Aide to Wallace Quits Post Amid Fund Drive Reports

MONTGOMERY, Ala., March 30 — Alabama's state highway director has abruptly resigned amid reports that top state officeholders have been under pressure to make personal contributions to the presidential campaign of Gov. George C. Wallace.

The director, Guerry Pruett, who was appointed by Governor Wallace, said he had resigned in a private letter to Governor Wallace.

"Out of respect to the office of the Governor," Mr. Pruett said in a statement, "I do not intend to release the contents of the letter unless it becomes necessary."

He added in the brief statement that he did not wish to be associated with the Wallace Administration "in any capacity."

Mr. Pruett, a professional engineer, served as highway director under two previous Governors.

Dinner Reported

The Montgomery Advertiser-Journal reported that a dinner was held at the Governor's mansion last Sunday at which 57 state officials and businessmen who had contracts with the state each made $1,500 personal contributions to Mr. Wallace.

The article by The Advertiser-Journal's editor and publisher, Harold E. Martin, said the money had been delivered personally to the Governor.

Mr. Pruett was reported to have refused to contribute. He wrote his letter of resignation two days after the dinner.

Mr. Martin wrote in a letter of resignation that personal contributions to the campaign of Gov. Wallace's brother, Gerald, and the State Finance Director, Taylor Hardin, "solicited state department heads last week, invited them to the dinner and told each of them to bring along $1,500 personal contribution for Wallace's Presidential campaign."

"The Governor had expected 100 persons, but only 57 showed up," the newspaper said.

Denial by Hardin

Mr. Hardin denied that he or his office had anything to do with the dinner.

Mr. Martin also quoted an unidentified state official as having said that the state finance office had been telling contractors "how much to donate to Wallace's Presidential campaign before they receive a state contract."

In Wisconsin today, Mr. Wallace acknowledged that a banquet had been held but said that "the people had already contributed to the campaign."

Commenting on the Advertiser-Journal report, Mr. Wallace said, "That is just a local paper that's always on me." He said he was not sure whether the names of those who attended Sunday's dinner were on a list of contributors he made public yesterday.

The list contained the names of about 30,000 persons who had contributed $727,000 since March of 1983. None of the major contributors listed by Mr. Wallace was known to political observers in Montgomery.