

Hill Record Defended in Albert Talk

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House Speaker Carl Albert defended Congress' legislative record yesterday and said President Nixon's criticism of it was an attempt to obscure the administration's own failures.

In a nationwide radio address responding to Mr. Nixon's latest attack, Albert said Congress has compiled an impressive record so far this year and will improve on it before adjourning.

"The President does not have a monopoly on wisdom or on a commitment to serve the nation's business," said Albert. "Congress is doing and will continue to do its part in moving the legislative program forward."

Albert's speech was the Democrats' reply to a second State of the Union message by Mr. Nixon Sept. 10. Mr. Nixon preceded delivery of his written message to Congress with a nationwide radio broadcast.

Mr. Nixon had said Congress' performance was disappointing, particularly in regard to 50 measures proposed by the administration.

Albert said 40 of the 50 priority items were already in the legislative process when Mr. Nixon set up the message and that half of them have passed one or both houses of

Congress. And the message itself, he said, "contained an embarrassing lack of new initiatives."

It is Congress that has taken the lead, Albert said, in trying to deal with the major problems facing the nation in the areas of the economy, health, energy and crime.

"Congress granted the President some of the most sweeping economic powers a Congress can confer upon a President," he said. "Because the President was slow to act, the cost of living is up 8 per cent compared with 3.4 per cent for all of 1972."

The administration's shifts from control to decontrol to reconcontrol of prices have provided no relief from inflation, Albert said, and price increases are now plaguing nearly every American family.

"Congress has helped by increasing Social Security benefits, expanding farm production to eliminate shortages and guaranteeing children a hot nutritious meal at school," he said.

And it is Congress, not Mr. Nixon, he said, that is doing something effective about holding down federal spending.

"Congress has cut President Nixon's budget requests by more than \$20 billion over the past four years," he said. "Despite that, the President's first four budgets added an incredible \$97 billion to the national debt. That totals up 20 per cent of the national debt accumulated in just four years."

In its efforts to provide health care services for the nation, Albert said, Congress has been thwarted by presidential vetoes and budget cutbacks.