

# Kennedy Losing Old Precision In Conferences

By JAMES MARLOW  
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WASHINGTON (AP) — President Kennedy is undergoing changes, and not for the better, in his news conferences.

1. His answers are losing precision, are beginning to wander, getting needlessly complicated.

This was typical of the way President Eisenhower answered for eight years.

2. Kennedy's sentences are suffering from the wandering. The more involved he gets, the more he leaves sentences dangling. So did Eisenhower.

Kennedy's first meeting with the press last January after taking office was a classic: Sharp and tidy. It was televised live and was impressive.

His seventh conference Wednesday would have had less impact if it, too, had been seen live on TV. Perhaps because it wasn't, Kennedy felt free to be more relaxed.

After Wednesday's conference this writer read each question and answer in the transcript carefully. The impression was that Kennedy a number of times had ducked direct answers.

In order to decide whether the impression was correct, this writer then summarized on paper each question and its answer.

The initial impression was then shown to be wrong.

In most cases Kennedy either gave direct answers or answers which he appeared to consider as direct as he could make them

when considered against the problem involved.

For example: When asked what he thought about federal loans—if not outright aid—to parochial schools, Kennedy made two points clear:

He wants federal aid to public schools passed first and the question of loans to private schools considered later since such loans, in his view, may be unconstitutional.

This was delicate ground, as Kennedy indicated, for he didn't want to be put in the position of giving an opinion which only the Supreme Court can give.

Still, he took up a good part of the news conference in making his points, just because he sawed back and forth. In fairness, news-

men's questions, going back over the same ground, pushed him into taking up a lot of time on this issue.

But what created that initial impression he was avoiding answers? Only this: He got overly complicated in giving answers.

But one thing has come through clearly in every Kennedy news conference, including Wednesday's: He's an extremely busy President who does his homework, pays attention to details, knows what's happening.

The fact that he takes the trouble to be informed not only on the big problems but on the minute ones, too, was evident in his 23rd and final answer.

He was asked what disposition the government would make of a

surplus Air Force extrusion plant in Adrian, Mich. This might have seemed too small a point for a President to be informed on.

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