

A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

THE relation between the President and the press," says Hugh Sidey, "should be as friendly enemies. We are concerned with what really happens rather than what the White House tells us, and frequently there are differences." Sidey's education in those distinctions started in 1960, when he covered John Kennedy's campaign for TIME. He then served as White House correspondent and began contributing a column to LIFE, an enterprise he continued after becoming TIME's Washington bureau chief. When LIFE ceased publication, we decided that Sidey's personal view of the President and the office was too valuable to lose. Thus, this week we introduce Hugh Sidey writing on the presidency as a regular feature in TIME.

Sidey's pieces will appear two or three times a month in the Nation section. The content will vary from analyses of presidential policy, through the kind of entertainment offered in the White House, to the ways in which Richard Nixon wields the presidency's vast powers. This week Sidey describes the aura of calm efficiency that often insulates Nixon from the very real problems outside the White House.

"The whole world marches through the White House," says Sidey. "I intend to take up part-time residence at the TIME typewriter in the basement and watch the parade. But you also have to stand in the streets with the plain folks and listen to their cheers and boos. You have to look at the apparition behind the tall fences and put into words its postures and bloviations, its true hopes and triumphs."

It is the rare Administration that takes kindly to criticism. Sidey, like others, has sometimes been the target of reprisals. His reporting of foreign policy problems provoked Kennedy to cut off Sidey's White House sources for two weeks in 1961. Lyndon Johnson once responded to a column by dismissing Sidey as an "Ivy Leaguer." (Sidey, a fourth-generation Iowan, went to Iowa State College.) Spiro Agnew has ranked Sidey among the Administration's biased critics. Reviews like that demand continued performances.

HUGH SIDNEY

On the ground floor of the Time-Life Building in Manhattan, Time Inc. maintains an exhibit center that is open to the public on weekdays. Currently on display is a sampling of TIME-LIFE video cassettes. Visitors will be able to learn how the system is adapted for use on home TV sets and to watch some of the taped programs. The subjects are as diverse as golf, cooking, business management and—for loyalists to the print medium—an eight-lesson course in speed reading. Everyone is welcome to drop in for a look.

Ralph P. Davidson

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