

Church believes he has fair president chance

Friday Mar 19 1976

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IDAHO CITY — U.S. Sen.

Frank Church sincerely believes he has a fair chance for a shot at the presidency despite his late start.

Following his momentous announcement Thursday in the historic mining town of Idaho City some 45 miles northeast of Boise, Church left the impression he is a formidable candidate, not of the favorite son variety.

He lamented that he needed to delay his announcement because of his chairmanship of the Senate Select Committee to Investigate the Intelligence Agency but he left little doubt he is in the race to stay and win.

Church contended in informal talks at the Boise Airport when he arrived Wednesday night and again at the Boise Basque Center fund-raising gathering that he plans gaining momentum that could carry him the remainder of the campaign.

He points out four Democratic contenders already have dropped and a fifth, obviously meaning Sargent Shriver, is on the verge of doing so. It's also apparent that former U.S. Sen. Fred Harris of Oklahoma is running a losing race, although his supporters may dispute this. That leaves the present front runner, former Georgia Gov. Jimmy Carter, U.S. Sen. Morris Udall, of Arizona, U.S. Sen. Henry Jackson, of Washington State; and Alabama Gov. George Wallace.

Lurking in the background, of course, is U.S. Sen. Hubert Humphrey, of Minnesota, who barely lost the presidency to Richard Nixon in 1968.

Word in high political circles link California Gov. Jerry Brown with a plot of holding the California convention delegates, largest in the nation, for possible shifting to Humphrey.

Under this arrangement, Brown could then win the vice presidency nomination.

Church and others agree that Carter or any other contender will not have the majority when the Democratic National Convention convenes during the sweltering July days in New York City.

A stop Carter movement will now intensify but at least he has for all practical purposes

knocked Wallace out of serious contention. Wallace will not now be the formidable challenger it was once believed before the Florida and Illinois vote.

Church is scheduled to talk with Brown at Sacramento, Calif. during his current tour of the Pacific Coast and this is expected to be one of the main points. It is known that Church supporters if not Church himself are concerned. Church, it is known, had hoped to run strong in California but this is now shattered with the popular Brown entry.

From various viewpoints, the Church entry is a smart one.

He has received the full benefit of his committee investigation of the CIA, FBI and

IRS, disclosing their lawlessness in many respects, yet retaining credibility in their function if they are directed the way they were intended.

With this glare of publicity, he has gained national prominence, even though coming from such a small state as Idaho.

He is now a national figure, further enhanced as "Mr. Clean," known for integrity and honesty.

If he should fail in his bid for the presidency, it still gives him a tremendous boost for any 1980 reelection plan and it also serves as a springboard for any 1980 presidential race. It must be remembered that if Ford should win, he can only serve one four-year term, and the race would then be wide open.

The Post-Register

The political pulse

B-12

Idaho Falls Idaho, Friday, March 19, 1976



IDAHO CITY — Gov. Cecil D. Andrus stands with U.S. Sen. Frank Church after the latter announced for President here Thursday afternoon. (Post-Register staff photo)



BOISE — U.S. Sen. Frank Church and wife, Bethine, and sons Chase, University of Idaho freshman, and Forrest, minister at Boston, Mass. stand before a crowd of some 700 upon arrival at the Boise Airport Wednesday evening. (Post-Register staff photo)