

Kennedy's Party Role

Some Friends Believe He Would Accept If Draft Developed at the Convention

By JOHN HERBERS

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 22— Many who watched Senator Edward M. Kennedy's re-entry into active political life yesterday got the impression that he would not look unfavorably on an opportunity to head the Democratic Presidential ticket this year.

The Senator has done nothing to dispel this impression, and a number of his friends and associates believe that the 36-year-old heir to the Kennedy political fortunes would accept a draft if the National Convention became deadlocked.

To substantiate this, they point to Mr. Kennedy's statement in his Worcester, Mass., speech that he was picking up the fallen banner carried by his brothers and that he intended to work to end the violence, hatred and division that threatens the country.

There was no mistaking what taking up the fallen banner meant to those familiar with the Kennedy tradition.

John F. Kennedy was reported to have said before he became President that he got into politics to fulfill the role intended for his older brother, Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., who was killed in World War II.

If anything happened to him, the late President reportedly continued, Robert F. Kennedy would assume his role and if anything happened to Robert the responsibility would fall to Edward.

War and Violence

The Worcester speech was also designed to bridge the great gap in the Democratic party. The portion on Vietnam placed Edward Kennedy well within the camp of the dissenters to the war but offered a way out "with honor."

His views on domestic division were a warning that the Republican party could be swept to victory "on a tide of fear" and that with law and order there should be justice.

The speech was delivered somberly with a sense of urgency. The surviving Kennedy sought to perpetuate the appeal to the American spirit exercised by his brothers—that to be true to herself, the nation must have a sense of destiny based on compassion and high purpose.

The Kennedy associates believe, however, that the prospect of a Kennedy draft is remote and that the Senator himself shares this view. They think his aspirations are directed at future years.

Further, the Kennedy people are convinced that the Senator

will stick by his commitment not to accept the Vice-Presidential nomination, even though many party members believe Vice President Humphrey, as the Presidential nominee, could not possibly win without him.

The Senator has told friends that even though there will be a memorial for Robert Kennedy at the Democratic National Convention and that his name will be placed in nomination for President, he will not go. He told them he plans to remain in Hyannis Port, Mass., and watch the proceedings on television.

His speech yesterday was in keeping with his commitment made public last month to remain out of partisan politics but to speak out on issues in an effort to enforce party policy.

Senator Kennedy's associates say that they would be surprised if he ended easy candidacy for the Presidential nomination in Chicago.

McGovern Doubts Backing

Senator George S. McGovern of South Dakota is running with the support of a number of people who worked in Robert Kennedy's campaign.

Campaigning in Indiana today, Senator McGovern said he called Senator Kennedy yesterday to congratulate him on his speech. The South Dakotan said Mr. Kennedy had "expressed very clear sympathy with what I am doing." But Senator McGovern does not expect a Kennedy endorsement or any attempts by the Kennedy people to use his candidacy to promote a draft movement for the Massachusetts Senator.

More than either John or Robert Kennedy, Edward Kennedy keeps his own counsel. He timed his arrival and departure in Worcester yesterday so that he could not be questioned by reporters, or anyone else on the scene. He left, the impression, however, that he had recovered from the shock of his brother's death.

There was some opinion within the Kennedy forces that continuing divisions within the party and a recent poll showing Mr. Humphrey trailing Richard M. Nixon, the Republican nominee, by a wide margin would increase the chances of the party's turning to someone other than the Vice President.

But as a Senator who knows Senator Kennedy well put it, "I don't think Ted will make any move for the nomination. If the convention wants him to run they will have to come to him."