

November 27, 1964

MISS. CONGRESSMAN WANTS ONE PARTY GOVT.

WEST POINT, MISSISSIPPI - A Mississippi Congressman said here November 19 he opposed the two-party system.

Representative Thomas Abernathy of the First Congressional District said "My going back to congress is not nearly as important to me as preserving our present system of government. A two party system" Abernathy said "brings many problems.

Abernathy has been in Congress since 1942 and is fifth and second ranking member respectively of the important House Committees on Agriculture and the District of Columbia. He is one of a group of a Southern conservative congressmen expected to be a target of an all-out drive to deprive them of seniority in the Democratic caucus and hence remove them from their important committee posts.

Lawrence Guyot, State Chairman of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) - the group that challenged this state's all-white regular Democratic delegation at the National Democratic Convention - said here "it is little wonder that Rep. Abernathy cherishes the one-party system. The exclusion of 42% of the state's population from the political process is what Abernathy really means by the one-party system. The denial of voting rights to Negroes is what has enabled Abernathy and all the Mississippi congressmen and senators to remain in office and to gain influence in Congress," Guyot said.

"From such positions," the MFDP chief added, "they have been able to halt any and all progressive legislation." Guyot said Abernathy prevented Negroes from voting in Mississippi, and, through his membership on the House District of Columbia Committee, prevented home rule for the District where Negroes are 52% of the population.