

KENNEDY DECIDES TO RUN; WILL DISCUSS PLANS TODAY; MAY ENTER THE PRIMARIES

NEWS PARLEY SET

He May Delay Formal Entry Into the Race For a Few Days

By RICHARD WITKIN

Senator Robert F. Kennedy has decided to become a candidate for the Democratic Presidential nomination.

The Senator scheduled a news conference for 10 A.M. today in Washington. Close friends said he would announce his candidacy then.

However, other associates said details of the announcement were still being worked out last night. They said the Senator might delay his formal challenge to President Johnson's renomination for a few days.

Senator Kennedy was reported considering entry into several state primaries, among them those in California, Oregon, Indiana and South Dakota.

The Senator's news conference today will be in the Caucus Room of the Old Senate Office Building. This is the room where his brother, John F. Kennedy, announced his candidacy for the Presidency in 1960. John Kennedy was 42 years old then. Robert Kennedy is 42 now.

Politicking in Nassau

Word that Senator Kennedy had decided to run was leaked by Kennedy intimates in Washington and here, as he himself refused to confirm it through a day of politicking in Nassau County.

The issue was first put before him at a morning kaffeeklatsch of 175 women civic leaders in Kings Point. He told his audience he would announce his plans in Washington. The only elaboration he would offer was to say:

"You can help in the effort I am going to undertake."

In several later stops, he avoided any but the most perfunctory exchanges with newsmen. As he climbed into his car late in the afternoon, he was asked exactly what he would announce today.

'A Lot of Problems'

"There are a lot of problems," he replied.

"Have you resolved them?" he was asked.

"Yes, I have," he answered, and the car moved off.

Mr. Kennedy flew back to Washington on the 5 P.M. Eastern Air Lines shuttle. Last night he and close aides were still going over details of today's statement at his suburban home in McLean, Va.

The Kennedy decision to run created a three-way fight among him, the President and Senator Eugene J. McCarthy of Minnesota, who made a power-

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ful showing in the New Hampshire primary on Tuesday.

Senator McCarthy scheduled a news conference at 10:30 A.M. today in Green Bay, Wis.

Mr. McCarthy predicted on his arrival in Milwaukee yesterday morning that there would be only two Democrats still in the race by the time the Democratic National Convention opens in Chicago on Aug. 26.

Low Point for Kennedy

Mr. Kennedy was entering the race at a time when his popularity in the party was at depressed point, particularly among the antiwar elements who had thrown themselves behind Senator McCarthy when Mr. Kennedy insisted he would not challenge the President.

The split was evidenced in signs displayed by a dozen high school students when Mr. Kennedy drove up to the Westbury Manor Restaurant in Westbury, Nassau County.

One sign said: "Don't Split the Peace Movement—McCarthy for President."

Another said: "Mr. Kennedy—Please Don't Be Just Another Politician. Support McCarthy."

Mr. Kennedy took McCarthy buttons from the students and thanked them for showing up. But he said nothing about his plans for today.

Intimates who spoke with Mr. Kennedy said he recognized that he faced "an uphill battle." They described his over-all mood as "fatalistic."

Say Hands Were Tied

These sources also said they had the firm impression that Mr. Kennedy had made his decision to run before the New Hampshire vote was in. But they added that his hands had been tied, because to have entered before the primary would probably have diminished Mr. McCarthy's vote and thereby slowed the over-all effort to block Mr. Johnson's renomination.

This view contrasted with the

impression held by some persons that Mr. Kennedy had not had the courage to take on the President until Mr. McCarthy proved what could be done by his New Hampshire showing. Mr. McCarthy, whose name was on the ballot, won 42 per cent of the Democratic vote, against 49 per cent won by Mr. Johnson in write-ins.

Whatever the impact of New Hampshire on Mr. Kennedy's thinking, most political observers thought it would have been wiser not to have disclosed the very next day that he was reassessing whether he should enter the race.

Mr. Kennedy got his first opportunity to explain his thinking processes at the kaffeeklatsch, held at the home of a Nassau Democratic committee-woman, Mrs. Anita Hall Richmond.

He said that whenever he had spoken out on Vietnam or other major issues on which he opposed the President, his action was generally interpreted as evidence of a personality struggle between himself and the President. The issues, he said, were not regarded as having anything to do with it.

"People say I'm doing it," the Senator said, "because they feel I think President Kennedy should still be President."