

Reporter Evaluates Presidential Prospects

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Alistair Cooke, interpreter of the American scene to Britons, thinks Hubert Humphrey might well be this country's best presidential prospect and Ronald Reagan is definitely the worst.

"The signpost of American television," (the BBC and Manchester Guardian correspondent told a Farmington Town Hall audience Thursday, "that it can bring into prominence a man who is so agreeable before the cameras and knows so little.

"I've spent some time with Reagan in California, and I know this is so."

THE MAN who gained some of his own fame on the television series "Commentary" said he really couldn't feel sure of the leadership qualities of any of the men now considered prospects for the presidency. But he added:

"Hubert Humphrey, if he breaks out of administration mold he has had to keep while vice-president, and returns to being the kind of leader he used to be, might be the best."

Cooke, whose talk was the last in the current Town Hall season, also had comments on the Vietnam conflict and possibility for peace, the economy of his native England and French leader Charles De Gaulle while speaking at the celebrity luncheon in Glen Oaks Country Club.

HE SAID THAT possibly a third of the people in England may have approved of this country's motives in entering the Vietnam fighting, but the other two thirds "feel this is the maddest episode in American history."

"My own view," he went on, "is that it's nonsense to think of Vietnam as another Munich. I think a far closer parallel is Napoleon's experience with Haiti. He sent in crack French regiment to put down a rebellion and it was riddled by a small native force that kept disappearing into the hills and attacking from the rear."

"NAPOLEON'S answer to the situation was to pull back the ragged remnants of his army and change his line about conquering America. And it was shortly after that France sold the Louisiana territory to the United States."

As far as the peace talks go, Cooke said, this country will be disappointed if it expects a conclusive settlement. "We've learned in Korea that the Communist strategy is to wear you down with talk-to argue every small point," he said. "But would we rather go back to shooting them?"

THE SPEAKER, who became an American citizen just before Pearl Harbor, said England's economic plight is serious because it can only maintain its standard of living through manufacturing "and the times are against the English—others are manufacturing too."

He called Charles De Gaulle "a throwback" in a historical sense.

"He's an immensely patriotic characterful man," Cooke went on, "but in these times we must look forward to the united states of Europe rather than backward to French nationalism."

ASKED IF the English have any civil rights problems, Cooke said emphatically, "You bet they do."

He added that Great Britain's so-called "dark million" now is outnumbered by whites about 55 to 1, but the percentage of Negroes is going up and a similar situation exists in the rest of Europe.

"But they are beginning to legislate early in this matter," Cooke said.

In this country, he stated, "Mod Podge" Speaker Set

The art of "Mod Podge" will be presented by Mrs. Georgia Dickens of Dearborn Heights, at the luncheon ending of the Dearborn-Plymouth Christian Women's Club Thursday, April 25, at 12:30 p.m.

Mrs. Lillian Boleak of Mansfield, O., will be the featured speaker. A homemaker and mother of four, she is a well-known Christian speaker in Cleveland, Sandusky and Mansfield, O.

Special music for the luncheon will be vocal solos by Denise Power of Springfield, Mo., a social science student at Evangel College in Springfield.

A children's nursery is available. Reservations may be made with Mrs. A.E. Van Ornum of Plymouth, 453-6228.

the long-range problem is one of "lifting up the Negro or facing the possibility of a second Civil War" and the short-range one involves "deciding what decent power we can give police that will keep order but not be police brutality."

IN HIS TALK in the Northland Theater, Cooke described the problems involved in reporting the scene in one country to another.

"The difficulties arise mainly with language when you try to get Americans and English together," he said. "Sometimes I almost wish I could translate explanations into French or German."

He said it's a small matter to learn two different words for the same object, like "spool of thread" or "reel of cotton," "elevator" or "lift," and "lawyer" or "solicitor."

"Americans can even get used to having a British hotel clerk say 'I'll knock you up at 7 a.m.," Cooke added.

"THE REAL PROBLEMS come when the same word means different things. It's hard for Americans to understand that a play that's a bomb in England is a smashing success."

"In politics, it's even harder for an Englishman to understand that the American President's cabinet has practically no

political power."

And the word "corn" always causes problems, he said, because it's the word each country gives to its staple grain.

"So in America corn is maize"

In England it's wheat, in Scotland it's barley and in Australia it's oats."



TOWN HALL VISITOR — Commentator Alistair Cooke chats with Mrs. Nadine Cardwell, of the Soroptimist Club of Farmington, after last week's Farmington Town Hall lecture. The Soroptimists sponsor the series, which concluded its first season program with Cooke's talk.

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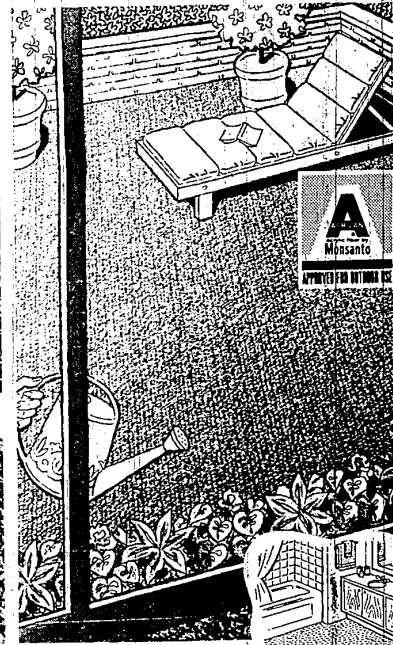
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