

The national scene . . .

Hansen emotional ploy seen as bid for money

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Why the irrepressible Rep. George V. Hansen is reviving and promoting emotional issues at this time can only mean one answer — money.

Hansen's powerful showing in the 1978 elections over Democrat Stan Kress indicates he appears safe for future re-elections unless he slips badly on some issue — and that does not appear the case at this time.

In the 1978 elections, he drubbed Kress by 20,551 votes, or 80,591 to 60,040, about a 57 percent majority. This was in sharp contrast to 1976, when he squeaked by with only 1,928 votes of some 167,000 cast.

After serving three terms or more, incumbents can be considered entrenched, except for some gross factor. This nearly happened in 1976 when Hansen was fined for violating campaign financing laws.

Hansen's campaign fund is in excellent shape. He started with a slight deficit but his contributions were so excellent that he paid off the debt in the 1976 campaign and finished in the black for the 1978 campaign. He spent very little in the primary against Jim Jones.

His troubles, however, are the huge personal debt which he said he incurred from "dirty tricks." These involved fees for attorneys, accountants, travel and others to defend himself against the finance disclosure violations, late income tax reporting and charges of irregularities in his campaign fund.

The Federal Election Commission ruled Hansen can't conduct such a personal campaign, so his faithful wife, Connie, took up the battle.

This campaign was suspended during the 1978 contests, with Jones in the primary and with Kress in the general, but likely may be resumed.

Hansen's personal debts are reported to range upwards of \$300,000, and Hansen had never denied nor confirmed this.

Mrs. Hansen has refused to give the debt amount and repeated inquiries of Hansen only elicited the reply that it's his wife's campaign.

The Hansens insist that such matters are their own personal business, but the fact they are asking contributions from the people would dispute this. The contributors have every right to know to what they are contributing and where it is going to be spent. A renewed call for contributions is expected to be pressed soon.

This type of contribution does not come under the strict campaign disclosure laws of the Federal Election Commission or other governmental regulatory bodies.

Hansen has always shown a penchant for whipping up flimsy emotional issues, even when he doesn't have to.

His latest thrust is in revival of his feud with the Internal Revenue Service when he gave a talk Feb. 19 to the U. S. House of Representatives, saying that the IRS had planned an armed search of citizens in the Upper Snake River Valley in 1975.

Copies of his talk were disseminated by some of his supporters last week, but the charges contain nothing that wasn't reported during the 1978 campaign, particularly a hearing in Idaho Falls in January, 1978.

Hansen vowed to press an investigation in Congress then, but nothing has happened in more than a year, until his latest outburst. Philip Sansotta, Boise, Idaho IRS director, said he could not respond until he received a written letter from Hansen on specific charges. As it developed, this issue was barely mentioned during the 1978 campaign with Kress.

Hansen has also promoted other emotional issues, such as seeking to stop payment of money for implementing transfer of the Panama Canal; and the continual fight with OSHA, ERA and Right-to Work, among others.

Only last week he dramatized

his appropriation fight against Panama Canal by driving a flatbed truck to Denver, Colo., with golden painted lumber which was supposed to represent the \$4.2 billion in bullion he said is the pricetag Congress must pay for the canal transfer. Such a stunt can only weaken his efforts in Congress.

He has publicized charges that organized labor has targeted him for defeat in 1980 but even labor must know he is

hardly vulnerable for ouster.

Most political observers, including this one, who has been around the political scene about as long as anyone, view Hansen as in no danger of losing at this time. In fact, there isn't even a serious opponent mentioned, Republican or Democrat.

Hansen doesn't need any emotional issues, and if, clumsily handled, they could bring counter results.

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