about just what may or may not have happened in my visits with world leaders.

For instance, there was the speculation about whether or not a certain famous person shed a tear on his dinner plate during my visit to his capital.

I can tell you absolutely and unequivocally that Lester Maddox did not shed any tears during my visit to Georgia. I shed the tears. ***

7)

Also you may have heard some rumors that, during my travels, I was critical of the press.

Now I ask you: How could I be critical of the press?

Everyone knows that the press is perfect.

I asked President Truman about his: He said, yes the press was perfect.

I asked Dick Nixon: He said, absolutely, always perfect.

I asked the President: And he said, ^{who} how could think such a thing?

And I ask you: Isn't the press perfect? I think the press is just

8)

I think the press is just wonderful.

It must be so, because Bob Thompson just leaned over to tell me that he thought all politicians were perfect too. And if we can't believe each other, Bob, whom can we believe?

* * *

9)

But, and here I would like to have a serious word with you, I think we are all concerned always, that our press should remain both free and responsible.

Some six years ago my old friend Adlai Stevenson spoke at one of these Washington Dinners. This is what he said:

"Your typewriter is a public trust. The sound may be the most beautiful noise you know. But it has meaning and justification only if it is part of the gloriously discordant symphony of a free society."

He also said:

"The rock bottom foundation of a free press is the integrity of the people who run it. Our press may make a million mistakes of judgment without doing itself permanent harm so long as its proprietors are steadfast in their adherence to truth."

I believe that, by and large, the people who run our press are men of integrity.

11)

If we who live in the goldfish bowl sometimes seem impatient or testy, I hope you realize that it is because we are in a goldfish bowl.

It is disconcerting to always have someone looking over your shoulder. It is easy to feel sometimes that, from over the shoulder, the optic may be a bit out of focus. ~~And it is disconcerting when you are the subject of a press report that is just plain wrong or inaccurate.~~

But it is far more important that all of us look beyond these irritations to the common goal we all seek: A free society of checks and balances,

12)

in which all of us can ~~honestly~~ tell our story as we see it, without apology or hesitation.

I don't know what is more important than a free and objective press.
And I hope you realize that I am willing to pay a far higher price than any injustices I may have suffered in the press during my public life for the preservation of such a precious institution.

So stay with it. Keep at it. And don't let any periodic roars of anguish keep you from the business of taking a good, hard look at what goes on.

13)

All my remarks tonight have been cleared with General Westmoreland.

The General has asked me to start a pacification program on the Hill. He tells me a military junta is easier to deal with than an irate dove.

* * *

14)

Victor Borge tells me he is expanding his Rock Cornish Hen farm to produce Rock Cornish Doves. They look tender, but are a little hard to swallow.

He decided not to produce Rock Cornish Hawks because that is a bird that won't fold its wings and whose skin is impervious to roasting, basting, and bombing.

* * *

15)

I am pleased to see Petula Clark here. I have written a new song which I hoped she could sing -- It's called Down South -- it should be sung in two part harmony by Hubert Humphrey and Lester Maddox.

"When you are lonely and your work is a grind to you,

You can always come, down south

When you have Wallaces as governors, in a hurry, nothing seems to help, down south.

15a)

Chorus:

Listen to the footsteps of the friends in Atlanta,
Linger in the city where arms are locked in unity,
How can you lose? "

* * *

16)

I came back from Atlanta to a meeting of the Klan -- the ADA klan of Rauh, Schlesinger, Galbraith and others. We ~~ate~~ fried chicken and roasted Humphrey -- but no crow.

We agreed on some things -- primarily that I would not run for Chairman of ADA, and Ken Galbraith would not run for Vice President of the U. S. , that I would not write a book called the Age of Schlesinger, and that Arthur would return the favor.

* * *

17)

I had a great trip to Europe. I'm organizing a new group -- Ban the Egg. I asked President De Gaulle how one made a French omellette -- he said you take one chest of a Secret Service agent, add one Maoist, two eggs, and shake well after using.

* * *

For those of us in government, John Stuart Mill's advice is as valid today as when uttered a century ago:

"We can never be sure that the opinion we are endeavoring to stifle is a false opinion; and if we were sure, stifling it would be an evil still."

[Draft?]

WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS

4/28

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that President Cormier has already made some tentative decisions about his

~~new Cabinet~~: All ^{those men} of them, I understand, have ^{already} had highest-level experience as columnists.

For Secretary of Defense, ~~Clayton Fritchey~~ Clayton Fritchey

For Secretary of State, James Kilpatrick.

For Secretary of Agriculture, Jimmy Breslin

- Treasury, Max Lerner ^{John Pearson}
- Health Education & Welfare, Bill Buckley
- Arms Control and Disarmament, Joe Alsop
- Ambassador to Saigon, Joe Kraft
- Ambassador to the UN, David Lawrence

- Director, U.S. Travel Service, Walter Lippmann
- Director, Civil Service Commission, Harry Fairlie

Bureau of Standards,
And, to head the ~~new Youth Opportunity Council~~, the Louella Parsons and
~~if sometimes madcap~~
that dynamic duo,
Hedda Hopper of the political world---~~these two former Boy Scouts~~, Rowland
Evans and Bob Novak.

* * *

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credibility gap.

For instance, do you really expect anyone to believe that your election
was the result of hard work and dedication? What was the real reason? What
at work behind the scenes
were the sinister influences ~~which really had an effect on you~~ ...what were
the deals...where was the hidden power which brought you to your position?

Also, how could you belong to an organization in which so many members
do not share your philosophy? Doesn't it make you feel a little unclean?

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And I ask you: Isn't the press perfect? I think the press is just wonderful. *It must be so, because Bob Thompson just leaned over to tell*
~~In fact, for authority, I refer you to a respected craftsman of the~~
me that he thought all politicians were perfect too. And if
~~profession, Mr. H.L. Mencken:~~ *we can't believe each other, Bob, whom*
can we believe?

"For my part, I am convinced that my old friend Adlai Stevenson was
right: He said: "I'm convinced that most of the press of this country follow
Joseph Pulitzer's admonition: his remark that accuracy is to a newspaper what
virtue is to alady. Except, as someone pointed out, a newspaper can always
Print a retraction."

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But it is far more important that all of us look beyond these ^{irritations} ~~####~~ to the ~~far more important~~ common goal we all seek: A ^{free} society of checks and balances, in which all of us can ^{honestly} tell our story as we see it, without apology or hesitation.

~~That is what this country is all about: People speaking their minds~~

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