

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 1964.

ROBERT KENNEDY RULES OUT RACE FOR SENATE SEAT

Brother's Injury Prompted Final Decision—Field in State Is Wide Open

By ANTHONY LEWIS
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 23 — Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy removed himself today as a potential candidate for the United States Senate from New York this fall.

In a brief statement he ended speculation that he might seek the Democratic nomination by saying: "I will not be a candidate." He gave no reasons and did not indicate his long-range plans.

Mr. Kennedy sent word of his decision to President Johnson but did not discuss it with him before the announcement this afternoon.

The Attorney General is scheduled to leave tomorrow on a one-week trip to West Germany, Berlin and Poland. He had a meeting with the President tonight to discuss the trip, but the subject instead turned out to be the civil rights crisis in Mississippi.

Mr. Kennedy's announcement left the choice of a Democratic nominee wide open. Many party leaders in New York had been urging Mr. Kennedy to make the Senate race, believing he would be the strongest possible opponent for the Republican incumbent, Senator Kenneth B. Keating.

Poll Looks Favorable

Polls being taken by Democratic state leaders have not yet been completed. The results already in, from New York City, were said to look very good for Mr. Kennedy, but associates said these did not figure in his mind when he decided against the Senate race.

The idea of a Senate race appealed to Mr. Kennedy at first, despite the difficulty it would entail of moving into a new state and facing "carpetbagger" charges. But in recent weeks his friends have felt he was inclining more and more against the Senate race.

He made his final decision last Saturday at Northampton, Mass. He had rushed there to see his brother, Senator Edward Kennedy, after a plane

crash in which Edward was seriously injured, and the crash spurred him to make his decision immediately.

His brother's injuries put even heavier family responsibilities on the Attorney General, who was already acting as the senior member of the large Kennedy family. The accident also meant that his brother could not help him campaign if he chose to run in New York.

But these were only last-minute additions to the more basic reasons that, the Attorney General's friends say, weighed against the Senate race.

Work on Rights a Factor

Most important was his unwillingness to take time away from civil rights problems, which will almost certainly be acute this summer. Mr. Kennedy spent much of today, for example, dealing with the case of three young civil rights workers missing in Mississippi.

The expected early passage of the civil rights bill will put new burdens on the Justice Department. Mr. Kennedy cut Ireland off his European itinerary today in order to be back by the time the bill passes the House, probably early next week.

A decision in favor of the Sen-

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ate race would have required Mr. Kennedy to take time away from his Justice Department responsibilities to establish himself in New York. That has seemed less and less feasible.

The Attorney General in the last month has also become deeply involved in the crisis in Southeast Asia. This involvement was reflected in his offer, declined with thanks by President Johnson, to serve in any capacity in Vietnam.

This interest reflects the re-establishment of a close working relationship with the President. After a period of distance and coolness this winter, they seem to have moved much closer together.

One appeal of the Senate to Mr. Kennedy was said to have been its independence — the fact that a Senator speaks for himself — but on reflection he apparently felt his real interests lay in administration.

The Attorney General has told everyone that he has decided nothing about his future beyond next January, when he will leave the Justice Department. He has made a strong showing in the polls as a candidate for Vice President, but of course that decision is up to President Johnson.

On his European trip Mr. Kennedy will be accompanied by his wife, Ethel, and their three oldest children, Kathleen, Joseph and Robert.

He will meet Chancellor Ludwig Erhard in Bonn on Thursday. On Friday he will fly to



Associated Press Wirephoto

Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy at hospital in Northampton, Mass., for a visit to Edward M. Kennedy.

West Berlin to commemorate the speech there exactly a year before, June 26, 1963, by President Kennedy.

The Kennedys will be in Poland from June 27 through 29, visiting Warsaw and Cracow.