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TIME, OCTOBER 4, 1968

A letter from the PUBLISHER

James R. Shepley

THE candidate for one of the two highest offices in the land stood on a high bluff in Montana, drinking in an awe-inspiring panorama of mountains in the distance and the Yellowstone River snaking away below, a trickle of gold under a setting sun. Turning to a companion, he inquired, "Is there one for the enlisted men?"*

Was this Nixon, Humphrey, Wallace, Muskie or Agnew? If you guessed correctly that it was Spiro Agnew, you are qualified to try matching the candidates with the following clues to their character, gathered by TIME correspondents accompanying them on the campaign trail.

► Which of the five habitually rolls small balls of lint from the seams of his pockets, then flicks them away? He also likes to scrutinize the floor during interminable introduction speeches. He recently spied a pin on the platform and, ignoring the speaker, rose, picked it up and neatly placed it on a little table next to the speaker's stand.

► Who is afraid to fly and broods constantly about the weather as his DC-7 lifts him from city to city? When a TIME reporter teasingly called his attention to oil spouting from an engine, the candidate's eyes popped. After peering at it intently, he explained that this was the kind of engine that leaks oil normally, then lit one of the cigars he smokes incessantly, but whose brand he cannot name.

► Which candidate, despite his cheery public stand, admits ruefully that his wife sometimes finds his private moods unbearable? He also drives his office staff to work long and late hours, frequently chiding them more than cheering them.

► Which man has a memory this long: When TIME Correspondent

Simmons Fentress introduced himself this year to begin traveling with him, the candidate immediately said, "Oh yes, remember that morning in Atlanta?"—and then recalled accurately a meeting four years and thousands of acquaintances ago.

► Which candidate never has a hair out of place or a wrinkle in his suit and, though everyone always knows just how he will be dressed, never seems to know from day to day just what he will say?

Score yourself an expert candidate-watcher if you identified the lint-ball roller as Muskie, the engine expert as Wallace, the sometimes trying spouse as Humphrey, the elephant memory as Nixon's and the spick-and-span man as Spiro Agnew.

Such intimate observations of the candidates round out the notebooks of TIME's correspondents, who stay with the office seekers throughout the campaign. Ken Danforth has been on the trail with Muskie, whom he has come to admire as "a good guy with a little-known sense of humor, somewhere between Will Rogers' and Russell Bakers'." Fentress, with Nixon, is impressed by his perfectly programmed movements. Hugh Sidey and John Austin are also with Nixon, and Charles Eiseendath is traveling with Agnew, Hays Gorey with Humphrey. Arlie Schardt and Roger Williams cover George Wallace, whom they find surprisingly amiable in private but unexciting to cover because he sticks to one speech and seldom bothers with position papers or shifts in strategy.

Inevitably, friendships, or at least mutual tolerance, spring up between the correspondents and the campaigners as they eat, drink and travel thousands of miles together. This week Hays Gorey and Simmons Fentress will swap candidates, Gorey going to Nixon and Fentress to Humphrey. That way, each correspondent aims to get a different perspective on his man and cast a fresh eye on his opponent.

* In a famous World War II cartoon by Bill Mauldin, an Army officer asked the same question as he gazed upon a spectacular vista.

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