

Black Vote for Wallace Is Put At 20-25% in Alabama Primary

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By RAY JENKINS MAY 9 1974

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MONTGOMERY, Ala., May 8 — Gov. George C. Wallace apparently picked up as much as 25 per cent of the black vote in Alabama yesterday.

At the same time, he may have indirectly helped elect a Lieutenant Governor more friendly to him.

The big upset in the Democratic primary was not Mr. Wallace's renomination, but rather the unexpectedly strong showing in the Lieutenant Governor's race by Charles Woods, who, in nearly complete returns, was running a seesaw battle against the incumbent, Lieut. Gov. Jere Beasley. A runoff on June 4 will be necessary to decide that race.

During his first term, Mr. Beasley was often at odds with Mr. Wallace primarily because the Lieutenant Governor sought to exercise powers in the Legislature that his predecessors had never attempted to use. In the process, he frequently angered Mr. Wallace.

'Help the Governor'

Throughout his campaign, Mr. Woods appealed to the voters to elect a Lieutenant Governor who would "help the Governor, not hurt him."

Mr. Woods, who lost a race for Governor four years ago as one of the candidates against Mr. Wallace, had since become close friends with Mr. Wallace. During the campaign, Mr. Wood also concentrated on a favorite Wallace theme: "taking the tax burden off the working man."

Officially, however, Mr. Wallace did not take part in the Lieutenant Governor's race, and indicated that he would not do so in the runoff.

Virtually complete returns today gave Mr. Wallace 495-733 votes—a record 64 per cent majority over his four opponents—to 232,422 for his nearest competitor, State Senator Eugene McLain of Huntsville. Form Gov. James E. Folsom had 25,

511 votes; Ralph Price, a veteran of many losing political campaigns, had 8,543 votes, and Thomas W. Robinson, a political newcomer, polled 6-517 votes.

Joe L. Reed, chairman of Alabama's leading black political caucus, the Alabama Democratic Conference, conceded that Mr. Wallace may have received as much as 20 to 25 per cent of the black vote yesterday, whereas he had received "virtually none in the past."

Black Support Cited

The results indicate that the Governor may have carried every county in Alabama—including several counties that have a black majority—with the exception of Macon County, where Tuskegee Institute is located.

In his victory statement last night, Mr. Wallace repeated his oft-expressed statement that he would be "the Governor of all the people"—in sharp contrast to his 1970 race, when he campaigned against the "black bloc vote." The Governor also said that he might be "involved" in national politics in 1976 "whether my critics like it or not."

In yesterday's primary, blacks apparently won about a dozen seats in the newly reapportioned Alabama Legislature, and six other blacks won spots in runoff elections. There are only three blacks in the Legislature now.

In the only Congressional race that drew significant attention, Representative Walter Flowers, a Democrat, easily survived his bid for renomination by defeating Mrs. Alberta Murphy by a margin of almost 2 to 1. Mr. Flowers is a member of the House Judiciary Committee, which is considering the impeaching of President Nixon, and Mrs. Murphy asserted throughout the campaign that Mr. Flowers was generally pro-Nixon.