

Symms feels changing times to bring win

By BEN J. PLASTINO
Post-Register political editor

U.S. Rep. Steve Symms, appearing as a virtual U.S. Senate candidate, said here Friday afternoon that the changing times to conservatism has convinced him he can score a victory of Democrat U.S. Sen. Frank Church in 1980.

Symms, who was here to attend the annual Fishermen's breakfast at St. Anthony, and also was a dinner guest of East Idaho Republicans Friday night, acknowledged he is "making preparations now to announce for the Senate."

"Right now," he said, "the chances are more likely I will be a candidate for the Senate rather than the House."

He left the door open, however, by saying that until he announces for the Senate "no one can be sure what I will do."

If he does announce it likely will not be "until later in the year," explaining he wants to stay in the role of a congressman rather than as a candidate

for as long as possible. He added the prospective House candidates in the First District will have a good idea soon whether he will run or not for the Senate.

Other candidates

Among the prospective Republicans seeking to replace him in the House are former Attorney General Wayne L. Kidwell, State Rep. Larry Craig, Midvale; C. L. "Butch" Otter, Boise, a 1978 gubernatorial candidate and former state representative, Theron Nelson, Jerome optometrist, and Lt. Gov. Phil Batt.

Symms said he would welcome a primary contest as it would engender more interest. The two mentioned as most interested are Sen. Dean Van Engelen, Burley, and Jim Jones, Jerome, who opposed Rep. George Hansen in 1978.

Asked why he thought he could defeat Church when Hansen in 1968 was beaten by a decisive 60-40 percent majority, Symms said times have

changed.

"Since that time," he said, "we had our hands full from the impact of the Great Society on the American people. Now a dollar is worth less than in 1968 and it is depreciating rapidly; gasoline lines are long, caused by government interference, and there is opposition to the Panama Canal giveaway and Salt II treaties."

He pointed to the conservative victories of Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain and Joe Clark in Canada as a significant sign of the times.

Social experiments

He said they won because the social experiments were not working there and they were causing a lower standard of living.

"The mainstream of thinking is conservatism as opposed to liberals," he said. "It is more difficult to see the liberal point of view."

"In 1968, we were fighting an unpopular war in Vietnam in the worst way possible. We spend money and bled and then lost the war. We were superior to the USSR but now we are not. We are relying on foreign sources for oil and other goods.

"I think this is the year to separate Church from state, it's as good as any year."

"My mother didn't raise me

The Post-Register

The political pulse

Idaho Falls, Idaho, Sunday, May 27, 1979

A-5

to be a fool. I'm more encouraged now than ever before to run. I'm going around the state. I will have a big force to help me do the job. I'll be on the offensive."

He pointed out he shook 5,000 hands in St. Anthony Friday as a starter, adding "I love to campaign. I have more physical endurance than anybody."

Take risk

"My big motivation is to take the risk because I know I would be safe for re-election. The Republicans have a good chance to win control of the Senate by winning either 9 or 10 seats."

Senate election

He pointed out there will be 34 senators up for re-election, 24 Democrats and 10 Republicans, in 1980.

He acknowledged that the chances for Republican control of the House would be much

more difficult as most Democrat incumbents are well entrenched.

Symms said Republican control would propel Idaho Sen. James A. McClure to chairmanship of the Senate Natural Resources and Interior Committee, something he would love to see.

In his wide-reaching Post-Register interview, he spoke strongly against the SALT II treaties as giving superiority to USSR, preferring instead an arms race; against the Panama Canal transfer and particularly against spending \$4,111,000 to do this, and on all front to give the free enterprise system an opportunity to work.

He vigorously opposed a gasoline rationing plan, insisting the loss and profit system would eliminate the need for such rationing.

He recommended some 3.5 million acres for wilderness with emphasis on developing mining and lumbering industries.

He left Saturday morning for Washington from Idaho Falls.