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MAR 14 1975

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

FROM: MARCIE POWERS
News Summary

FYI

*Thanks
MRC*



Brock May Have Trouble In '76 Race

By MORRIS CUNNINGHAM

WASHINGTON, March 8.—Unless the economy improves and unemployment subsidies, Republican candidates again will face heavy going next year, as they did last year, when Democrats made gains all across the country.

This is the bleak prospect confronting not only Republican presidential hopefuls but Republicans like Sen. Bill Brock (R-Tenn.), whose six-year term expires next year.

Brock has not yet announced whether he will run again, but his activities, such as his appearances in Dyersburg and Covington this week, convince observers that he is, in fact, already running.

BROCK'S SUPPORTERS do not anticipate much trouble in the Republican Senate primary now that former Gov. Winfield Dunn and defeated GOP gubernatorial candidate Lamar Alexander have let it be known they will not be contenders.

His main challenge will come in the general election in November, 1976, and much will depend upon the composition of the Republican and Democratic presidential tickets.

He will be helped if the Republicans come up with the most attractive offering, and he will be hurt if the Democrats produce the most appealing package.

It would be much to Brock's advantage if his colleague, Sen. Howard Baker (R-Tenn.), should win a place on the GOP presidential ticket. And Baker already has indicated he plans to test his prospects, although the odds obviously are against him.

OF COURSE, in trying to assess Brock's chances, the fundamental factor is the identity of the Democrat who will oppose him.

Presently a number of prominent Democrats are being mentioned, and if all of them run, the Democratic primary will be as con-

tested as was the Democratic primary for governor last year.

Among those being talked about are Rep. Richard Fulton (D-Tenn.), state House Speaker Ned McWherter (D-Dresden), John J. Hooker of Nashville, Franklin Haney of Chattanooga and Jake Butcher of Oak Ridge, Democratic national committeeman Bruce Shine of Bristol, and James Neal of Nashville, the assistant Watergate prosecutor.

Brock's chances suffered a setback with the Democratic victories in the Chattanooga and Memphis congressional districts last year. Not only were Republican organizations weakened and Democratic organizations strengthened, but Democratic ties with black voters

were forged, particularly in Memphis, that could be significant in future elections. This could be especially troublesome for Brock since he has not been as successful as Baker in perfecting liaisons with the state's black communities.

MANY ASSUME Brock also will suffer from the fact that a Democrat, Ray Blanton, will be occupying the governor's office next year. But this will depend upon how well Blanton has handled the office and what his standing with the voters is at that time.

As of now, Republicans here are dismayed, and grudgingly complimentary, over the good start Blanton has made and the general excellence of his appointments.

The biggest surprise in Blanton's defeat of Alexander last November was Blanton's astonishing success in traditionally Republican East Tennessee. Strong support in East Tennessee will be vital to Brock's chances.

A question will be whether East Tennessee Republicans, now that they have gone astray, can be brought back into the fold.

It has become conventional wisdom to say that Tennesseans didn't vote for Brock in 1970, that they voted against his Democratic opponent, former Sen. Albert Gore.

Next year, if he runs, Brock will have a chance to disprove this contention, and to show that he can win on his own.

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