

MOYNIHAN IS OPEN TO A SENATE RACE

Would Consider Running if Democrats Wanted Him, His Lawyer Asserts

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ALBANY, Feb. 2 — Daniel Moynihan would seriously consider seeking the Democratic nomination for United States Senator from New York, his lawyer said today, if there were indications that Democrats around the state wanted him to run—indications that were quickly forthcoming as word spread of Mr. Moynihan's decision to resign as chief delegate to the United Nations.

Mr. Moynihan has not yet decided to run, his lawyer, Arthur Klebanoff, emphasized in an interview. But Mr. Klebanoff said that "it's a fair inference that if there is a groundswell of support, he would consider running."

"He hears people of importance say very flattering things about his political chances," Mr. Klebanoff added, "and the fact is that you'd have to be an idiot not to be responsive to it."

Mr. Moynihan himself refused to be pinned down on the question of a Senate race when he was besieged by newsmen outside the Security Council chamber yesterday afternoon.

However, he said he would not shut the door on such a race and would, as he put it, "go back to the Government one way or another."

Warm Reception Seen

Mr. Moynihan has apparently not discussed a Senate race with either Governor Carey or Democratic officials here. But the comments of some key Democrats today indicated that a Moynihan candidacy would be warmly received by the party's leadership.

"I would think he'd be a very strong candidate and very welcome to the field," said David Burke, Secretary to the Governor and one of Mr. Carey's closest political advisers.

Another of the Governor's political advisers, David Garth, said that Mr. Carey "is interested in putting up the strongest possible candidate, and on paper Moynihan is very, very strong."

A Senate race by the often flamboyant United Nations delegate has been the subject of speculation in political circles here for months, although Mr. Moynihan, who ran unsuccessfully for City Council President in 1965, has taken pains to deny the rumors.

October Disclaimer Recalled

Last October, in an interview on "Face the Nation," Mr. Moynihan had this to say: "I would consider it dishonorable to leave this post and run for any office, and I hope it would be understood that if I do, the people — the voters to whom I would present myself in such circumstances—would consider me as having said in advance that I am a man of no personal honor to have done so."

One of Mr. Moynihan's close friends said yesterday that the strong words on the "Face the Nation" interview might be a source of Mr. Moynihan's current ambivalence about making the race.

"If he were to change now, he'd obviously have those words thrown back at him," said this friend, who asked not to be quoted by name. "He cares about his reputation, and he knows he'd have to present some strong reasons."

In fact, those who know Mr. Moynihan give credence to the reason for resigning that he cited in his letter to President Ford—that he would have lost his tenure at Harvard University if he did not return to Cambridge next week. While serving as president of the United Nations Security Council this month, Mr. Moynihan plans to commute to Harvard once a week to teach a seminar.

Among Mr. Moynihan's strengths as a Senate candidate are his strong identification with Israel and his simultaneous appeal to his fellow Irish Catholics, Jews and Catholics making up the vast majority of voters in the Democratic primary.

"Undoubtedly he's cut into an area of votes that Buckley might have thought was his own preserve," Joseph F. Crangle, the former Democratic state chairman and one of the most powerful upstate Democrats, said today. "He's not only waved the flag at the U.N.; he's pretty much raised the flag. There's a freshness there. If he announced he'd be given an awful lot of weight in the party."

But if his strengths are obvious, some of the potential drawbacks to his candidacy are obvious, too. He would undoubtedly have to win the nomination in a primary, and his worth as a candidate on the stump is not well tested and is, in fact, doubted by some of his strongest supporters.

In addition, there is a residue of bitterness toward him in the black community as a result of his memorandum advocating "benign neglect" of the race problem while he served as a White House adviser to Richard M. Nixon.

One prominent black Democrat, Representative Charles B. Rangel of Manhattan, issued a statement yesterday in which he accused Mr. Moynihan of "using his position at the United Nations as a launching pad for his ambition to become United States Senator from New York."