

Notes on People

Admirers Toast Lippmann at 85

President Ford sent a telegram saying, "Yours has been a long and distinguished career." Helmut Schmidt, the West German Chancellor, cabled his "sincere congratulations," to "the dean of American publicists who has stimulated the American and the world press with his independent spirit."

And Walter Lippmann, the retired columnist and author, had a spirited party in his Park Avenue apartment yesterday to celebrate his 85th birthday.

The celebration was non-political, and the only appraisal of the situation that Mr. Lippmann made was to say that he was having a fine time. But friends reported that he has lately been speaking his mind in private about American Presidents.

Asked by a friend whether Richard M. Nixon had been the worst President in American history, Mr. Lippmann replied, "Not the worst — the most embarrassing."

And to another friend he observed: "Presidents in general are not lovable, they've had to do too much to get where they are. But there was one President who was lovable, Teddy Roosevelt — and I loved him."

Among the dozens of friends helping Mr. Lippmann celebrate were his lawyer, Louis S. Auchincloss, the author; Henry R. Labovisse, the head of UNICEF; Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., the historian; former Ambassador Thomas K. Finletter; Gilbert Harrison of the New Republic, and Fred W. Friendly, the television executive who is now an associate dean at the Columbia University School of Journalism.

Another guest was Marya Mannes, the writer, who read this ode to Mr. Lippmann:

*Greatness is. It cannot fade.
Whether illumined or in shade.
And those who live you know
this, too:
Immortality is you.*