The election eye...

Andrus is the hottest future political package in Idaho

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The latest news that Secretary of Interior Cecil Andrus has accepted a part-time position as a member of the Synthetic Fuels Corp., a federally chartered but privately directed concern to seek energy independence for the nation, poses interesting ramifications in Idaho political circles.

The appointment gave Andrus another propitious opportunity to reaffirm he is returning near the first of the year to Idaho which he fondly calls "the pristine state" where he wants to live.

Unlike most politicians, Andrus has not fallen in love with the city along the Potomac River. His job, which entails so many controversial subjects, has taken their toll as witness by his thinning hair turning gray. He is only 49, for example, while his close friend who now occupies the governor's chair, John V. Evans, is 54, yet looks considerably younger. Both, however, are men of considerable vigor. They both are outstanding Idaho political powers and between the two could control the governor's chair for at least the next decade or more.

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Reams of copy will be written about Andrus and the possibility that he might run for governor. This can be discounted. Andrus will never oppose Evans unless some political catastrophe — which doesn't appear in the future at this time — would make Evans a political liability. As long as Evans wants to continue as governor — and he has left no doubt that he does — Andrus in his own words will watch from the sidelines and consider his options.

In answer to a question about gubernatorial aspirations in 1982, Andrus said definitely not. Unlike most political office holders, the record shows Andrus keeps his word and means what he says.. It's what has made him so popular in Idaho as a governor.

The best guess now is that Andrus will accept some lucrative position in private industry in Idaho, at the same time looking in the future political sector.

Not even President Carter could persuade him to stay on as secretary of interior, even if he should be re-elected and that possibility grows stronger every day.

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Andus won the gubernatorial nomination in 1966 but lost the general election to Republican Don Samuelson. Four years later, Andrus nosed out the bumbling Samuelson by a narrow margin of only 11,000 votes. Andrus stumbled in the first two years of his office but then performed so auspiciously that he won in a landslide 71-26 percent over the then formidable Republican Lt. Gov. Jack Murphy. Andrus carried 43 out of the 44 counties, losing only Lemhi by a narrow margin.

At the height of his popularity, Andrus accepted the secretary of interior position in 1976. Although many cabinet heads have rolled, Andrus was never in any danger during the four-year tenure.

follow in succeeding Andrus as governor. Yet, he carries the conservative image that is popular in Idaho. He has made no serious mistakes, is a down-to-earth executive who knows his people. If he should continue in that role he would be odds on favorite to win re-election in 1982.

Now back to Andrus.

He has said he doesn't like Washington which obviously would preclude him from seeking a congressional or senatorial seat.

Yet, it is not that simple. As a senator, Andrus would represent Idaho, finding his homestate connections more to his liking. It is unlikely he would want to run for Congress, but if he did it possibly would be in the 1st District.

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tional policies in the current senatorial campaign by calling for defeat of his colleague, Democratic U.S. Sen. Frank Church. U.S. senators of different parties in the same state generally follow a party line speaking well of their own party candidates but seldom against their colleagues. Church followed this policy in all the years he has served in the Senate, never directly criticizing Republican Sens. Henry Dworshak, Len Jordan or McClure during their campaigns. In fact, he was on warm terms with Dworshak and Jordan.

McClure has now alienated many who liked both him and Church. He also may have lost many moderate voters who could accept him but not the more rightists Symms or Congressman George Hansen. It

Post-Register photo

Making his point

SECRETARY OF INTERIOR Cecil D. Andrus is shown in one of his characteristic speaking poses while addressing an Idaho audience. He plans to resign his present post and return to Idaho near the first of the year, regardless of whether President Carter is re-elected or not.