

Selected Shorts

By William Safire

ESSAY

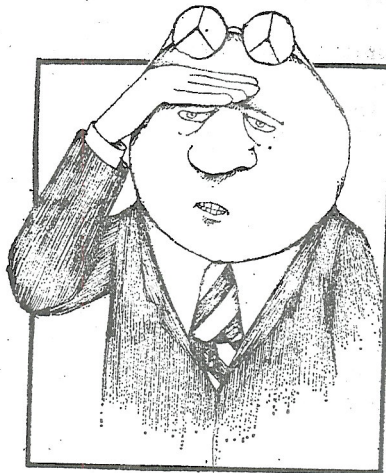
alisms, "cotton-pickin'" is no longer, as some slang authorities hold, a reference to blacks: It has become a jocular euphemism, acceptable in polite society, for a perjorative combination of words familiar to most Americans that will not soon become a part of political discourse.

Coat Holding

The recent suggestion of an appeals court that the President's lawyers and Archibald Cox try to work together out of court to get the question of the White House tapes settled recalls a similarly charitable comment a generation ago in the United Nations.

There, in one of the classic gaffes of modern oratory, American Ambassador Warren Austin suggested to warring Jews and Arabs that they should sit down and try to settle their differences "like good Christians."

Meanwhile, there need be no confusion about what criterion the President will apply to determine what he considers a "definitive" decision of



the Supreme Court. Justice Potter Stewart's definition of obscenity will do for Mr. Nixon's definition of definitive: "I know it when I see it."