

McClure predicts tight presidential, senatorial contests

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U.S. Sen. James A. McClure, R-Idaho, himself a fortunate noncontender in the 1980 elections, views the presidential race and the Idaho U.S. senatorial race as close.

Pinned down to make a choice, McClure said he would give Republican Ronald Reagan an edge over Democratic President Jimmy Carter, but said the senatorial donnybrook between Democrat Sen. Frank Church and Republican Steve Symms "is too close to call."

In a Post-Register interview, McClure said he felt Republican George V. Hansen has a decided edge over Jim Jones for the congressional nomination.

Church vs. Symms

McClure noted Church has raised over a million dollars while Symms has not raised as much, but the amount to be spent by the two will set a new campaign cost record.

McClure observed that much of this money is from outside the state, adding "I regret this."

The Idaho senator also commented that he has never seen Church as "vitriolic in a campaign."

The Post-Register The political pulse

Idaho Falls, Idaho, Wednesday, May 21, 1980

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"He hasn't gotten as personal in other Senate campaigns as he has in this," McClure said.

"I don't like to see such a campaign of 'the senator of Israel versus the senator of Exxon', referring to charges that Church is backed heavily by the Jewish forces, while Symms is supported generously by the oil interests.

McClure said he doesn't see Hansen in danger for the primary, but acknowledged there could be a heavy Democratic and independent vote balloting for Jones in the Republican primary because of lack of contests on the Democratic ballot.

Conservative trend

McClure said there appears to be a strong conservative trend throughout the nation, adding "more and more people are dissatisfied. We will see if the political institutions or the special

interest groups will prevail. This trend is stronger than in the past.

Politicians will find to their dismay that the demand of special interest is no longer powerful. It is the general view to reduce size of government and the costs."

Carter

McClure said Carter appears to be balancing the budget, but this is done by raising the budget \$100 billion, through what he called "bracket creep", where wage earners' income is inflated and they pay a higher tax at a higher income bracket.

McClure added people want lower taxation and lower interest rates and a condition where people are encouraged to work, rather than pay much of their income in taxes.

McClure said the Social Security system is in a shambles and

needs to be restructured so that it will be able to keep its promise to repay the participant.

McClure said the present system will not generate enough money to pay.

Issues

The most pressing issues this country faces, said McClure, are energy self sufficiency, military capability and economic conditions.

President Carter is not handling the situation well, said McClure, adding the president is too inconsistent.

"He talks one way and does something different" was the way McClure put it.

On the Iranian crisis, McClure said he had always advocated a strong hand. Much of this has come too late and this nation has now lost the warm support of its allies. He said last January the Western allies would have supported strong sanctions.

"Iran now becomes primarily an American problem, rather than an international one," McClure said.

Iran rescue

McClure lamented the failure of the aborted attempt to rescue

the American hostages, saying "it is a great blow against us."

McClure said he was interested in the comment of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who said the mistake was made when President Carter required a check on progress of the raid. McClure said Kissinger said the American force should have been committed to go all the way and attempt the rescue, without need of getting further authority from the president.

In other matters, McClure said he felt the food stamp program is badly administered and is losing \$600 million a year; that he doesn't anticipate early release of the American hostages in Iran; that he warmly supports the Palisades power hydroelectric project, because it has unified support of the governor and legislature, but that he does not see any action this year because of objections of the

District Electrification Association marketing distribution; and that he opposes transfer of water from the Upper Snake River Valley to Salmon Falls as a matter of principle.

McClure will return to East Idaho to serve as the key speaker at the Fishermen's Breakfast at St. Anthony Friday morning.

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