Andrus tenders resignation in his farewell appearance

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BOISE— Idaho Gov. Cecil B. Andrus tendered his resignation Monday in his farewell appearance in Idaho, first to Senate President Pro Tem Phil Batt, then House Speaker Allan F. Larsen.

After Andrus gave his resignation to Batt, the Republican senator from Wilder said, "I guess I have to accept it, but I don't know if I approve." He later explained, of course, "we have no other alternative but to accept the resignation, but it is with regret."

Andrus then crossed the rotunda to tender his resignation to Rep. Larsen, R-Blackfoot. Larson replied, "I am sorry to see this, but I guess we will need to accept it."

While in speaker's office, a clerk, who is obviously new, asked, "May I say who is calling on him," when Gov. Andrus asked to see Larsen. The clerk later came back in a flustered way saying to Andrus, "Of course I knew who you were."

The resignation was in a brief three paragraph letter explaining Adnrus had been nominated and confirmed as U.S. secretary of interior.

The resignation letter said, "as I have expressed, I took this action only after serious consideration and reflection. I have thoroughly enjoyed my tenure as your governor and I value the friendships we have formed. I am hopeful you will extend the same courtesies and cooperation to Governor Evans that I have enjoyed in order that the beneficiaries will continue to be the people of Idaho."

In an interview with this writer, the governor said almost any issues in the Department of Secretary of Interior will affect Idaho.

He pointed out that the department will deal in all phases of water, land and Bureau of Indian affairs, as well as many other western states issues.

"All of these are of vital importance and they will have a direct impact on Idaho." Andrus said there has been no official decision made regarding the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) coming under the Interior Department; however, he added, this and other matters relating to energy appear to be headed for the newly created Department of Energy under John Schlesinger, former AEC chairman.

Andrus pointed out that the present fee for animal units per month (AUM) has been frozen for a year. This is an issue which is highly controversial in Idaho at present. He said, however, he will look into this to see what can be done when possible, in view of the depressed livestock price. He indicated he would want to lower the fee.

"I leave Idaho with a great deal of regret, but I look forward to my new job. I look foward to the challenge and I approach this position with confidence and enthusiasm."

Andrus pointed out his administrative staff is made up of 160 people, but that he plans to reduce this by some 25 per cent, including the elimination of two assistant secretaries.

Monday the governor was engaged in cleaning out his Boise office and took a room to the rear of the present governor's office to complete some work. He plans to return to Washington, D.C., Tuesday afternoon.

He said he would return to Idaho from time to time and is the scheduled speaker for the Jefferson-Jackson Day banquet in Boise Feb. 19.

Andrus said he will follow a policy of evenness between natural resource development and the environment. In the way of natural resource development, it must meet department criteria so that it will not destroy the environment, he said. But in any event where there is a decision between environment and natural resource development, he said he will decide in favor of the environment.

Andrus said President Carter has given him a free hand in making policy decisions in his department.