A political profile of Lyndon B. Johnson, by James B. Swanson, Jr.

BY JANE E. BROOY

A physician from Kansas has concluded that President Kennedy had Addison's disease, although vigorous attempts were made by his physicians, family and friends—apparently for political reasons—not to disclose his illness by that name.

In 1955, the late President's two surviving brothers, declined to comment on the article.

Senator Robert F. Kennedy, Democrat of New York, and Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, the late President's two surviving brothers, declined to comment on the article.

The leading author of the 1955 article, Dr. James E. Nichols of New York, declined to comment yesterday, when asked if the illness described was Mr. Kennedy.

Dr. Nichols, who is an associate in orthopedic surgery at the Hospital for Special Surgery in Manhattan, acknowledged that Mr. Kennedy had undergone surgery in 1954 for a spinal operation to correct a wartime injury.

Mr. Kennedy is known to have suffered from a severe illness by that name.

In his description of spinal surgery on the 37-year-old man with Addison's disease (previously termed adrenocortical insufficiency, adrenocortical insufficiency or even Addisonian crisis), the doctor wrote that the illness was diagnosed by an outside consultant familiar with these operations.

"With respect to the old problem of adrenal insufficiency, as late as December, 1954, when you had a general check-up with a specific test of adrenal function, the results showed that your adrenal glands do function.

However, medical sources who had been close to the late President said in interviews that Mr. Kennedy had taken regular oral doses of synthetic cortical hormones until his death.

MacGregor Burns, in his book "John F. Kennedy: A Political Profile," published in 1960, said that "while Senator Kennedy's general insufficiency might well be diagnosed by some doctors as a mild case of Addison's disease, it was not diagnosed as the classic type of Addison's disease, which is due to tuberculous".

"Fully Controlled"

Mr. Kennedy's condition, Mr. Burns said, "can be fully controlled by medication taken by mouth and requires a routine endocrinologic checkup as part of regular physical examinations once or twice a year."

The subject was treated in an outside book by MacGregor Burns, published in 1960. The book was "John F. Kennedy: A Political Profile.

Dr. Nichols's article was reviewed by The Journal's board of editors, all of whom are physicians, as well as by an outside consultant familiar with the late President's medical history. All passed it as worthy of publication, the spokesman said.

In linking Dr. Nichols's patient with Mr. Kennedy, Dr. Nichols deplored the fact that no mention was made of President Kennedy's adrenal condition in the autopsy report.

"The diagnosis of Addison's disease could have been firmly established at autopsy and perhaps etiology (cause) determined," Dr. Nichols wrote. However, the autopsy protocol is curiously silent on this point. The silence . . . may be due to an accidental or intentional failure to search and observe, or (b) suppression of autopsy findings and existing clinical records by relatives or Federal officials or both."

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