

Humphrey Helped His Competitors

By Drew Pearson

Hubert Humphrey is a believer in competition. In fact he has trained and educated his competition. Sometimes, however, he wishes that the men he has trained wouldn't decide to compete with him just as he is reaching for life's biggest goal.

It was Humphrey, then mayor of Minneapolis and a founder of the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party, who saw the political appeal of a young professor at St. Thomas College in St. Paul and helped him get elected to the House of Representatives in 1948. Ten years later, Humphrey helped the young Congressman get elected to the Senate.

Today that young professor, Eugene McCarthy, is running against Humphrey for President.

In 1957 another young professor, this time from South Dakota, got elected to Congress and because he admired Humphrey, they both being natives of South Dakota, he asked Humphrey's advice about getting a house in Washington. Hubert recommended a modest neighborhood in Chevy Chase where prices were not too high.

So young Congressman George McGovern took a mortgage on a house next door to Hubert's at Coquelin Terrace.

At that time the hedge be-

tween the McGovern's and the Humphreys' back yards was so low that you could step over it; so the Humphrey and McGovern children grew up together. There wasn't even a family row when the Humphrey dachshund infiltrated the McGovern's yard to kill the McGovern children's pet Easter rabbit.

Later, when the young Congressman from South Dakota wanted to run for the Senate, Humphrey persuaded Lt. Gov. Frank Lindley not to run in the Democratic primary against him. This was in 1962 after Sen. Francis Case died and there was an excellent chance of electing a Democrat. Thanks to Hubert, McGovern was nominated without Democratic opposition. Hubert held a fund-raising reception for him and also approached Mary Lasker, the Democratic angel in New York, to get some campaign funds for McGovern. McGovern was elected to the Senate.

McGovern's Motives

Out in California at the Democratic caucus last week, Pierre Salinger, former press secretary to President Kennedy, confided to friends that Kennedy family supporters were putting Sen. McGovern in the race because of the snide speech Eugene Mc-

Carthy had made as a eulogy to Bobby Kennedy. They were down on McCarthy, Salinger said.

Two weeks earlier, Sen. McGovern had been in California, conferring with Speaker Jesse Unruh, leader of the Kennedy forces, who aspires to be Governor of California. McGovern was quoted as saying he probably could not support Hubert Humphrey.

Back in Washington McGovern came to see his old neighbor, the Vice President, said he had been misquoted.

A week later he was in Chicago at another meeting, also attended by Speaker Unruh and Kennedy family supporters. They persuaded him to run. McGovern's will be a holding operation in the hope of tying up the Democratic convention. If so, it's barely possible, though not probable, that the Kennedys can pick their own candidate.

Higher-Priced Cars

It looks as if the auto industry is getting ready to follow the steel industry in bucking the White House for a price increase on 1969 cars.

The excuse will be added safety features, though actually the only safety features next year will be two head

supports, to prevent neck injuries from rear-end collisions. The head supports will cost around \$10. Despite this, Government experts have word from Detroit that new car prices will be upped around \$100.

Actually, increased auto profits and increased productivity should lead to decreased prices. However, all signs indicate that General Motors will increase prices across the board and that the others of the Big Three will follow.

Some people are wondering what happened to Sen. Abe Ribicoff's hearings which began last February with a demand that the motor moguls make public the details regarding the cost of safety devices. The Ribicoff hearings have now petered out into a plan whereby the auto industry gives cost data to the Bureau of Labor Statistics which promptly treats them as if they were a military secret. Ever the Highway Safety Bureau has not been able to get a look at these cost figures.

This is a strange anticlimax for Senate hearings which began with such a flourish. However, the fact is that Ribicoff, an excellent Senator, faces a tough re-election battle in Connecticut. If he bucks the auto industry, it can send money into Connecticut to defeat him.