

Symms favors limitations on Idaho wilderness area

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Rep. Steve Symms, R-Idaho, a potential challenger to Democrat Sen. Frank Church, said in a Post-Register interview he favors what he calls a "cap" on Idaho wilderness area.

Symms suggests a limit, of say, 3.5 million acres of wilderness in Idaho, but his figure is flexible and could be changed to less or more, depending on merits.

He said after this limit is established, then for every acre the federal government takes the state should be given two acres in return.

Symms also took exception to an Associated Press story which indicated he and Church were diametrically opposed on Idaho wilderness when he appeared before Church's subcommittee in a hearing on the River of No Return Primitive Area at Boise recently.

Symms pointed out that while he favors less wilderness, Church has not announced any acreage preference. Church said he sponsored all three bills to give people a chance to air their views and has suggested instead compromises, possibly taking portions of all three

proposals.

The proposals listed 2.3 million acres backed by environmentalists, 1.3 million acres endorsed by the Idaho Forestry Council and 1.9 million acres recommended by President Carter.

Symms said he leaned for a 1.4 million acre proposal for the Idaho Primitive Area but this figure is flexible and could even be increased to 1.8 million.

"A shudder to think that more than 10 millions acres be designated wilderness in Idaho.

"We must be careful that we don't unduly hamper mining and lumbering development in Idaho," he said.

Symms agrees members of the Idaho congressional delegation, Gov. John V. Evans and other leaders should get together to agree on how much wilderness should be designated and thus present a united Idaho front.

He said he doesn't believe there are insurmountable differences among them.

"We have got to know how many acres should go for wilderness and how much should go for multiple use," he said.

Although Symms said there appears no vast differences with Church on Idaho wilder-

ness, this is not the case on a wide range of domestic and foreign policies.

His sharpest disagreements are on the SALT II and Panama Canal treaties and any form of gasoline rationing which he fervently opposes.

Symms pointed out the House sentiment appears to be growing against voting funds for the Panama Canal transfer. On a rule vote, the House narrowly defeated as amendment a opposed by the Carter administration. He said he backs a bill introduced by Idaho U.S. Rep. George Hansen to block the fund transfer.

Symms contended the Panama transfer would cost \$4,100,000,000, not just a few million as the Carter administration says.

Symms also said he doesn't trust the Russians on treaties, adding the present treaty would give the USSR a superiority in weapons.

"The Russians," he said, "have a long record for breaking treaties. They cheat and they steal."

Instead, he said, if the Russians want to engage in an arms race, this nation has the capacity and expertise to outstrip the Russians on all types of weapons.

"We can sell our system and try to get people under this free market system," said Symms. Everyone envies us". Symms then pointed out how the Russians are seeking to undercut the United States in other foreign nations, citing Iran as a case in point. There, the USSR appears to have replaced the United States as the dominant foreign power.

"Our foreign policy appears to be a white flag of surrender," he said.

Symms, advocates a stiffer front to the USSR so that this nation can assert its superiority.

Symms warmly backed decontrol of gasoline prices so the price can find its position in the open market.

He said he opposes any form of gasoline rationing and allocation, adding, "I have faith in our free enterprise system that has made the United States the leading nation of the world."

He complained this nation is subsidizing foreign nations by paying exorbitant prices for imported gasoline.

The "profit and loss system," he said, would solve many energy marketing problems.

He warmly backed gasohol and other alternative sources of energy.