

BELLS TOLL AGAIN AS AMERICA 'DIES'

By A. S. 'DOC' YOUNG

On Tuesday, between the hours of 7 a.m. and 8 p.m., the people went to the polls and voted.

Then, as darkness enveloped the land, they sat back in their homes to await election returns.

A great deal was at stake:

The political fortunes of incumbent officials. The hopes of aspirants. Ideologies. Perhaps as much as the future of the entire nation.

Shortly after the polls closed, news media, stretched out from one end of the state to the other, began reporting election returns.

And, it was something like listening to baseball scores, only these scores were vastly more important.

At 12:15, the game changed. No longer was the contest one pitting politician vs. politician. Now it was Life vs. Death.

Life and Death were tussling over Robert Francis Kennedy, U.S. senator from New York and Democratic Presidential candidate.

SHOT, CRITICALLY WOUNDED

Moments after he had delivered an election-victory speech to a cheering audience in the Ambassador Hotel — he had beaten back the challenge of Sen. Eugene McCarthy — he was shot and critically wounded.

The man who allegedly shot him was Sir-

han Sirhan, a diminutive, 24-year-old resident of Pasadena.

The people were shocked. Some cried. Some cursed. Some prayed. Everyone died a little.

AMERICA DYING

For, in truth, at the moment that Senator Kennedy was shot, America died a little more.

Two months earlier, another great man, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., and Sen. Kennedy attended his funeral in Atlanta.

Four and a half years ago, a deranged man named Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated Senator Kennedy's brother, the late President John F. Kennedy, in Dallas, Texas.

In the between years, assassins murdered Malcolm X and violence — evidenced in numerous riots, killings, and other brutalities — became the American style.

Violence became, as it remains, a huge pimple on the face of America, symptomizing the cancer within.

JUNGLE BARBARITY

America's pretense of civilization was no longer valid; for, obviously, the nation had returned to the barbarity of the jungle.

People no longer relied on debate to settle issues; now, it was the bullet. America was, as it is today, the victim of the cheapening of life, the unbridled bigotry, the cannibalistic tendencies of the "uncivilized" people.

WHITE CANNIBALS

No longer could white America conjure up the vision of black Africans when they thought of cannibals. The fact had been proven here: The most sophisticated cannibals are white.

★ ★ ★ ★

In the midst of sorrow over the shooting of Senator Kennedy, a man recalled a statement made by a Central Avenue barber after Dr. King was killed.

"The paddy is something else," the barber said. "He will kill ANYBODY."

Yes. Ministers and militants and Presidents and . . .

(Please turn to Page 12B)

Bells Toll . . .

(Continued from Page A1)

MASS killing was a major issue in the Presidential primary campaign. Senator Kennedy had broken with President Johnson's administration over the war in Vietnam.

Senator Kennedy sought to turn the country around, to aid the poor, save the cities; to rebuild the nation in the image, now terribly tarnished, of a democracy with equal rights and opportunities for all.

'LOVE MY COUNTRY'

How ironic that a man with the odd name of Sirhan Sirhan should shoot him, claiming: "I did it for my country. I love my country."

But, was it ironic? In this country, murder is committed in the name of Love, God, and Patriotism. Any excuse at all is a good enough excuse for killing.

As I say, the shooting of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy changed the entire mod of election evening.

NATIONAL CRISIS

"The shooting of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy . . . could change the whole nature of the 1968 campaign," Robert J. Donovan said in the Los Angeles Times. "If Kennedy is

disabled and cannot continue the race, the result would approach a national crisis."

But, meanwhile, politicking goes on.

While Senator Kennedy lay wounded, the counting of votes continued.

The rebellious mood of the nation was again symbolized in the senatorial contest between liberal incumbent Thomas H. Kuchel and conservative Max Rafferty.

VALIANT EFFORT

Billy G. Mills made a valiant effort to elevate Los Angeles County Negroes to a higher political plateau — a supervisorship — than they had ever attained before. He failed. But, he left word: Watch out next time.

Elsewhere, in races involving Negroes, the incumbents remained victorious. And the hopes and aspirations of their challengers were buried in failure and disappointment.

But none so serious as what happened to Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Only national cancer could do to a great leader what Sirhan Sirhan did to him.

Like Senator Kennedy, the whole country should be placed in an intensive-care ward. It must be . . . if it is to survive.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.