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The Beneficiaries Of the Watergate

Whether fire or flood or famine or pandemic, every great disaster always benefits someone. Even the Black Death greatly improved the lot of many who did not go to the mass graves of the 14th century. In England, for instance, the resulting shortage of men to till the land vastly strengthened the bargaining position of the survivors.

To this grim rule, the Watergate horror is sure to be no exception. Two of the main beneficiaries can even be spotted today. Although the 1976 election is still so far ahead, the presidential candidacies of Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller of New York and Sen. Henry M. Jackson of Washington al-

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ready look much, much more promising than they did a month or so ago.

The case of Nelson Rockefeller is simple enough. If re-elected governor by a solid majority—as he is all but certain to be—Rockefeller will become an active candidate for the presidency at the end of 1974. He has already made up his mind that there is to be none of the hawing and wavering, this time, that hurt him so much in earlier fights for the Republican presidential nomination.

The decision to be clear-cut and determined is an advantage for Governor Rockefeller, in and of itself. Now, however, he has the added advantage that the Watergate horror has brutally damaged what may be called the Republican Party's Nixon-big business wing. This was the powerful wing of the party that previously stopped Rockefeller dead in his tracks.

Today, the chances are that members of this wing of the party will feel they need Rockefeller more than he needs them. Since he has moved rightward in recent years, he is also far more acceptable to average Republicans. Most important of all, the Nixon-big business candidates are being visibly weakened by the Watergate horror.

Vice President Spiro T. Agnew has had zero-minus to do with Watergate.

He has lately been treated with iciness by the White House. But simply because he is Vice President, Agnew can hardly present himself as transfusion of fresh and different political blood. As for the formidable Texan, former Gov. John Connally, his strong big business-aura is daily becoming more of a handicap.

Yet the Watergate horror is visibly damaging the entire Republican Party.

Thus the more important but less noticed beneficiary of the horror is Senator Jackson. In recent American political history, no potential presidential candidate has ever gathered together so many important political assets, while attracting so little public attention. The acquisition of just one of these Jackson assets would have put Sen. Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts on every front page of the country.

For instance, the event was passed over in virtual silence except in Chicago. Yet last March 9, "Scoop" Jackson's candidacy was publicly endorsed by Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago. The last Democratic boss with a big bloc of delegates to deliver asked Senator Jackson to be the honored guest at the huge annual dinner of all the Daley henchmen. There Mayor Daley bluntly presented Jackson as, "God willing, the man who will lead the party in 1976."

Not since President Kennedy's candidacy has Mayor Daley been so forthright in his preference. This must be giving Senator Kennedy unhappy second thoughts about the orgy of left-wing liberalism at the last Democratic convention. For the party convention was where Mayor Daley's transfer of affection to Scoop Jackson really began. The same orgy further had a lot to do with Jackson's more and more solid labor assets.

At the most recent AFL-CIO council meeting in Miami, all the countless Democratic presidential aspirants angled for invitations. Powerful old George Meany invited only Scoop Jackson, who addressed a breakfast of AFL-CIO union leaders with great success. Daley, Meany and Jackson in truth form a solid alliance, nowadays. The new triumvirate was mainly responsible for the defeat of Sen. George McGovern's people at the Democratic

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National Committee, and the resulting installation of the able new committee chairman, Robert Strauss.

Nor is that all. No single group is so important for the Democratic Party as the Jewish community; and Scoop Jackson today is the prime hero of American Jewry. That means not only money; it also means really invaluable, solidly reliable votes in future primaries.

With the Meany organization in the AFL-CIO, plus the open support of Mayor Daley, plus the passionate support of the Jewish Democrats, Senator Jackson is no longer a candidate to be fashionably ignored. He is the man to watch.