

Stomach Wounds Infected

Wallace's Surgery Delayed

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Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace's recovery has been hampered by a stubborn infection in his stomach wounds that could postpone an operation for removal of a bullet lodged in his spinal canal until after next month's Democratic National Convention.

If Wallace has surgery before the convention, which opens July 10 in Miami Beach, there is little chance that he will achieve one of his major aims—playing an active part in picking the Democratic presidential nominee.

"Our goal right now is to get into the convention in

Miami," said his wife, Cornelia, in a television interview.

"That is the big thing, and it is his strong motivation," she continued.

Wallace remains paralyzed from the hips down, but doctors reported yesterday that he was able to move toes on his left foot voluntarily. His chief physician said the significance of this development was "undetermined."

Mrs. Wallace, interviewed by Merv Griffin for a show to be televised Monday night (from 8 to 9:30 over WTTG, Ch. 5), said that the second operation cannot be performed until Wallace's stomach infections are cured.

"They (the doctors) are trying to give him all the time they can on this area (the stomach wounds) before they go into the back," she continued.

If doctors operate on his spine before the stomach

See WALLACE, A3, Col. 5

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A 3

WALLACE, From A1

Infections have disappeared, medical sources close to the case said, the infections could spread and possibly cause spinal meningitis.

One doctor said Wallace cannot be moved from Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, where he is in the intensive care unit, for at least another week and probably two weeks.

That means that Wallace will be temporarily replaced at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday as governor of Alabama by the lieutenant governor, Jere Beasley—something that Wallace's political advisers had hoped to avoid.

Under Alabama law, the governor must give up his powers if he is out of the state for more than 20 days. Wallace last left Alabama on May 15, the day he was shot in the Laurel Shopping Center.

Wallace would regain the powers of the governorship as soon as he returns to the state. When he leaves Holy Cross he probably will go to the University of Alabama Medical Center in Birmingham, where the spinal operation likely will be performed.

His neurosurgeon there, Dr. James Garber Galbraith, said Wallace will need four to six weeks to recuperate from that

operation—a time frame that will leave him still bed-ridden when the convention starts—if the operation is performed between now and July 10.

His doctors here have insisted that the decision on when and where to perform the second operation will be made on medical, not political grounds.

Nevertheless, Wallace's deep desire to go to the convention may play a large part in that decision merely for the good effect it would have on his morale.

Doctors said his ability to learn to move around on his paralyzed legs depends to a great extent on his own motivation.

As Mrs. Wallace put it yesterday: "I think the only thing that would ever really make him want to walk again is his career and his position."

The voluntary, or brain-controlled, toe movements occurred Tuesday night and were first made public Wednesday night by Mrs. Wallace. Only then did Wallace's chief physician, Dr. Joseph P. Schanno, put the toe movements into yesterday's medical bulletin.

"The overall significance of this in regards to the eventual outcome of his paralysis is un-

determined at this time," said Schanno.

Other specialists not connected with the case said movements do not mean that Wallace will ever walk again.

At best, these doctors said, they mean that his spinal cord was not completely severed by the bullet in his spine—one of four that ripped through his body—and that a few strands of nerves still are carrying messages from the brain to the toes.

Wallace has been undergoing physical therapy to keep his leg muscles in shape so he can begin the long rehabilitation process. Country and western singer Eddy Arnold, who visited Wallace yesterday, said the governor was pulling himself up on a trapeze attached to his bed.

Arnold was the first non-family member to see Wallace in three days. On Tuesday and Wednesday such political notables as Mississippi Gov. William Waller, the Alabama congressional delegation, and Rep. Wilbur Mills (D-Ark.), a presidential candidate himself, were kept from seeing Wallace.

Before the curb on visitors, most of the major figures of the Democratic Party as well as President Nixon and Vice President Agnew had dropped in on Wallace.

"Almost all his opponents and very few of his friends" visited, commented Mrs. Wallace.

Photographs show Wallace more haggard than the rosy medical bulletins and reports from his political aides suggested.

This is not surprising. One surgeon familiar with gunshot wounds and operations said,

"For any surgery, it takes a couple of weeks to recover. Unfortunately mother nature takes her own sweet time and can't be rushed."

Wallace's recovery has been complicated by the infection, probably caused by partly digested food that spilled into the abdominal cavity when his stomach was nicked by a bullet. Mrs. Wallace said the governor had eaten a full meal

shortly before the shooting.

The infection not only slows the healing process, it drains strength.

"The thing that could have killed him was the stomach injury," said Mrs. Wallace.

"The bullet missed his large aorta by a hair. It missed his lung, missed his liver, missed every vital organ, and just by a fraction. So we are very thankful that he is alive."