

Kennedy Ignores Political Rules, Yet Beats Pros

Editor's Note:—It was a hard, uphill fight, and many experts said it could be done. Here in a three-part series, Arthur Edson, a Washington observer who traveled with all the candidates, tells how Sen. John F. Kennedy got where he did, and what sort of a campaign can be expected from him. The first two installments will be carried today and the third on Friday.

By ARTHUR EDSON

LOS ANGELES (AP) — In the long and exciting history of U.S. politics, there has never been anything quite like this.

For John Fitzgerald Kennedy, in winning the Democratic nomination for president at 43, ignored rules, precedents and advice in pushing through to his spectacular victory.

Watching Kennedy in the big sports arena, waving to the delegates who had just made him their man on the first ballot, it was easy to forget that the road was rough — and that his road-map often was politically unorthodox.

One example will show how completely Kennedy ignored the folklore politicians treasure.

KENNEDY NO COY BOY

Since George Washington's time, men have yearned for the presidency. But usually they have worked for it behind scenes, industriously and deviously. Outwardly the fiction is kept up that this office must seek the man; the man must never appear to be greedily seeking it.

But Kennedy is no coy boy. By his own calculations, Kennedy has been openly and unabashedly seeking the presidency for four years, speaking in every state, hitting the larger states, with their larger delegations, many times.

And now it is evident that while his Democratic foes were still fumbling around in their minds as to what they should do Kennedy already was putting down foundations that would bring him victory.

REASONS FOR SUCCESS

Kennedy owes his success to a combination of many things: His organization, his uncanny ability to attract favorable publicity, his money, his family, his church, his ward record, and, most of all, himself.

Anyone who has been around Kennedy at all realizes he has winning ways with people, especially young people.

And the picture he presents comes through like this:

Nice young Harvard man. Shy smile. Nice family. Boyish, even though now he wishes he looked a bit more mature. Lively, but still apparently relaxed. Likeable. Nice clothes.

All this is true. But no public image of any other public man is so incomplete.

A TOUGH HOMBRE

For rarely is there a hint that underneath is a tough hombre who can slug it out with anyone on almost any terms.

There's no outward hint that Kennedy can take the long, hard road to the nomination, by way of the presidential primaries, but in 18-hour day after 18-hour day trying to flush out voters, and still wind up looking fresh and relaxed. Well, moderately fresh and relaxed.

Sen. Estes Kefauver of Tennessee, who took the same long trail in 1952, ended with the glazed-eye look of a steer that's just been tapped on the head with a sledgehammer.

There's not even a suggestion, in Kennedy's public appearances, that here's a cool calculator of the odds, but one who also is willing to take daring political gambles if the stakes are large enough. It's easy to underestimate Jack Kennedy.

Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts did it. In 1952, Lodge looked certain to keep his seat, particularly since Dwight D. Eisenhower was to carry the state and Lodge was firmly clutching the general's coattails.

But Kennedy, then a relatively unknown congressman, put on a whirlwind campaign to win in a year when Republicans everywhere were sweeping into office.

Kennedy's Road To Nomination

If our political disputes are ever remembered as our battlefields are now, West Virginia will become a national shrine.

For it was in West Virginia's beautiful mountains, in its thriving cities, in its impoverished coal fields that the decisive battle was fought that gave Sen. John F. Kennedy the Democratic presidential nomination.

Everyone, including the Kennedy forces, now seems to agree this was the turning point.

Until the West Virginia primaries two months ago, it looked as if the Democrats would have no clear choice and might become hopelessly deadlocked in their convention in Los Angeles.

Instead, Kennedy won big in West Virginia, knocked Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota out of the race completely, and picked up momentum that swept him to an astonishingly easy first ballot victory.

CATHOLIC PROBLEM

West Virginia merits a second look because the problem he licked there will be discussed, sometimes openly, more often privately, throughout his campaign against Vice President Richard M. Nixon.

Over and over, politicians have gone back to the unfortunate Al Smith and declared that no Roman Catholic can win the presidency of this predominantly Protestant nation.

West Virginia, with less than 5 per cent of its population Catholic, was a good testing ground for the political impact of Kennedy's Catholicism.

Kennedy chose to meet the issue head on, to insist that the voters were too fair to vote against him merely because of his beliefs.

He handled the question so ad-

riously that one Humphrey worker, a Catholic, blurted out:

"Jack's workers tell the voters here if they don't vote for him, they're bigots. In Wisconsin, they kept telling the Catholics they had to turn out to prove that a Catholic could roll up a big vote. How in the hell can you keep up with arguments like that?"

No one can say how many will vote against Kennedy, or for him, in November simply because he is a Catholic.

But at least Kennedy won Protestant West Virginia when it counted most.

KENNEDY HAS HELP

No politician succeeds without help and help is what Kennedy has plenty of.

At the airport in Los Angeles, while waiting for Kennedy to arrive, I counted 15 persons bustling about with "Kennedy staff" badges on them. And most of the Kennedy staff had more important jobs than meeting airplanes, like, You can't help but be im-

even an airplane carrying the pressed."

boss. They had delegates to see and to convince.

Kennedy's campaign manager is his brother, Robert, who at 34 is well known because of his job as counsel for the now-defunct Senate investigating committee.

The impressive thing about the men around the 43-year old Kennedy is this: most are younger than he is; all are just as eager. Nowhere does one see the old fashioned type of political pro...

You can get some idea of the effectiveness of their work from this:

A Colorado observer — "Kennedy had his men, and the state organized, before anyone else started."

A Pennsylvania delegate — "Kennedy never came into our district at all. Didn't have to. His men had it all sewed up."

A Virginia delegate — "We were for Sen. Lyndon Johnson, of course, but I got a letter from the Kennedy bunch which showed they had gone to a lot of trouble to find out what I liked and didn't like. You can't help but be im-

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