

House Votes to Show Kennedy Film in U.S.

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WASHINGTON, June 9—The House topped off one of the liveliest political skirmishes of the session today by voting to allow Americans to see a documentary film on the life and death of President Kennedy.

If approved by the Senate, the measure would clear the way for the showing of the film, "John F. Kennedy—Years of Lightning, Day of Drums" in theaters across the nation.

The film was produced by the United States Information Agency for audiences overseas. There is a long-standing policy, but no law, against the showing of such films, which are prepared as propaganda by the Government, in the United States without Congressional authorization.

Republicans protested loudly. Americans should not be propagandized, they argued. Furthermore, they said, the Democrats might use the Government-made film as a campaign weapon.

Representative Edward J. Derwinski, Republican of Illinois, said, "President Kennedy is still a potent political force."

In an obvious reference to the late President's brother, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, Democrat of New York, Representative Peter H. B. Frelinghuysen, Republican of New Jersey, suggested that a future U.S.I.A. film might deal with "a living American, such as an Attorney General or a U.S. Senator."

He said later, half in jest, "I was only trying to protect the other half of the Democratic party." He was apparently referring to reports of political coolness between President Johnson and Senator Kennedy.

Despite the party-line debate, a number of Republicans joined the Democratic majority in voting for the measure. The final vote was 311 to 75.

Fifty-four Republicans joined 257 Democrats in voting for the bill, while 68 Republicans and seven Democrats voted against it.

Dispute Over Charges

A dispute arose over a Republican effort to amend the measure to require that the film be shown "without charge," instead of in commercial theaters as provided for in the resolution.

In effect, this would have scuttled the plan, for there would not have been funds available to make copies of the film, sponsors of the measure said.

There are 383 copies of the film, but they are all overseas and are still being shown, according to U.S.I.A. officials.

Democratic floor leaders were hard pressed turning back the Republican amendment. In two non-record votes, the amendment was adopted, 75 to 61 and 96 to 87. Some Democrats joined Republicans in voting for the amendment.

Later, however, Democratic leaders rallied their forces and succeeded in killing the amendment by a roll-call vote of 216 to 174.

In arguing for showing the film without charge, Representative William Mailliard, Republican of California, said:

"I would look with horror seeing this picture on the marquee of some theater as a lead-on for some C-grade movie called 'The Monster From Outer Space.'"

Democratic leaders scoffed at the suggestion. They said that the U.S.I.A. could be trusted to make "suitable contracts" with film distribution companies.

Furthermore, the sponsors said, the Government would actually make money from the film. A certain amount of proceeds from the theater tickets would revert to the Government, they said.

The 90-minute color film is currently being shown in English and 29 other languages in 117 countries overseas. It has been shown privately to several groups in the United States, including members of Congress.

Congress also authorized its showing at the dedicative last February of the Boston Civic Memorial Center and at the upcoming 25th reunion of President Kennedy's class at Harvard University.