

The Last Week

President Kennedy spent his last days in pursuit of re-election.

In his campaign for a second term, he planned to waste little time or energy on the U.S. South, which his strategists thought might already be beyond his reach because of the civil rights issue. But there were two Southern states, the region's most populous, that Kennedy had no intention of writing off. They were Florida, with its 14 electoral votes, and Texas, with 25, and it was to these that he went on his final journeys.

During one ten-hour stretch in Florida, the President inspected the new Army-Air Force Strike Command headquarters, made three speeches in Tampa, flew to Miami for another. A sparse, unenthusiastic crowd appeared on the 74-mile route of his motorcade into Tampa, and his receptions were cool.

Only at a Tampa meeting attended by 4,000 members of the Florida State Chamber of Commerce did the President give one of his better performances, gently but effectively chiding businessmen for opposing his fiscal and economic policies.

True Story. He began by telling a story about how Treasury Secretary Douglas Dillon, flying to Miami with a leading Florida businessman a year or so ago, spent most of his time explaining how the man's company would benefit if the Administration's investment-credit tax bill were passed. When the plane landed, the man said to Dillon: "I am very grateful to you for explaining the bill. Now tell me just once more why it is I am against it."

"That story," President Kennedy said, "is unfortunately not an exaggeration. Many businessmen who are prospering as never before during this Administration are convinced, nevertheless, that we must be anti-business."

"We have liberalized depreciation guidelines to grant more individual flexibility, reduced our farm surpluses, reduced transportation taxes, established a private corporation to manage our satellite communication system, increased the role of American business in the development of less developed countries, and proposed to the Congress a sharp reduction in corporate as well as personal income taxes, and a major deregulation of transportation, and yet many businessmen are convinced that

Jim Rowley to the house, told him how one of his agents, Rufus Youngblood, had acted heroically at the time of the shooting. Assigned to guard Johnson, Youngblood had thrown the Vice President to the floor of his car at the first sound of the shots, then placed his own body atop Johnson, stayed there all the way to the hospital. Declared Johnson: "I want you to do whatever you can, the best thing that can be done, for that boy."

Despite the day's overwhelming events and despite his weariness, President Johnson was already looking ahead. He listed memos he would need for the next day's meetings, noted people he would have to call. And he said repeatedly: "We really have a big job to do now."