

JFK Probe Taken Lightly Outside Orleans--Salinger

Former Press Secretary
Backs Warren Report

By PAUL ATKINSON

Former presidential press secretary Pierre Salinger said here Wednesday that the Garrison investigation into the assassination of his late chief, President John F. Kennedy, "is not much regarded outside of New Orleans."

Salinger, an airline executive and author of the book, "With Kennedy," which will be published in paperback form in mid-October, was interviewed following an address to the Mid-America Periodical Distributors Association at the Roosevelt Hotel.

Asked if he was satisfied with the Warren Commission report that stated Lee Harvey Oswald



—Photo by ... Times-Picayune.
PIERRE SALINGER
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was the only killer, Salinger said, "Yes, I am; I have been from the start."

"The Warren Report because of its size and voluminous character lends itself to anyone who wants to pick and choose his facts in writing various books,"

explained Salinger. "But I have yet to see anything that attacks the central findings of the Warren Report—including Mr. Garrison's investigation."

Salinger recalled the fateful day that President Kennedy was shot in Dallas, Tex., he and five Cabinet members were flying to a meeting in the Far East. Asked about the scene aboard the plane, Salinger said,

"First, it was the prevalent feeling that the report wasn't true; when it became apparent that it was true, people reacted in a state of shock."

His future plans? Salinger replied, "I'm heavily involved in business right now; I won't say that I wouldn't like to get back in government somewhere. But you have to have someone to desire that you serve."

Talking of the tribulations of his former role as go-between for the press and the President, Salinger said, "The gov-

ernment and the press should always be antagonists; a completely compliant press is not good.

"But the real problem comes when the line is drawn between freedom of the press and the national security.

"When the decision was made to keep the Cuban missile crisis from the public, I feel more and more that it was the right one to make. Many times when information is released, the Soviet Union has time to get a jump ahead of America be-

cause it has seen something in the press.

REVERSE OF COIN

"The public has a right to know, sure. But there is the reverse of the coin—the right of the enemy not to know."

Salinger said his most vivid recollection of President Kennedy was the President's actions during the Cuban missile dilemma. "One mistake could have put us all in an atomic war," said Salinger. "But the memory of the President is how he acted so coolly and the

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way he handled himself."

Projecting into the political future, Salinger sees President Lyndon B. Johnson as a "tough man to beat" in the 1968 election.

Two logical opponents and those with the best chance to win for the Republicans, said Salinger, are New York Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller and California Gov. Ronald Reagan.

Speaking of Reagan, Salinger said, "Gov. Reagan has come very strong; he has a way of simplifying the issues and would be a tough candidate."

Comparing Reagan with the 1964 Republican standard bear-

er Barry Goldwater, Salinger said, "He's a sugar-coated Goldwater; he is a little more palatable to the public.

"There are very few politicians today who can use the mass communications media. People such as Reagan who was once an actor fill the void and capitalize on this ability."

HELD KEY FACTOR

Ability to project, said Salinger, was a major reason that President Kennedy won the 1960 election over Richard Nixon. "The press had a lot of trouble getting to Nixon," explained Salinger. "We gave the press instant transcripts of the Kennedy speeches, enabling the re-

porters to have the speeches in 15 to 20 minutes after the speech. This gave the reporters opportunities to go out into the audience and get information on what the people thought of the candidate."

Salinger said his hard cover edition has "sold about 140,000 copies."

Chided that his book didn't sell quite as well as the one by William Manchester, "Death of a President," Salinger said with a smile, "I didn't get quite the publicity." He referred to the hassle that developed between the Kennedy family and Manchester.

On his ability to get along

with Jackie Kennedy, Salinger said, "Mrs. Kennedy had the natural desire to shield her children and herself from publicity as much as possible.