

# Schlesinger gives a presidential history lesson

By ERIC PETERS

"For a nation traditionally addicted to optimism, to an inherent view of the future, boosterism and positive thoughts, I think we're in a strangely brooding, melancholy mood."

The words were Arthur Schlesinger's in a speech to the State Bar of Michigan in Southfield's Raleigh House last week. Twice a Pulitzer Prize winner, Schlesinger has authored a prodigious list of books on history and politics.

Popular confidence in our national capacity to deal with pressing problems of security, race, poverty, depression, inflation, urban, environmental and moral decay has declined," he contended.

The theme of Schlesinger's talk was drawn from Abraham Lincoln's message to Congress July 4, 1861: "Is there in all republics this inherent and fatal weakness? Must a government, of necessity, be too strong for the liberties of its own people, or too weak to maintain its own existence?"



ARTHUR SCHLESINGER

DURING the Watergate years, Schlesinger said, authoritative figures expressed concern about the impact of the clamor on the presidency as an institution. Regarding Nixon as any other citizen under the law and Constitution was dangerous. He maintained that the impact might have crippled the office for years to come, he added.

Schlesinger criticized President Gerald Ford as an obstacle to new legislation despite the fact he wasn't elected and lacked a legitimate personal base of authority.

"Ford was in fact an accidental president," Schlesinger declared. "He's not only a White House incumbent, but he's nearly lost the nomination of his own party. The electorate faces a choice between mediocrity and mystery in our biennial year."

Although two years have passed since Nixon's departure, Ford is continuing the tradition of an imperial president, Schlesinger charged. He accused Ford of instituting a government by veto.

"FORD, THE loyal Capitol Hill man such a short time before has vetoed 54 acts passed by Congress," Schlesinger maintained. "It took the imperial Nixon nearly six years to veto 46 bills. The mighty Lyndon Johnson vetoed only 30 in five years and John Kennedy only 21 in three years."

Most presidential vetoes in the past have

Quoting Theodore Roosevelt, Schlesinger said, "I have a very definite philosophy about the presidency. I think it should be a very powerful office and the president should be a strong man who uses without hesitation every power that position yields. But because of this fact, I believe he should be sharply watched by the people and held to a strict accountability by them."

SCHLESINGER COUNTERED the popular chant that the system worked in the Watergate crisis by listing the fateful array of circumstances which brought Nixon down. They were overman Woodward and Bernstein, the "smoking pistol" tapes, Archibald Cox and Leon Jaworski.

"Without any one of them, Nixon, Halde- man, Erickman and the rest would still be riding high," he asserted. "Now, of course, emergencies may arise when it is impossible for a president, no matter how well disposed, to touch every base before he makes his decision."

"Abraham Lincoln did some things in 1861 and Franklin Roosevelt in 1941 that bypassed the system of accountability. But these were the two great crises in our history that authentically threatened the life

of the nation, the Civil War and World War II."

SCHLESINGER RECOMMENDED a revival of the cabinet instead of increased use of private aides accountable to no one but the president.

He suggested an increased openness of the chief executive through more press conferences and pointed to Congressional abdication as a factor encouraging presidential usurpation. He maintained Congress must again take the initiative.

Schlesinger quoted Hubert Humphrey on the executive influence on Congress by stating, "It is easy to roll this body because the executive branch comes in with power and information and is able to mobilize public opinion."

"Congress, lacking staff, expertise, information and will, has been overwhelmed by the executive juggernaut. What is to be done to ourselves, we are afraid. We are fearful men."

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## Alan Jay Lerner coming to Town Hall

The writer of scripts for such successful plays and movies as "My Fair Lady," "Gigi" and "An American in Paris," will be the opening speaker at the Nowhere Town Hall lecture series at 11 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 14 in Plymouth Station Inn, 1677 Northville Road, Plymouth.

Alan Jay Lerner will replace the scheduled speaker, musician Marvin Hamlisch, who had to bow out because of TV commitments.

Lerner has won three academy awards

for his original screenplays and two Antoinette Perry awards for plays. The three films already mentioned have won him academy awards for best film of the year and the largest number of academy awards for films written by one man.

His plays have been presented over the English-speaking world as well as throughout South America, Mexico, Spain, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, Poland, Japan and all the Scandinavian countries.

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**  
**OAKLAND COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION**  
**1977 BUDGET**

**1977 ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM**

The Oakland County Road Commission hereby gives notice of a public hearing at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 28, 1976 at the Oakland County Commissioners Auditorium, 1200 North Telegraph Road, Pontiac, Michigan 48053.

The purpose of the hearing is to present the Oakland County Road Commission's proposed 1977 Budget, including the Transportation Planning and Environmental Control Department of the Oakland County Road Commission and the funding thereof, and to provide an opportunity to all interested citizens and elected officials of Oakland County to present comments thereon prior to adoption of each by the Board of County Road Commissioners.

The proposed Budget sets forth the anticipated revenues available to the Oakland County Road Commission and their source. The Budget also shows the uses to which these funds will be put, which includes the Operating Expenditures of the Road Commission and the Road Construction Program.

Copies of the proposed 1977 Road Construction Program are available and may be obtained by contacting the Transportation Planning and Environmental Control Department of the Oakland County Road Commission, 3100 Lahser Road, Birmingham, Michigan 48010, Phone 645-2000, ext. 210.

Copies of the proposed 1977 Budget and related information will be available one (1) week prior to the Public Hearing and may be obtained by contacting the Finance Department of the Oakland County Road Commission, 3100 Lahser Road, Birmingham, Michigan 48010, Phone 645-2000, ext. 233.

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