Delegate reports Social Security supported

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Mrs. Fred (Yoshi) Ochi, one of two Idaho Falls woman to attend the 1981 White House Conference on Aging at Washington last week, said Tuesday the vast majority of delegates left little doubt they wanted to see that Social Security gives retirement benefits to the aged.

She said 600 resolutions were submitted, which the 2,200 delegates will vote on by mail within 60 days.

Mrs. Ochi deplored what she called the distortions of the news media, particularly by national television which sensationalized the controversies and exaggered the differences among the various groups.

"I was very disillusioned in Washington to see some of the news reports on the conference," said Mrs. Ochi following her return to Idaho Falls. "It was obvious they didn't do any acurate investigations and made their own conclusions."

She said she saw one television show, "Washington in Review" Sunday morning which were distortions and inaccuracies of the happenings that did take place.

"All they gave," said Mrs. Ochi, "were smatterings of the news which showed only negative sides of the conference. They wanted to create sensationalism and relied on the views of the dissidents."

She also blamed 81-year-old Democratic Rep. Claude Pepper, chairman of the House Committee on Aging, "for fanning emotions of the people who were not delegates."

Mrs. Ochi was one of 11 delegates from Idaho and one of two from east Idaho. The other east Idaho delegate, Mrs. Marilyn Stanger, Idaho Falls, continued to Rochester, N.Y., to visit her son, Ronald and family, and will not return until near end of the month.

Mrs. Ochi had been appointed by Gov. John V. Evans and Mrs. Stanger was named by Sen. Steve Symms.

"We were very productive," she said of the delegates, adding "maybe we were overproductive as we came out with 600 resolutions. I thought that was far too many. The committee I worked on drafted only 16 resolutions but that was plenty. We had so many resolutions we ran out of time to vote on them.

"I don't think it was good to have so many resolutions. We are supposed to set examples for our children, yet we do such things as this."

Mrs. Ochi said most of the resolutions were in support of strengthening but not necessarily expanding the Social Security System.

She said she did not agree with Pepper's proposal for doubling the amount of Social Security.

She said President Reagan was accorded repeated applause and most of the delegates were gratified at his pledge to keep the heart of the pension system intact.

"I don't think he would go back on his promise after appearing before this conference after making such statements," said Mrs. Ochi.

Mrs. Ochi said security was tight and only committee members with credentials were allowed to enter committee sessions. She said her own committee—research—was her first choice. Mrs. Stanger was a a member of the economy committee, also her first choice.

In all there were 14 committees. Mrs. Ochi said the committees worked from early morning until late at night during the four days of the conference.

Mrs. Ochi said it was necessary to seek to consolidate resolutions in her own committee but many other committees apparently did not do this.

Mrs. Ochi said among the important resolutions approved by her committee were those calling for more extensive reseach into the cause for senility, pointing out improper nutrition often is a contributing cause.

Another favored research to show that it is more more desirable and cheaper to keep the elderly in their own homes, rather than in nursing homes.

She also said tax incentives were favored for families who take care of relatives.

Resolutions recommending research in behavioral areas also were backed.

"Among the main topics," said Mrs. Ochi, "was using the rich resources of the elderly for volunteer work. It would give them something worthy to do in their retirement."

She also said there was almost unanimous opposition to mandatory retirement except for those who are unable to work for health reason.

Mrs. Ochi said there was a fire in the Sheraton Wasington Hotel second floor where she was staying but it turned out to be a trash fire and it was quickly extinguished.