

Gardner Hits 'Fear' Tactics In Campaign

By Nick Kotz

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John W. Gardner, chairman of Common Cause, yesterday accused President Nixon, Vice President Agnew and other politicians of both parties of using campaign tactics designed to frighten voters.

"Too many politicians," he said, "Democratic and Republican, and including the President and Vice President, are treating voters as though they are children. They seem to believe that the way to deal with the voters is to scare him, play on anger, flatter him, and to oversimplify. The voters resent it."

Gardner, a Republican who served as Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in the Johnson Administration, said candidates of both political parties are "drastically oversimplifying issues" in their speeches and television advertisements.

Although politicians can win

some votes by playing on voter anxieties, Gardner questioned: "Do we really want leaders whose chief skill is to exploit anger, fear and hatred?"

Gardner discussed the current political campaign at a breakfast meeting with reporters. Questioned as to which Democrats he thought were using questionable tactics, Gardner mentioned Lloyd Bentsen, Democratic candidate in the Texas Senate race.

After serving in the Johnson Administration and as chairman of the Urban Coalition, Gardner is now directing his efforts at building Common Cause, which he describes as a national citizens' lobby.

He said the purposes of Common Cause are to press for a reordering of national priorities and for reform of government institutions so they are more responsive to public needs and wishes.

A major project of his organization is to seek congressional reform, including elimination of the seniority system establishing mandatory retirement at age 70, and eliminating or modifying the filibuster.

"Congress is creaky, cranky and obsolescent," Gardner said, "and the best men in it can't make it work."

In the current session of Congress, Common Cause has lobbied in favor of the Nixon administration's welfare reform plus and against administration efforts to modify the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Gardner said he is pleased with the growth of his organization, which now has 20,000 members. The membership fee is \$15.