

POLITICAL MILEAGE ~~12/23/64~~ Journal

Racial Stand's Impact For Kennedy Is Noted

Last in a four-part series on the administration's civil rights program.

By VINCENT J. BURKE

WASHINGTON (UPI) — President Kennedy's appointment of Negroes to policy-making government jobs has produced more applause from rank-and-file Negro voters than anything else he has done.

There is widespread agreement on this point—both among Kennedy's political advisers and among white and Negro leaders of the civil rights lobby.

They feel the political mileage Kennedy has gained in Negro communities this way has far outstripped that won from any other single administration move to advance minority rights.

The latter include an all-out drive to eliminate segregated travel accommodations in the South, an expansion of the drive against racial discrimination in voting in some Southern areas and a new program to open more and better jobs for Negroes in private industry.

The point is made that the Negro job appointments represent an important advance for all Negroes because they tend to upgrade the public image of the Negro.

CLOSE TO CABINET

Kennedy selected a Negro, Robert C. Weaver, to head the Housing and Home Finance Agency. This agency has become so important that Kennedy has asked Congress to give it Cabinet status.

Kennedy has put three Negroes on the federal bench. The highest of the three judicial appointments—judge of the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals—went to Thurgood Marshall. He led the successful NAACP drive for the Supreme Court ruling that segregated public schools are unconstitutional.

Both Weaver and Marshall are from New York City, which has a bigger Negro population than

any other U. S. city—more than a million.

Negroes from Chicago and Detroit, which also have large Negro populations, were given federal district judgeships. They were the first Negroes to be given lifetime appointments as district court judges in the continental United States.

A Baltimore Negro was appointed ambassador to Norway. The U. S. attorneys at Cleveland and San Francisco now are both Negroes. For the first time a Negro sits on the three-man commission which runs the government of the District of Columbia.

In addition, Negroes have been assigned to more than 50 other choice federal jobs, including policy-making sub-Cabinet positions in the State, Labor and Post Office departments.

EFFECT ON VOTE

According to the Democratic National Committee, Kennedy last November got close to 80 per cent of the Negro vote. Deputy Chairman Louis Martin, a Negro, contends that if the election were held today Kennedy would get a much higher percentage.

Martin draws enthusiastic applause from Negro audiences when he refers to "the list of qualified Negroes who are running things in Washington."

"The greatest single thing Kennedy has done is to integrate Negroes at the highest levels of government," Martin told a summit meeting of Negro leaders at St. Louis in September. "This is the greatest acceptance of Negroes in policy-making positions in history."

A white civil rights leader agrees that the Negro appointments have had tremendous political impact. But he is also concerned. He fears the White House may decide that it stands so high with the Negro community that it can afford to rest on its laurels.

He is thinking of other Kennedy campaign promises which have not yet been fulfilled.

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