

EARLY PROTECTION FOR '72 ASPIRANTS

Secret Service to Guard the
Rivals Before Primaries

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 19—The Secret Service, whose paramount responsibility is safeguarding the President, is preparing to extend its protection to Presidential candidates long before the primaries or the nominating conventions of 1972.

Until the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy in 1968, the service provided protection only for Presidents and Presidents-elect. That year, the service began guarding some candidates before the conventions and looked after nominees until the election.

Preparations for the 1972 campaign, however, envision taking on protective duties perhaps as early as mid-winter 1971. While the final date has not been decided, sources in the service indicated that it would be shortly after a candidate makes a formal announcement.

Senator George S. McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, has indicated that he will announce his candidacy early in 1971. Senator Edmund S. Muskie, the Maine Democrat who is widely considered the front-runner for his party's nomination, has said that he will gear up his staff for the run early in 1971, but Mr. Muskie has given no indication when he will announce.

Other Officials Covered

The sources in the Secret Service also said that the service had extended its protection to senior officials of the Nixon Administration and to visiting dignitaries to the United States and United Nations.

The service, however, has not made public the names of of-

ficials being guarded. While a public announcement might deter attacks on those guarded, the sources said, by implication those officials unnamed would be regarded as unprotected.

Since most Cabinet officers are protected by security units within their own departments, the added Secret Service protection was presumed to focus on White House officials. Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, the President's assistant for national security affairs, has been mentioned as one who is guarded from time to time. But that has never been confirmed officially.

The expansion of the Secret Service and its duties began with the assassination of President Kennedy in November, 1963. It has been further stimulated by the climate of violence and unrest that has spread across the nation over the last five years.

The Secret Service has grown from about 300 special agents at the time of President Kennedy's death to 850 today. The greater increase, by far, has been in protective services while a smaller increase has gone into the number of agents assigned to counterfeiting and other investigations.

In addition, the newly formed Executive Protective Service, which absorbed the White House police force and took on the guarding of foreign embassies here, has about 600 of its 850-man force in operation. It is under the supervision of the Secret Service, which, in turn, is part of the Treasury Department.

Resolution of Congress

The authority for the Secret Service to provide protection for Presidential candidates is a joint resolution passed by Congress in June, 1969, just after Senator Kennedy was killed.

The service began its protective duties of Republican and Democratic candidates in 1968 before the conventions and carried on with the Presidential and Vice-Presidential nominees. Because its own manpower was short, the Secret Service relied on men supplied by the Army, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and local police forces.