Kennedy must calculate effect of candidacy

(Continued from Page 6) friends could not get him consultion delegation. Kennedy asked the nomination while Johnson waited for his useless courtesies to put it into his lap. Even when on the ticket with Kennedy, he could not help win most of the South and in his own state, it was the Negro vote and not Johnson's popularity that won the state for Kennedy. The tragedy of 1964 and not political prowess made Johnson a national leader, and a campaign against an annoy-

Professionals' View

In addition, in his years as President, Johnson has done little to cultivate the favor of the profes-

sional politicians. He has been disinterested and inconsiderate of their needs. For example, John-

son, perhaps out of sheer stupidity, has never invited Jesse Unruh, the most powerful Democratic leader in Southern California, to stay at the White House. The pro-

fessionals dislike Johnson. Yet the strange paradox is that with the exception of Unruh, almost all of them have warned Kennedy that he would meet with disaster at the polls if he ran and that he will ruin his chances in 1972.

On the other hand, men like Reuss and Slattery urge him to discount the apparent lessons of history and the potential impact of a failure this time around on the effort in 1972. They argue that any re-


tainment against "tracing the rules" is highly overrated and will be quickly forgotten. The logic of Rockefeller at the conventions in 1968 and his recent emergence as a potential serious candidate are proof of this they argue.

A Kennedy defeat

For many, these conditions would be too tempting to resist. Yet Kennedy must carefully cal-

culate what his candidacy would mean if he runs and loses to John-

son very badly, then Johnson will have beaten the strongest possible opponent to the left of him. With

such a victory, he would probably go into the November election with tremendous momentum. Hav-

ning seen Kennedy fail, the Re-

publicans would surely turn to the right and pick someone like Nixo-

on or Reagan. Such a Kennedy e-

fment would have just the opposite effect on the 336 electors as was intended.

On the other hand, a strong showing, reaching around 40% of the Democrat vote, would have two possible effects. It would show the Republicans the tremen-

dous potential of those Democrats to the left of Johnson, and prob-

ably encourage them to look more favorably on the candidacy of Rockefeller or even Rockefeller. Furthermore, it might shock Johnson, that he would be forced to change policy and seek a quitter or compromise solution in Viet-

nam.

A Kennedy victory

The third possible outcome of Kennedy running would be a vic-

tory over Johnson. This might shatter the Democratic party, but

it isn't likely. Johnson is disliked and resented by many in the party and if not the nominee — he would suffer little influence. Seeing Ken-

nedy as winner, the professionals would be likely to come over to his side. The Republicans would also be shattered. If Nixon's na-


cination could be stopped by this time, the party would turn either to Reagan or Rockefeller; this would be decided by popularity among convention delegates and not the national electorate. on the other side. It seems that
even different M. things could
defait even the "new Nix-
on." Nixon is the man who near-


ly best John Kennedy, and an unproved Harris poll shows that, perhaps because of self-right, a maj-

ority of Americans recent the fact that they nearly let this hap-

pen.

In any case, no matter who the Republican nominee is, Kennedy
could certainly have a reasonable chance of beating him. In this
crucial year of internal strife, his candidacy would rejuvenate his own party and receive the sup-

port of the masses of presently disenchanted youth. Politics again might be honorable. The election might be the beginning of a return to
domestic peace. Johnson has failed and his remaining based on "irreversible circumstances." As the events of this time show, things can change very rapidly.

Kennedy would have to avoid a John Kennedy, but if McCarthy can get 25% of the national vote, 40% seems certain for Kennedy. It is always hard for a politician to tell when his time is up, but it seems to be over-estimating Johnson's strengths and the importance of historical precedents, and im-


timating the internal dissatisf-


tion with his personal style and distrust directed toward Johnson. Understandably, Kennedy is being cautious. But to paraphrase Al Lowenstein of the New York re-


gister, it is not to challenge a President who is both strong and unpopular is both immoral and politically stupid.

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