

Knowing how to fast will be useful

Gregory's wit takes American ills to task

By AGNES KRUCHIO and PAUL WASSMAN

Dick Gregory is a man fighting a single-handed battle against ignorance, who tries, in his funny, biting way (he earns his bread and butter as a comedian and lecturer), to point out the flaws and self-destructive forces and trends within American society.

Toronto had a chance to hear this widely travelled humanitarian (he has more than 310 speaking engagements in a ten month period.

consisting mostly of lectures at universities) in the opening ceremonies of the Earth Dome, on December 13. His message comes across in an amalgam of evangelical sermon, political science cum history lecture and comedy monologue.

Gregory started with a random series of quips, taking the White House past and present to task first.

On Nixon: "I was glad Nixon got elected to the presidency, 'cause Nixon ain't got no class. Now, having a president in the White House with

no class means he wasn't gonna do no more or no less than the rest of them — but he was gonna get caught! Nixon is a po' white boy and anytime you give a po' white boy that much power that fast he's going to steal too much too quick. You see, at least we niggers, when we get the shopping bag full, we quit.

"But Nixon got even with us before he was quit — he gave us Gerry Ford."

On Ford: "The only beautiful thing about Gerry Ford is that none of us voted for him. Now, Ford is stupid. He comes up with things like a WIN button... It's a little bit frightening to know that he's the commander in chief: with him in the White House you get the feeling the Virgin Islands are going to attack us — and win... it would take him four days to find the button."

On the state of the Union: "We Americans don't want to talk about it — there is inflation and recession gong on, not to mention we're in the middle of a depression. But I can understand people not knowing about that — if in 1932 there had been



Dick Gregory

credit cards, nobody would have known about it until 1945.

"You can tell things are real bad, because young folks are not lied to in America any more — the old folks don't go on and on about the good old days, 'cause now they're comin' back."

On the cost of living: "Food is so high in America, it's damn near cheaper to eat money," There was drought in the mid-west this summer — and a lot of folks are not aware of this yet — and so in two months

chickens will be selling for \$5 a chicken. "Before I pay \$5 for some live chicken, I'd take a dozen eggs home and sit on them myself."

Food was one of Gregory's major topics, as he said, "Something is fixing to happen to the food in America." He stressed the importance of taking care of one's body, and finding out about nutrition and fasting, as this information will become useful in future days. He mentioned one of his recent books (one of eight) as a good guide to this end, Dick Gregory's Natural Diet for Folks That Eat.

While he said he was glad to be in Canada, he warned, "You can all talk about how civilized you are and how much better than us you are, but when things go haywire, you don't have a force to keep us from coming over the border. The only thing you Canadians will have going for you is that you will have right on your side — because maybe you haven't gone beyond the point of no return."

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