

Florida Governor May Be Candidate As Vice President

Washington (CP) — Florida's Governor Leroy Collins, a silver-tongued orator who uses his speaking skills to further the cause of moderation and understanding between the races, will be a man in the spotlight at the Democratic National Convention in July.

Collins, 51, is not only permanent chairman of the convention — a post of power and influence held by the redoubtable Sam Rayburn in recent years — but also a potential Vice Presidential nominee.

A study of Collins' record in public life reveals a man of deep religious and moral convictions who has been unusually successful in dampening the fires of racial tension in his home state.

'Qualities of the Spirit'

Collins was first elected Governor in 1954 after completing twelve years in the state house and senate. Inaugurated in 1955, he startled the people of Florida with some straight talk: "Progress in business, industry and human welfare can only go so far with a ward-heeling, back-scratching, self-promoting political system. . . . Government must have qualities of the spirit."

His first program to the legislature — three-quarters of which was approved — included the widest program of government reform ever proposed by a Florida governor. Successful measures included a new state development commission, repeal of Florida's "quackie" divorce law, a merit system for state employees, six new junior colleges, and an increase in teachers' pay.

Though a defender of states' rights, Collins warned local and state governments must tax properly and govern properly or Washington must step in. "If more people would be concerned with states' responsibilities instead of states' rights," he said, "there would be little loss of those rights."

'Moderate' on Race Issue

By 1956 racial tensions, stemming from the Supreme Court's 1954 school segregation decision, were becoming heated in Florida as elsewhere in the South. Collins ran for reelection as a moderate and swamped extremist opposition. He will not be eligible to run for reelection in 1960.

Collins has counseled Floridians against open defiance of the Supreme Court, saying that such defiance "is little short of rebellion or anarchy." He points with pride to Florida pupil placement laws, which he supported, that allow local school boards to decide when local conditions permit school integration. The first public school in Florida was integrated last September.

Collins has urged the legislature "never, never, never to pass a law under which a school can be closed (to avoid integration). When you close schools, you close people's minds and shut out progress." He has vetoed extremist pro-

segregation legislation.

The wave of Negro sit-down demonstrations which spread to Florida in early 1960 led Collins to make a major address to the people of Florida, urging moderation and level-headedness in the crisis. Collins said merchants had a right to serve whomever they wish, but that he considered it "unfair a morally wrong" to serve Negroes in some departments of a store but to refuse them service in others.

Collins has not limited his efforts on behalf of racial moderation to Florida. He un-

successfully called on President Eisenhower to call conferences of Southern leaders to meet with him on the subject of race relations, and was one of the governors seeking to mediate between Eisenhower and Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus in the 1957 Little Rock school controversy.

Governors Conference Leader

Collins served as chairman both of the Southern Governors Conference (1957-58) and the National Governors Conference (1958-59), gaining experience which will aid him as presiding officer at the Demo-

cratic National Convention. Collins urged both governors' groups to consider his plan for five-member educational adjustment commissions to be appointed by the president for each state, on recommendation of the state's governor, with the task of ordering desegregation "where and when feasible" or to protect areas from desegregation where conditions make it unfeasible.

Last year he headed a group of nine governors on a 30-day visit to the Soviet Union and interviewed Premier Nikita Khrushchev.

Collins was born in Tallahassee — the "old South" of Florida. In 1932 he married the great-granddaughter of an early territorial governor of the state, and they have four children. The oldest boy, an Annapolis graduate, is now on submarine duty with the Navy.

Collins has declared he is not a candidate for Vice President, but would accept the post if it were offered him. No organized movement in behalf of his candidacy has appeared, but the man who wins the Presidential nomi-

nation might well pick Collins as his running mate in a bow to the South.

Collins has often said a Southerner should not be deprived a place on the national ticket because of his locality, pointing to the many Southern Presidents in the early days of the republic. He warned recently, however, that "if the South wraps itself in a Confederate blanket and consumes itself in racial furor, it will bury itself politically for decades to come." (Copyright 1960, Congressional Quarterly Inc.)

WIFE PROTECTS HARE

Knoxville, Tenn. — Mrs. Myrtle Sweet was accidentally shot in the leg Tuesday when she stepped between her husband and a rabbit he intended to shoot. Mrs. Sweet, who suffered only a slight wound, said she just didn't want to see the little rabbit hurt.

Hubby Shed Shoes To Boot His Wife

Oakland, Calif. — Mrs. Anthony J. Kash Jr., said her husband thought it was all right to kick her if he took his shoes off first, but she disagreed. So did the judge. He granted her a divorce.

Scientists Driven Off Their Trolley

Washington — It's enough to send a scientist off his trolley. Two government agencies have decided to pack up and move and Washington, street cars make a share of the blame.

The coast and geodetic survey, which, through use of sensitive instruments, keeps its eye on earthquakes, complains the rumbling trolleys cause vibrations that jar the delicate seismograph. This agency, seeking a spot far from trolleys and other city noises, is planning to move to Dugway, Utah.

MAIL TRIBUNE, Medford, Or. Thursday, June 2, 1960

involved atomic research. Every time a trolley goes by, a half-mile from the research center, magnetic responses foul up the readings. The bureau has picked out a new spot in Gathersburg, Md.

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