

Kennedy Decision Awaited by Rebels and Regulars

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BOSTON, July 9—The political drama among Democrats here is called Waiting for Teddy, and many of them think it is destined for a nationwide run.

The party regulars on Beacon Hill are waiting for Teddy to come home and fire their enthusiasm for politics again. The McCarthy rebels out along Route 128 are waiting for Teddy to come home to reject their pleas for unity as usual.

Waiting for Teddy means either fear or hope that Vice President Humphrey unaided will not catch on with enough traditional party voters.

It also means waiting for something from somewhere to hold the party together if Senator Eugene J. McCarthy of Minnesota, as expected, fails to win nomination at the Chicago convention next month.

For these and other reasons a good many Democratic regulars downtown are also waiting for Teddy—Senator Edward M. Kennedy—to run for Vice President on a Humphrey ticket to assure its victory over Richard M. Nixon.

Not Sure When He'll Return

But a good many suburban rebels are waiting for him to reject these importunings, contending that if this elects Nixon it will serve the Democrats right.

The Senator was due to return tomorrow from a visit to Spain, but his advance message to the politicians here was that he might remain officially "away" for quite a while longer, resting and fishing on Cape Cod, perhaps, but still on the



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Senator Edward M. Kennedy

journey of grief and reappraisal that began the day he buried his brother, Robert, a month ago.

In absentia, Teddy has had as many advisers as he has friends here, and that is a prodigious number. They have written him with their advice and they share it with anyone who cares to listen.

Around Harvard University out in Cambridge, the story is that the Senator has already asked some friends to compose a statement that would firmly reject the Vice-Presidential nomination this year for personal and family reasons.

Around the Democratic State Committee, however, they smile and say that this is always

Teddy's way—deflecting advice with a request for "the language" that would properly carry it out, but collecting other language, too, that may say just the opposite.

"I'm sure Teddy doesn't know himself what he wants to do," says one of his closest associates at the state committee.

"I have no secret sources but I'm sure he will not run," says one of his shrewdest colleagues in the State House of Representatives.

More Than a Local Problem

"I don't see him refusing the party if it really proves it needs him," says a more distant student of the Kennedy cult and ethic.

In Washington, the best informed sources expect a meeting soon between Senator Kennedy and Vice President Humphrey and a statement by the Senator that takes him out of active politics for the time being, pledges his support for the Presidential nominee of his party and leaves open the question of whether he would accept the nomination for Vice President.

As the speculation and argument proceeds in Massachusetts, it becomes quickly apparent that not just local issues are seen to be at stake. The Democrats in Massachusetts sense a lassitude and weakness in their ranks and they see their troubles as possibly symptomatic of a nationwide trend.

The McCarthy forces are said to be daily more defiant, vowing vengeance if their man is not chosen to lead the national ticket. The Humphrey partisans are said to be daily more despondent over their

man's failure to rouse the rank-and-file voters. The possible further losses to former George C. Wallace of Alabama loom as a troubling unknown.

Only with Teddy, some of the party managers think, could Mr. Humphrey gain luster here and gain the support of at least large blocks of angry party defectors to both the left and the right.

Friends Fear Response

But why should he do it, ask some of the Senator's best friends. He would be accused of merely exploiting a name and a tragedy, they suggest, and even if successful would soon be lost in the helpless post of Vice President.

They know that he is actively weighing these considerations. They suspect that whatever he decides he will return a stronger more resolute man than ever before.

They are waiting to find out. They are waiting even for the most rudimentary help and guidance. The Senator can be the virtually unchallenged leader of the 72-member delegation that will cast 46 votes at the Chicago nominating convention, yet they don't even know whether he will wish to attend.

Chosen amid great confusion last March after a primary election in which Senator McCarthy went unchallenged, the delegation is legally bound to him for at least one ballot. Yet most of its members came to favor Senator Robert Kennedy and, after his assassination, switched again to Vice President Humphrey, and if asked to do so, would gladly change again at the direction of Teddy.

So they wait, uncertainly and apprehensively.