

Kennedy, in Visit to Carolina, Cites Calhoun But Not Sherman

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CHARLESTON, S.C., Feb. 28 — Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts made a speech here last night that included 41 typewritten lines of praise of John C. Calhoun, South Carolina's most favorite son.

At the close of a long section calling for an end to the Vietnam War, he invoked Calhoun one last time by recalling that the 19th-century Senator had opposed the war with Mexico.

"Times change, circumstances are different, but on the matter of this war today, I stand with Calhoun," he declared, and 1,800 South Carolinians applauded.

An admiring but politically sophisticated Charleston woman remarked, "Sounds like Teddy's Southern strategy."

Mr. Kennedy's trip here, to address 600 to 800 South Carolina Jaycees and about 1,000 other black and white residents from around the state, could hardly have avoided stirring political speculation.

Some Senatorial Teasing

He rarely speaks in the South. Over the last several years he had turned down repeated invitations to Charleston. The spectacle of a liberal Democrat — a Kennedy, at that — in conservative Charleston was likely to be seen as an attention-getting device.

Mr. Kennedy did nothing to dispel the talk. He and the man who introduced him, Senator Ernest F. Hollings of South Carolina, who has been mentioned as a possible running-mate if Mr. Kennedy should be nominated for President, teased each other in front of the crowd about their presumed respective ambitions.

Mr. Hollings, who is known in his hometown of Charleston as Fritz, said that Mr. Kennedy had asked his advice on how to answer reporters' questions here about running for President. Mr. Kennedy, he said, had voiced confidence that the press would read political implications into his visit.

Mr. Hollings said he had suggested that Mr. Kennedy cite General Sherman's statement that he would not run if nominated and would not serve if elected.

He said that Mr. Kennedy had replied, "You know, General Sherman was not popular in the South. I don't believe I'd better quote him."

When the laughter faded, Mr. Kennedy rose to speak and said that Mr. Hollings had not told the story right. Mr. Hollings had suggested following Sherman's example, he said, adding:

"So I turned to Fritz and said, 'I'll say it if you will,' and Fritz changed the subject."

Mr. Kennedy recently reaffirmed that he is not a candidate for President and sees no circumstance that would make him a contender at the 1972 Democratic convention. He has told friends that he would remove his name if anyone should

enter him in any of the pre-convention primaries.

Nevertheless, his visit was seen by some here as perhaps part of an effort to keep the door ajar in case the political picture should change.

He was received warmly here, and that warmth was highly noticeable in view of an angry outcry before his visit from some Charleston conservatives.

His visit had inspired a stream of condemnatory letters to the editors of the Charleston newspapers over the last month.

Many of the letter writers attacked Senator Kennedy for the accident on Chappaquiddick Island in which a young woman secretary drowned. One writer labeled him "the Chappaquiddick kid."

Senator Strom Thurmond, Republican of South Carolina, made a public joke about the accident. Speaking to the Charleston Chapter of the Air Force Association 24 hours before Mr. Kennedy arrived, Mr. Thurmond noted that Brig. Gen. Thomas B. Kennedy, commanding officer of the Charleston Air Force base, had a wife named Joan, the same name as the wife of Senator Kennedy.

"The difference between them is that this Mrs. Kennedy's husband is a better driver," Senator Thurmond said.

Turnout Is Surprising

After all that, some were surprised when 500 people, including many of the city's business and political leaders, turned out for a reception honoring Mr. Kennedy last night. Then for his speech he drew more people to the Municipal Auditorium than the Charleston Symphony draws. There were no hecklers or demonstrators.

Mr. Kennedy's broad A's sounded foreign in Charleston, the cradle of the silent R. But the audience, most of it young, interrupted his speech repeatedly to applaud. They applauded four times while he was reading four paragraphs calling for an end to the war.

The Senator bore down hard on the nation's economic problems and talked of the difficulty that many now have in finding work. This is an issue that many South Carolinians probably consider more important than the war. Thousands have lost their jobs in the textile factories in the last few years.