

Wallace to Seek a Third Term; Bars Decision on Plans for 1976

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MONTGOMERY, Ala., Feb. 22—Gov. George C. Wallace announced today that he would seek a third term. He is expected to win easily in the May 7 Democratic primary.

Mr. Wallace declined to say whether he would run for President again in 1976, but today's announcement may have been the first formal step in that direction.

The Governor told reporters and several hundred supporters who had driven from all over the state, "I have no specific plans, but as Governor of Alabama I'm sure I'll be in a position to make certain that the people I spoke for in 1972 will be represented in the councils of both major parties in 1976." He paused, then added, "Not necessarily by me."

A group of Wallace supporters from several states will meet this weekend in Houston to discuss ways of attaining maximum influence at the Democratic party's midterm convention in Kansas City, Mo., this December.

They will analyze the delegate selection laws of the various states and plan campaigns to capture as many of those delegate slots as they can. The midterm convention will adopt a party charter. Mr. Wallace's friends are eager to have a choice in that.

'Middle America' Backed

Mr. Wallace told the crowd at the Capitol here this morning that he would continue to let both major parties know that they must pay attention to the taxpayers and citizens of "middle America" and not to the "exotic left" that he says took over the Democratic party in 1972.

Asked if he would be an active Presidential candidate or a power broker in 1976, he said, "I'll tell you who will be the power broker at the 1976 convention; it will be middle America."

Friends and members of his family escorted him into the House chamber of the Capitol. As he was lifted out of his wheel chair to stand, with support, behind the speaker's stand, his mouth turned sharply down for an instant, reminding the spectators of the pain he still feels from the assassin's bullets that cost him the use of his legs and almost killed him during the 1972 Presidential campaign. His face appeared weary as he began to speak, but it relaxed and brightened after the first applause.

A reporter asked if his health was good enough to permit him to campaign actively this spring. Before he could answer, his wife, Cornelia, who was standing behind him, said, "It's better than mine."

Mr. Wallace, who is 53 years old, said, "What my wife is trying to say is I'm wearing her out." His supporters laughed. He went on, "I'm physically able to make any type of campaign that is necessary. I'm as healthy as I've ever been except for being able to walk."

His main opponent in the Democratic gubernatorial primary apparently will be State

Senator Eugene McLain of Huntsville. Former Gov. Albert Brewer, who was defeated by Mr. Wallace in 1970, considered running this year but reportedly has decided not to.

In his announcement address, Mr. Wallace, who came to fame as a staunch segregationist, touched on the new conciliatory racial theme that has characterized his recent utterances.

He said the people of Alabama were good, compassionate and progressive and were prepared to "show the nation that all people can live together in a spirit of peace and harmony."

"We know that every person in this state is a citizen of this state and is entitled to all the rights and privileges it has to offer," he said.

A handful of Negroes were in the audience. Mr. Wallace recently crowned a black homecoming queen at the University of Alabama, where 10 years earlier he stood in the door and vowed to preserve "segregation forever." He has made other such gestures of goodwill toward Negroes. A few black leaders have responded in kind.

Mrs. Rosa Parks, the black woman who started the Montgomery bus boycott during the nineteen-fifties, visited Montgomery recently from her present home in Detroit. She was taken to see Governor Wallace and they were photographed together. She is reported to have told friends afterward that she was tricked into posing for the picture.

Mr. Wallace served his first four-year term as Governor from 1963 to 1966. His second terms began in 1971.