

Humphrey's Stock as '76 Choice Rises Among Numerous Political Observers

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WASHINGTON, July 28—Senator Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota, who chipped \$40,000 off his 1972 Presidential campaign debt with a party at Mary Lasker's home in New York last week, Washington looks like the best bet for the 1976 Democratic nomination to an intriguing variety of political professionals.

For range in age and ideology, the people who foresee a Humphrey comeback next year form one of the more remarkable lists in politics today. Starting with Republicans, the list includes John B. Connally of Texas, Treasury Secretary in the Nixon Administration, the Senate minority leader, Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, and Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz.

Among presumably independent students of the game the list includes Jimmy the Greek Snyder, the Las Vegas odds maker, and former Democratic Senator Eugene J. McCarthy of Minnesota, who is running for President on his own ticket now.

Also on the list are two columnists, Alexander Cockburn and James Ridgeway, who wrote in *The Village Voice* last week that as Mr. Humphrey's mid-nineteen-sixties defense of the war in Vietnam fades from memory, "At last he may have found his hour, a man for all seasons at a time of economic crisis, an old New Deal liberal at last rid of the trappings of the war criminal."

Democrats who sound inclined to agree run a gamut from Senator George McGovern of South Dakota, the party's 1972 nominee, to John J. Hooker of Tennessee, president of the STP Corporation, and his friend, John Y. Brown of Kentucky, the fried-chicken millionaire, who says he would like to manage the Humphrey campaign.

Mark Shields, a campaign consultant here who worked with Mr. Humphrey's Democratic opponents in 1968 and 1972, now sees the 64-year-old Minnesotan as a healer.

"Liberals in particular and the Democratic party in general are still hung up on their guilt about Vietnam and on the racial crisis, which they put on the national agenda," Mr. Shields remarked yesterday.

"Hubert Humphrey stands in that picture as an individual totally free of vengeance or self-pity on Vietnam, which destroyed him in 1968, and as the man who won more black votes than any other Presidential candidate in history. He could well be the man to resolve our dilemma."

Among Democrats still puzzling about Senator Edward M. Kennedy's intentions, the departure of James King, an advance man and court jester, from the Massachusetts Democrat's Boston office is taken as one more sign that no national Kennedy campaign is in the offing next year.

Mr. King has been clearing Mr. Kennedy's path since the Senator came to Ludlow, Mass., in 1958 to help in John F. Kennedy's last Sen-

ate campaign; he has worked as an advance man on Kennedy trips in every state but Alaska and also in at least 17 nations abroad. But he gave it up last month for a job with the Transit Authority in Boston.

Senator Kennedy's long-time press secretary, Richard Drayne, is still on the job but looking for another one. His deputy, Loretta Cubberly, has also decided to quit rather than move back to Massachusetts for the Senator's 1976 re-election campaign.

In New York today, Senator Kennedy once again denied his Presidential candidacy. At a news conference to announce the fourth annual Robert F. Kennedy professional-celebrity tennis tournament Aug. 23 at Forest Hills, Queens, he was asked about a television comment yesterday by Representative Thomas R. O'Neill of Massachusetts. Mr. O'Neill quoted the Senator as saying "Keep me alive, Tip." Senator Kennedy said he might have made the remark to his old friend and fund-raiser about his Senate re-election campaign.

Bill D. Moyers, the television journalist, and Stephen E. Smith, a brother-in-law of Senator Kennedy and Sargent Shriver, have both taken exception to a report in the New York Times a week ago that they had "rebutted" Shriver's appeal for help in his Presidential campaign.

Mr. Smith wrote in a letter to *The Times* that he would not only explain the misunderstanding but also help to clear up the matter.