

BACKING HUMPHREY,
MCKEITHEN DECLARES

(States-Item Bureau)
BATON ROUGE—Gov. John J. McKeithen said at a press conference here today he is committed to support Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey for president through the Democratic convention and believes Humphrey is the only one who can carry a Southern state for the national party.

The governor was one of 17 Democratic state chief executives who met in St. Louis yesterday in what was billed as a "Stop Kennedy" meeting but which failed to come up with a unified goal.

MCKEITHEN SAID he spoke out freely at the St. Louis meeting in declaring he thought Humphrey is the best candidate the Democratic Party has for president, "Particularly when we talk about unifying the country."

He said unless Humphrey is nominated he believes "The Democratic Party can write off all the states south of the Mason-Dixon line."

Independent candidate George Wallace of Alabama, McKeithen said, is in the lead in Louisiana for its 10 electoral votes.

"I am a Humphrey support-

er through the convention," McKeithen declared.

He said he was not committed further to support the party nominees after the August conclave in Chicago. He said first he wants to see who the nominees are and what the platform is.

HUMPHREY'S POSITION on foreign affairs and the Vietnam war, he said, coincides with that of the South. In the past, he continued, he has had no trouble getting Humphrey to listen to reason about the civil rights problems in the South. He said

he had always been able to reach Humphrey as Vice-President to discuss such

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problems and feels he still would be able to reach him as president.

McKeithen downplayed his own vice presidential efforts and said he felt that the party might choose a man from the South such as Gov. John Connally of Texas. He also cited Sen. Richard Russell of Georgia, or Sen. Russell Long of Louisiana as men he could support.

"I am not burning up to run for vice president," he said.

He also maintained that he still is unaware of efforts to begin a national promotion campaign to enhance his image in a bid for the vice

presidency.

McKeithen also lashed out at "jumpers, squealers and beatniks" supporting candidates. When he sees them on television, he said, he thinks, "My God, am I going to turn my country over to that?"

WITHOUT NAMING him, he also rapped Sen. Robert Kennedy of New York who he said was urging youth to rebel by making statements about drafting 19-year-old American youths when South Vietnam doesn't.

He called the Kennedy campaign "completely irresponsible" and said it is backfiring.

The governor also said he has no plans to run against Sen. Long when the latter seeks re-election this summer.

In other matters closer to home, the Governor said that he has not decided on a major tax program for additional revenues. He did say that a tax on automobiles is contemplated but the method as yet is undecided.