

SATURDAY

CITY HALL REPORT

Campaign Base? Group? Rallies? Not M'Keithen!

By DAVID SNYDER

How long has it been since a gubernatorial candidate ran without an organization or even political headquarters in New Orleans?

Gov. John J. McKeithen is the first such candidate that even veteran politicians can remember. He is that strong.

With slightly more than a month to go before the first Nov. 4, no McKeithen-sponsored rallies are planned. His primary Nov. 4, no McKeithen-sponsored rallies are planned. His people contend that he is actually spending much less money in the city than did the late Chep Morrison.

Gubernatorial candidates are expected to pick up the major share of the expenses where they support a ticket. The expenses in the current campaign are not expected to amount to much more than the cost of putting out four tickets — in the neighborhood of \$40,000 or \$50,000.



DAVE SNYDER

★ ★ ★ THE GOVERNOR WAS IN TOWN

Thursday. His long conference with the Metropolitan Crime Commission received all the attention, but he was also talking politics.

Some of the incumbent legislators are about to blow their tops over the endorsements that have been made by the Affiliated Council of Democratic Organizations and by the Regular Democratic Organization. They have been pressuring the governor to step in and reason with the local political leaders.

The governor did talk to RDO leaders and to Gus Betz, the RDO First Ward leader and Senate candidate running against incumbent Olaf Fink.

Not only is the RDO endorsing Betz instead of Fink, the organization has dropped two other incumbents in the Ninth Ward, Donald Fortier and Edward L. Boesch.

Over and over again the governor has said he is backing the incumbents for reelection, period.

★ ★ ★ IT IS ONLY LOGICAL, THEN, to expect the RDO and Betz to take a second look at their positions. This is especially logical when you figure that six leaders in the RDO are state job holders.

The script called for the RDO to meet with the governor, listen to the facts of life, and caucus again to back the incumbents.

Betz would confer with McKeithen, come up with a job, and quit the race.

The RDO leaders and Betz say it just didn't happen. The Regulars will stick to their endorsements and Betz will stay in the race.

Everybody denies that any pressure was brought to bear. Betz was asked yesterday if the rumors that he was getting out of the race had any foundation.

Although this was early in the day, Betz said six politicians had already called to ask the same thing.

"You were misinformed," he said. "I'm not getting out."

Betz said he told the governor as much Thursday and the governor indicated that he would not push the issue.

"I'm going all the way," said Betz. He opens a campaign headquarters on the West Bank today.

★ ★ ★ THE CRESCENT CITY DEMOCRATIC Association, City Hall oriented and led by "Duke" Rutledge, met yesterday afternoon for the meaningful closed door, head-knocking part of their caucus.

A breakfast meeting will be held at the Fontainebleau Motor Hotel Monday, at which time the organization's endorsements will be announced and the candidates introduced.

Even before yesterday's afternoon session, the plan was to back all of the incumbents. The CCDA is one of the organizations Gov. McKeithen will support with money for a ballot. The RDO is not.

Although the CCDA is a part of the ACDO, its ticket will be in conflict with the affiliation.

Last week the ACDO came up with a list of endorsements that included two Negro candidates for the House of Representatives and Betz.

Now there are strong rumblings that the ACDO has been asked to convene again for the purpose of reconsidering the endorsements.

★ ★ ★ THERE WAS A STRONG RUMOR early in the week that the Negroes—Ernest N. Morial and the Rev. A. L. Davis—would be replaced on the ticket by incumbents Eugene O'Brien and Stephen Daley. Those close to the organization said Friday, however, that this is not likely to happen.

There is a stronger possibility that the ACDO will decide to replace Betz on the ticket with Fink in the Senate race for Wards 1, 2, and 15.

With little more than a month to go before election day, most of the major endorsement decisions have been made and the tickets formed.

Gov. McKeithen, with weak opposition will head seven different ballots in the city.

He is not doing as well as Ernest Hessler Jr., however. Hessler's father, the register of conveyances, told a Ninth Warder this week that Hessler's name will appear on eight different ballots in the ward.

★ ★ ★ THAT KIND OF ORGANIZATIONAL support is hard to battle. This is one of the reasons why a couple of "independents" in the race, Jim Serio and Nat Kiefer, were especially anxious about the possibility that the RDO would reconsider their endorsement and go with the incumbents.

Serio is not only counting on the RDO endorsement and a couple of other smaller ones, he also hopes to line up some strong Negro support in the ward before election day.

One thing the politicians were able to agree on this time around — elections are costing more than ever. Worse, the candidate is not sure after he coughs up the money to an organization for a ballot and such whether or not it has done him any good.

New Orleans politics is confusing, said one veteran incumbent candidate, "like a lot of spaghetti thrown into a lot of hot water."

★ ★ ★ SHORTS: Henry Engler, chairman of the Orleans Parish Democratic Executive Committee, reminds candidates that the deadline for submitting commissioner lists is 5 p.m. Monday . . . Mayor Victor H. Schiro has had his problems with appointments . . . three of his appointments resigned from the City Planning Commission under fire . . . now two more appointees, members of the Vieux Carre Commission, face serious charges.