

MOVE OVER, GEORGE'

Will McKeithen Enter National Politics?

By **BILL LYNCH**

(Capital Correspondent)
BATON ROUGE —
Move over, George.
Here comes John.

Louisiana Gov. John
J. McKeithen may be

rapidly overtaking former Alabama Gov. George Wallace as the new champion of the South.

There is strong belief that McKeithen is running hard for the Senate seat now held by veteran Sen. Allen J. Ellender, which is up in 1972. However, McKeithen may have set his sights even higher in America's political spectrum.

"America is with us now," the governor declared in his assessment of the response to the school desegregation issue.

Backed by a \$100,000-plus treasure chest, the governor last night launched his campaign to take the South's side of the school desegregation crisis to the rest of the country.

But he's not overlooking his Southern neighbors either.

Wallace Plans

Wallace, who is currently making noises as a candidate for the Alabama Statehouse again, also did not ignore his Southern base of support as a source of much-needed funds.

McKeithen, in his address to a joint session of the Legislature, had high praise for Wallace but at the same time pointed out that Wallace had failed to capture the support of the nation.

In the nationwide television campaign, the governor has lined up 133 stations to show his taped speech which was made last Friday from notes. He made the talk from notes, using an offstage questioner as part of the format, rather than trying to read from a prepared text.

The first of the shows appeared last night over five stations in the South and the West.

Of the 133 listed by the Governor's office, 49 of the appearances are over television stations in the South and 11 are in Border States. Twenty-four shows are scheduled in Texas alone.

There are 23 set for showing in Western states, 35 in the Midwest and 15 in the East.

Newspaper Advertising

In addition, the governor plans full-page advertisements in The New York Times, The Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times and the Chicago Tribune to run March 4. A full page ad also is planned for Newsweek magazine.

Money to finance the ambitious program was raised quickly, mostly from Louisiana citizens, after an appeal for funds by McKeithen in a statewide series of telecasts. He appealed for funds to conduct a national TV campaign to tell the South's side of the story.

He estimated that about 20 per cent of the funds came from neighboring states.

The taped film will be made available to any Louisiana station which wants to run it and a transcript of the speech has been promised to newsmen. The governor's office apparently has run into some difficulty in getting the transcript out before the first viewing.

It is not a network show appearing simultaneously throughout the country, but was arranged with individual stations through a broker. The advertising agency operated by his former executive secretary, Gus Weill, is handling arrangements for both television and newspaper advertisements on a regular commission basis.

In addition to the 24 times the program will be shown in Texas, other Southern state

showings include six in Florida, five each in South and North Carolina, four in Georgia and three in Virginia.

New York Shows

Of the eight showings in the heavily populated state of California, four will be in the capital of Sacramento, two in Fresno, one in Eureka and one in Monterey. Although none has been scheduled yet in Los Angeles, San Francisco or San Diego, efforts are being made to get a time slot in Los Angeles.

In New York, time has been bought in New York City, Binghamton, Oneonta, Plattsburgh and Rochester, for one showing each. In Pennsylvania, another populous Eastern state, Pittsburgh is on the list, but Philadelphia is missed.

In Illinois in the Midwest, Moline, Quincy, Rockford and Springfield are on the

schedule. Efforts are being made to include Chicago.

McKeithen also appeared on national television on a morning news show while he was in Washington. He held a press conference for Washington newsmen outside a Senate office.

So, McKeithen is getting plenty of exposure — both at home and away.

Previously full of criticism for the Eastern press, McKeithen came away from the Washington press conference highly pleased that he had been well received.

Critical of Press

Lately, he has been highly critical of some of his home state press, which has not responded favorably to his actions — particularly on the special session call.

He accused some news media of "laughing at me."

"You're the only one laughing at me," he retorted. "America is with us now."

This is the new approach by McKeithen, who three months ago was warding off efforts to have a special session on the school issue. His objective now, he says, is to get all America involved and he feels he has done this with adoption of the New York State law on local option freedom of choice.

The television campaign is part of an over all strategy as was the five-day special session to win support in other sections of the country.

The response from the public on the TV campaign fund request was immediate. The initial goal of \$100,000 was quickly oversubscribed.

The response from the Legislature on the freedom of choice law was equally overwhelming, passing the bill in the House and Senate with few dissenting votes.

Thus McKeithen, whose popularity had reached a low water mark after his flirtation with Hubert Humphrey and the Democratic party vice presidential nomination, has climbed back to the top of the mountain.

It leaves the question of whether the mountain is higher in Louisiana than it is in Alabama.



McKeithen and Wallace
New Champion for South?