

Church plans on active foreign panel role

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. Frank Church, D-Idaho; elevated to chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is certain of breathing new life to a committee which has been languishing under the aged and ailing 78-year-old Sen. John Sparkman, D-Ala.

Church, now 54, plans an active role in foreign affairs which may not necessarily conform to what President Carter wants.

Church said he doesn't want the panel, which originated Dec. 10, 1816, to merely react to world events.

He hopes instead to develop an active diplomatic advisory for the committee.

"The writ of the committee calls for it to report to the Senate from time to time on major foreign policy questions," Church said.

Church said he sees such major issues as closer U.S. relations with oil-rich Mexico, a peace-making role in the Middle East, a new stance with Red China and Taiwan, a shift in positions in Iran and bolstering the lagging position of the U.S. in world commerce.

Church, however, has underscored the importance of the committee in the field of economy.

He pointed out the International Sugar Agreement now reposing in his committee can be used as a leverage for seeking to save the Idaho sugar-beet industry from collapse.

Church observes the commit-



Sen. Frank Church (D-Ida.)

tee also will have a powerful voice in similar international trade and business that will help Idaho.

Idaho remains first along such lines," he said.

The 15-member committee has taken on a more conservative tinge with new members, Edward Zorinsky, D-Neb., Richard Lugar, R-Ind., and S. Hayakawa, R-Calif., but Church himself is also veering more conservative and his chairmanship might make this movement accelerate.

Thanks Idahoans

Church said that he is "grateful to the people of Idaho for their backing through the years, which has made it possible for me to assume the chairmanship of one of the Senate's oldest and most influential committees, with a history which dates back to 1816."

The new post, the Idaho

senator said, "means added duties, but also enlarged opportunities of benefit to Idaho."

"Besides broad issues of concern to all Americans, including Idahoans — the decline of the dollar, the nuclear arms race, the hijacked price of foreign oil — Idaho farmers have a special stake in our foreign trade since they are among the world's most efficient producers of food and fiber," Church said.

Church noted he has demonstrated that he will not hesitate to use his power on the Foreign Relations Committee to benefit his state. As chairman of the Subcommittee on Foreign Economic Policy, he has refused to allow the International Sugar Agreement to be ratified by the Senate until a domestic sugar program is in place. Last year, he delayed ratification of a new tax treaty with Great Britain until the

votes could be secured to strip out of it a provision that would have limited the ability of individual states such as Idaho to tax foreign corporations doing business within the state.

His effort was opposed by the Administration and giant multinational corporations, but supported by state tax officials and farm organizations.

"In the end, we won," noted Church, adding that his power as chairman of the full committee "will be even greater when it comes to protecting Idaho farmers and other sectors of the economy involved in foreign trade."

Helps aged

In succeeding to the helm of the Foreign Relations Committee, Church relinquished the chairmanship of the Senate Committee on Aging, which he has headed since Jan. 22, 1971. He will remain, however, as the ranking member of the Aging Committee. In addition, he remains the ranking member of the Senate Committee on

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Energy and Natural Resources, and will continue to chair its subcommittee on energy research and development the key panel that deals with the operations of the vast Idaho National Engineering Laboratory.

For Church, election to the Foreign Relations chairmanship fulfills an ambition held since boyhood, when he came to admire Republican Senator William E. Borah of Idaho, who served as chairman of the committee during the 1920's and early 1930's.

The Idaho senator said, "Borah was a boyhood hero to me, and I followed his career, read his speeches, and admired him greatly. Because Borah was a senator, I wanted to be a senator. Because Borah was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, I wanted one day to follow in his footsteps. It doesn't come to many people in this life to have an ambition they've nurtured since childhood come true."