

Sen. Byrd Hits Nixon Aide Stein

By Stephen Green

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Sen. Harry F. Byrd (Ind.-Va.) yesterday accused presidential economic adviser Herbert Stein of making the American people the "scapegoat" for the government's failure to control inflation.

In a speech on the Senate floor, Byrd described as "remarkable" Stein's comment on Sunday that inflation has been due to the reluctance of the public to tolerate tax increases. Stein is chairman of President Nixon's Council of Economic Advisers.

"One finds it difficult to determine whether to be amused or to be aggravated by Stein's assessment," said Byrd a fiscal conservative.

He charged that Stein was "wandering around trying to find a scapegoat" for inflation, now some 12 per cent a year, and "decided to blame it on the American people."

"I don't think John Public has to hang down his or her head," Byrd said. "What needs to be done is for policymakers in Washington to return to some sound financial princi-

ples. Until that is done, American people will continue to suffer from inflation," he said.

Byrd said "inflation has been encouraged and indeed, brought about to a considerable extent by the policies of government, itself, by the continued and accelerated deficit spending of the federal budget. I think Dr. Stein, instead of blaming the American people for this fantastic inflation our country now has, would do well to talk with some of his colleagues and try to change their views," Byrd declared. He said that President Nixon never has submitted a balanced budget to Congress.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.), congratulating Byrd on his speech, said that "in all candor, nothing has been done by the administration or Congress" to fight inflation.

Mansfield added, "I do find fault in people who say the American public is to blame." The majority leader said "all we get" from Stein "is pious invocations that we return to old-time religion. Does that mean we should just pray and inflation will go away?"

Mansfield urged President Nixon to call a White House conference on the economy to be attended by representatives of Congress, the administration, labor and industry.

Senate Minority Whip Robert P. Griffin (R-Mich.) said, "I don't necessarily rise as defense counsel for Dr. Stein," as he also commended Byrd for his speech. "I think the thrust of his (Byrd's) remarks are greatly needed to help educate the American people" Griffin said.