The New Republic

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Nebraska Primary—
The Is, Ands Buts

Omaha

The Nebraska primaries were six days away when David Evans said, "This campaign can be won. The question is, will it be won?" He meant, won for and by Senator Eugene McCarthy. Evans, a 26-year-old with 90 voice, a glib facet and 14 years of experience in Nebraska politics and government. He worked as a college fellow for Democratic candidates in 1960, served former Governor Frank Morris as a special assistant, and was teaching political science at Wayne State College when he quit in March to run the Nebraska McCarthy campaign. His assertion and his question pretty well summed up the hopes and frustrations of the McCarthy forces for the six of the last push before May 14.

McCarthy could have lost Nebraska in Indiana. But barring catastrophe or triumph for him on a scale unforseen, the Indians results were not expected to make a crucial difference in Nebraska. It was rather a matter of momentum and policy. The Nebraskans had elected a Governor, John Martin, who had announced he would contribute materially to the impression of an irreducible McCarthy juggernaut. "He traveled like I thought only Presidents travel," a neutral but awe Omaha Democrat who went along said afterward. "He had everything. The state, and that I'm not even sure he didn't have one of those of his own." The higher estimate from the Dewey campaign spending ($200,000) may have been exaggerated, but it certainly exceeded the $50,000 which McCarthy could afford or that the well-heeled Republicans spent to support their primary. "We have never seen anything like it in this state," said a Humphrey-Johnson Democrat who re-

members the outpouring of Oklahomans and other money in a vain effort to defeat Kennedy in the Nebraska primary.

But those who think a big Kennedy win would have little influence if his figures were important. "You lose public interest irreparable harm," said a Chicago Democrat who was 3 (editorial column, the Denver convention delegation of 18 (180 members, 30 votes) to be chosen on a separate ballot could be divided between Kennedy, McCarthy, and McCarthy, however, by irrevocably nonbinding preferential poll vote. A few days in advance of the primary, politicians who fancy themselves experts on election results more or less agreed on the following basis for scoring the outcome of the preferential vote. Less than 50 percent of the total vote would be a serious setback for Kennedy and anything near or over 25 percent would be a disaster for McCarthy. A two-thirds McCarthy vote, said why a McCarthy fuse overify, said McCarthy. "I'm not going to vote for that Republican!"

Moments before 50,000 Nebraskans in Omaha and Lincoln, some 20,000 of whom are in Omaha's ghetto quarter, and many of the 10,000 or so register black would be said to be voting for Peter. Justice Police abuse during a ghetto arrest led to Omaha's third state of rioting and lasting in recent times on April 30, while it was speaking in the magnificent Civic Auditorium, and no electorate anything about the "urban black problems," racial and radical nostalgias that white Nebraskans are. White politicians tend to minimize the importance of the Negro problem. The situation as of the May 4, 1968, during the week of April 4 to 40 the McCarthy forces seemed to be making the same mistake. The last of the young Negroes trying to stir some awareness of and support for McCarthy in black Omaha worked from a dilapidated and abandoned cafe, Dale Amers, a 24-year-old chair-car attendant on the Union Pacific Railroad, and John Beasley, also 24, a bell telephone employee then on strike, said they had received precisely $20 from McCarthy headquarters and were financing their efforts from "change friends could spare. Down the street, Kennedy blacks led by Jack L. West, an emerging ghetto leader, enjoyed the use of well-kept labor union halls and transportation. West could tell his people that Kennedy leaders were urging the senators to vote for him some time in black Omaha during his next visit. McCarthy's spokesman, tied by his air of detachment from the racial issue, had already before his last week. Beasley say even that much.

The decisive scene before primary day at once encouraged and tantalized McCarthy supporters. Mr. Johnson's withdrawal and the crawl toward Vietnam neutralization and, if need be, to defund the war issue. But these developments did not appear to have diminished Sen. McCarthy's demonstrated and potential appeal. Heretofore, it had been said that the indicators were probably less reliable in Ne- braska than in any other primary state. There has been no recent statewide polls. The Kennedy men, for all of their pretended consistency, insisted that they had many friends in the key black college poll during Kennedy's visit in favor, but they were doubtful giving a liberal electoral. McCarthy canvassers, the only means available like inclusive information, reported that the majority of interviewed householders did not know how they were going to vote a fortnight before the primary. The canvassers said they found strong support for McCarthy. Conversely, the Denver convention delegation (18 delegates, 30 votes) to be chosen on a separate ballot could be divided between Kennedy, McCarthy, and McCarthy, however, the legally nonbinding preferential poll vote. A few days in advance of the primary, politicians who fancy themselves experts on election results more or less agreed on the following basis for scoring the outcome of the preferential vote. Less than 50 percent of the total vote would be a serious setback for Kennedy and anything near or over 25 percent would be a disaster for McCarthy. A two-thirds McCarthy vote, said why a McCarthy fuse overify, said McCarthy. "I'm not going to vote for that Republican!"

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