

T.R.B.
from
Washington

Capital Portraits

★ Five of the most interesting men in American public life have spoken here recently. We watched them, pondered them, and jotted down notes about them, mostly under blinding TV lights. Here they are.

Fulbright. Relaxed, low-keyed, tanned face. Wears Ben Franklin glasses; peers over them. Affable. Oxford. Has aristocratic loathing for demagogues, many of whom are colleagues. I remember meeting him outside the Senate Caucus Room years back when he first saw McCarthy in action. Voice shook. State of shock. Never forget the way he said it: "Why, the fellow's a boor!" He alone (repeat: alone) of all senators voted against continuing McCarthy's funds. Long ago decided it was better to vote Arkansas Southern segregationism and be a senator than not vote it and not be a senator. Glad he so decided. Under mellow irony is passion. He is also lazy. Won't sully hands with influence-trading or political manipulation. Prefers college auditorium to Senate floor. Now is most effective, articulate and temperate critic of LBJ foreign policy. Started national educational campaign. "In recent years Congress has not fully discharged its responsibilities in the field of foreign relations. . . . I conclude that when the President, for reasons with which we can all sympathize, does not invite us into his high policy councils, it is our duty to infiltrate our way in as best we can." More power to him.

McNamara testifying. Theoretically on foreign aid; actually, Vietnam. Strong man. Whiz kid. Power drive! Facts, facts, facts. They pour out. Likeable. Rimless glasses. Bulldog face.

A-political. What luck to have him in Defense Department. How awful to have him in White House! Focused like a laser beam. In controversy all the time. Why do men like this leave Ford salary to serve country? Patriotism? Yes - and *power*. People don't work for money, they work for power. He administers half US budget. He awes Johnson as he did Kennedy; same drive for efficient, united, cost-conscious, IBM management of armed forces. Get 'em there; give 'em bombs. He knows the answers; knows them before senators ask the questions. How Pentagon brass hates him. How pork-barrel congressmen hate him. He's won all arguments so far. Makes them hate him more. "Shocking mismanagement," GOP leader Jerry Ford says of his handling of war supplies. Nonsense. Ford not over-bright. Some slips, sure, but actually it's been incredible what McNamara's done: a quarter million army, 10,000 miles away. McNamara smiles. "Next question?" he seems to say.

John Kenneth Galbraith: keynoter at ADA convention last week. Later he coiled his six-foot-six frame under table into hot seat before Fulbright committee cameras. Big, prominent features; scion of dour Scotch-Irish Canadian Covenanters; has a scalding irony, laced with wit. Wouldn't give a dime's worth of military aid to any country with per capita income under \$200: "arming the indigent," he calls it. Says "we must face seriously the likelihood that there will not again be a government in Saigon which is seriously capable of prosecuting the war along with us." Funny how nice everybody is to LBJ; Galbraith disagrees with Vietnam policy, but it's those bad advisers who are to blame: "I'm among those who regard the President as a force for restraint." Well, maybe he is; maybe he is.

The Sweet and the Sad

★ Hubert Horatio Humphrey: We love Hubert; everybody does. HH helped found ADA. In 1948 Democratic convention floor fight he forced through civil rights plank that separated party from Dixiecrats. Magnificent fight; will always remember it! Element of high drama when Hubert appeared last

week to make banquet speech before anti-Vietnam ADA liberals, in behalf of Administration which he must defend. TRB sat at table for 10; all watching and waiting. In basement dining room for 600. Distant thrum of dance orchestra came from above. Preliminary speakers surrounded Hubert with layers and layers of cottonwool against any confrontation, or "scene." Drama oozed out. Everybody terribly sweet and cordial; HH terribly sweet and cordial; made speech about peace and negotiation. Advocated an "Asian New Deal." What does that mean? Finished at 10:58 p.m. Applause 45 seconds at end of speech. Still love Hubert. But where is the passion of yesteryear?

And finally - Dean Acheson. (What a galaxy of performers we get!) Always see Acheson with wig, cape and sword, just stepped out of Three Musketeers. Aristocratic nose, splendid moustache, magnificent aplomb. However, present mood sad. He's not testifying on Vietnam but, for a change, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Expresses "gnawing concern" over NATO. All de Gaulle's fault. France like volunteer fireman, resigning in face of fire hazard "capable of being ignited by a spark." The hazard? Soviet Union, of course. Acheson puts on a brilliant show. Senators awed. Can remember when senators heckled him when he was Truman's Secretary of State. Doesn't suffer fools gladly. Also had wondering, haughty look, implying, "How did you ever think up that silly question?" Acheson's mellowed; hair's grayed. Makes audience feel his sorrow now: like actor, every gesture, every quiet intonation, counts. Living through very tragic era, he says. One of greatest opportunities since Roman Empire to win world peace. Europe plagued since Middle Ages by countries seeking hegemony; France for 150 years, till Waterloo; Germany, two world wars. Then hopes brightened. French statesmen, Robert Schumann and Monnet, caught the gleam. . . . But then, de Gaulle. General disintegration if NATO falls; Germany perhaps turning to Moscow. A situation highly dangerous to all of us. Acheson sighed. Held room spellbound. "This I find deeply depressing," he said.