



Presidential Primary, 1960

Jack Happy Fate is Here

Welch-Sen. John Kennedy told an audience that overflowed the McDowell Circuit courtroom Tuesday night that "I am delighted to submit my political fate to the people of West Virginia."

The Massachusetts Democrat, resuming his campaign for the presidential nomination after a two-day break, still nursed the sore throat that has hampered him for nearly a week. He spoke only 10 minutes.

In his brief address, Kennedy emphasized that he was glad he entered the West Virginia primary because it gave him an opportunity to see the plight of men who have lost work because of automation.

"This is the best school, the hardest school, and in many ways the most somber school of learning about this problem," he said. "I wish every Democratic candidate was here in West Virginia."

The Senator said automation was becoming more important in every industry, and predicted that displaced workers would be a key problem facing the next President.

Despite his throat, he spoke in a firm voice. "I have been in Welch three times," he said at one point. "I'm the only presidential candidate who can make that statement."

Ted Kennedy, again lending a helping voice to his big brother, also made a brief speech.

"We recognize that West Virginia is going to be the key state. We recognize that the next seven days are going to be the crucial battle," he declared. "If we're successful here, we're going to be successful in July and November."

The green and white courtroom was filled well before the Senator made an appearance at 7:40 p.m. Leonard Bolt, chief McDowell County field deputy estimated there were 700 in the audience and another 300 listening to a public address system outside.

Sen. Kennedy was introduced by Sidney L. Christie, secretary of the county executive committee, and a man also regarded as the most important political figure here.

Christie said the Senator was "truly the man of the hour."

"I have told him that his candidacy would be judged on its merits-not on bigotry and intolerance," Christy [sic] said. ...

Kennedy Captures Stunning Upset by Harry G. Hoffman, editor of the *Gazette*

Sen. John F. Kennedy swept to an overwhelming victory in West Virginia's presidential primary Tuesday to make his strongest bid yet for the Democratic nomination.

In the process he eliminated one of his opponents, Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey, who bowed out of the Democratic presidential contest under a landslide victory of West Virginia Kennedy votes.

In 1,383 of 2,570 precincts, Kennedy has 112,351 votes to 74,855 for Humphrey.

Kennedy, who flew to Charleston from Washington when a growing majority made his victory certain, expressed confidence that the West Virginia vote would affect delegations in other states to a degree to assure his nomination at the Los Angeles convention.

"I am in debt to the people of West Virginia," Kennedy said. "I believe now that you have made it possible for me to be nominated for President."

Humphrey, who campaigned bitterly against Kennedy, said he hopes to work for a liberal nominee and a liberal platform. He faces a fight for reelection to the Senate from Minnesota this year.

In addition to extending his congratulations to Kennedy, and his thanks to those who had worked for him, Humphrey said:

"West Virginia and the Democratic Party have both gained as a result of our primary contest."

He gave no immediate indication of which candidate he might support, but many of his followers have made it clear that if he fell by the wayside they would like to support Adali E. Stevenson, twice the party's nominee.

Kennedy moved into the lead with the first precincts to be reported and never relinquished it. By 2 a.m. today, his majority had passed the 32,000 mark and was still growing.

Actually, Kennedy's victory does not assure him any of the state's 25 delegate votes, but from a practical standpoint the size of his majority will have a strong effect.

The greatest significance of his victory—especially the size of it—is that it at least

minimizes objections to his nomination because of his Catholicism.

To those who have argued that the Democrats cannot run the risk of nominating a Roman Catholic, Kennedy can now point to his strength in predominately Protestant West Virginia, which is no more than 5 per cent Catholic.

In a formal statement early today, Kennedy said:

I want to express my thanks to the people of West Virginia for their fairness, for their confidence and for their support. Despite all that has been written about the people here, after traveling to every corner of the state and meeting you, I had no doubt that you would cast your vote on the basis of the issues and not on any religious prejudice. West Virginia has given me a major boost towards the Democratic nomination for President."

"I want to pledge again that I will not forget the people of West Virginia nor will I forget what I have seen and learned here. On my television broadcast last night, I said that if elected President I would immediately inaugurate a program of help for West Virginia. This I will do."

Kennedy ran strongly in the depression-ridden coal section of southern West Virginia, where among nine counties Fayette has the largest number of Catholics, 3.4 per cent of its population.

He held the lead in Kanawha County, where 2.3 per cent of the residents are Catholics. In Ohio County where there are 29.9 per cent Catholics, he opened a wide margin.

Humphrey made a close race of it in industrial Cabell County, trailing only slightly there. He held a small margin in Lincoln County, where there are almost no Catholics. He was ahead by small margins in some counties bordering on Virginia.

But Kennedy's strength appeared widespread as he took the lead with the first returns and continued to hold a substantial margin as the count piled up.

Berkeley County, where the first precinct to report with a full count gave Humphrey a 69-65 edge over Kennedy, is only 14.8 per cent Catholic on a population basis.

In Hardy County, a poultry growing and orchard section, the first precinct to report gave Kennedy 96 and Humphrey 35. Only 1.6 per cent of the residents of this county are Catholic.

A single precinct in Greenbrier County, on the Virginia border, gave Kennedy 67 votes and Humphrey 32. Greenbrier has a Catholic population of 1.6 per cent.

A precinct in McDowell County, in the heart of the coal fields, registered 117 votes for Kennedy and 23 for Humphrey.

In Lincoln County, an agricultural area southwest of Charleston where there are practically no Catholics, Humphrey topped Kennedy 178-136 in the first two precincts to report.

Kennedy ran 3-1 ahead of Humphrey in five precincts reporting from Cabell County, where the Catholic population is 3.9 per cent. The count there was: Kennedy 295, Humphrey 222.

Across the state, on the Virginia border, the first precinct to report from Jefferson County listed 44 votes for Humphrey and 31 for Kennedy. The county's population is about 7 per cent Catholic.

Kennedy ran well in first returns from the economically hard-hit region of southern West Virginia. Both candidates had hitched their campaigns to promises of economic aid for the state but controversies over the religious issue overshadowed other subjects.

The first two precincts from Kanawha County gave Kennedy an overwhelming edge. The count was: Kennedy 225, Humphrey 29. The county's population is 2.3 per cent Catholic.

But in Pocahontas County, a Virginia border area where there are practically no Catholics, Humphrey rang up 74 votes to Kennedy's 39 in the first precinct reporting.