

(280) NIGHT LEAD

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NEW YORK, NOV. 23 (AP)-DEMOCRATS COULD DO NOTHING "MORE STUPID AND SELF-DEFEATING THAN TO RUN SEN. ROBERT F. KENNEDY, D-NY AGAINST PRESIDENT JOHNSON OR VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY IN 1968, THEODORE C. SORENSEN, FORMER SPECIAL COUNSEL TO PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY SAID TODAY.

SORENSEN, DECRYING THE ABSENCE OF "QUALITY" CANDIDATES IN HIS PARTY ON THE NATIONAL AND STATE LEVEL, SAID KENNEDY'S FIRST RESPONSIBILITY IS REBUILDING THE PARTY IN NEW YORK STATE.

NEW YORK DEPUTY MAYOR ROBERT PRICE, WHO MASTERMINDED THE ELECTION OF REPUBLICAN MAYOR JOHN V. LINDSAY LAST YEAR, TOLD THE SAME DEMOCRATIC FORUM AUDIENCE THAT THE MODERATE WING OF THE GOP FARED POORLY IN THE ELECTION. THE MODERATES, HE SAID, LOST CONTROL OF A NUMBER OF DELEGATES TO THE GOP PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATING CONVENTION.

"THE GROWTH OF THE REPUBLICAN STRENGTH IN THE SOUTH IS NOT A HAPPY LESSON," PRICE SAID. "WHILE THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IS PREPARED TO FIGHT IN 1968, I DO NOT DRAW GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE ELECTION RESULTS AS OTHERS DO."

SORENSEN SAID THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S LOSSES WERE "FAR WORSE THAN THE USUAL MIDTERM SLIDE, FAR WORSE THAN THE ISSUES REQUIRED; AND IT SPREAD DISASTER AND DISARRAY INTO OUR PARTY IN EVERY SECTION OF THE COUNTRY."

"NO PROGRESS WILL RESULT FROM FURTHER FEUDS BETWEEN REFORMERS AND OLD-TIMERS, OR BETWEEN JOHNSON MEN AND KENNEDY MEN, OR BETWEEN UPSTATE AND DOWNSTATE, HE SAID.

HE SAID REPUBLICAN GOV. NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER WON A THIRD TERM OVER DEMOCRAT FRANK D. O'CONNOR "BECAUSE HE WAS A SUPERIOR CANDIDATE WITH A SUPERIOR CAMPAIGN.

WITHOUT REFERRING TO O'CONNOR'S CLAIM TO TITULAR LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY IN NEW YORK, SORENSEN SAID "LOGIC AND HOPE" CAST KENNEDY IN THE ROLE OF PARTY CHIEF.

"THE SIMPLE FACT IS THAT WE HAVE A MAJOR TASK ON OUR HANDS AT THE STATE AND NATIONAL LEVEL," SORENSEN SAID. "WE MUST HAVE QUALITY CANDIDATES AND QUALITY PROGRAMS BEFORE WE CAN WIN SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES OF VOTES."

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