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Senior Citizen's Group Charges 'Lie' in Nixon Election Pamphlet

By LAURIE JOHNSTON

Stung by President Nixon's Oct. 30 veto of a bill to extend the Older Americans Act, the National Council of Senior Citizens accused the Administration yesterday of "a cynical campaign of trickery and outright propaganda" directed at older voters.

Local and national officers of the three-million-member organization — which calls itself "nonpartisan but not non-political"—charged at a news conference that Nixon Administration was taking credit for legislation "that it has consistently opposed or that has never passed at all."

Nelson H. Cruikshank, national president of the Senior Citizens group, described as "a downright lie" a statement in a campaign pamphlet issued by the Committee for the Re-election of the President. The pamphlet, entitled "The President Cares," describes how "President Nixon found . . . he could affect health benefits" and says: "The \$5.80 monthly premium for Medicare is henceforth to be paid for by the Government—worth another \$1.5-billion to the nation's elderly."

Mr. Cruikshank called this "a real killer when it comes to distortions and half-truths because it was never enacted."

Contention Confirmed

Albert Bernzweig, regional public affairs officer for the Social Security System, confirmed later that this provision had been "knocked out of H.R. 1" and was not in the final version of the bill signed by the President.

Mr. Cruikshank noted that the same pamphlet said that "under President Nixon, benefits in social security increased 51 per cent in three and a half and charged that the President had "opposed most of the increases every step of the way."

"If we had listened to Nixon," Mr. Cruikshank said, "the total increase would have been only 18 per cent since he took office. It would be lower than the cost-of-living increases during the Nixon years."

Mr. Cruikshank said other "false claims for benefits to the elderly" were being made on behalf of Mr. Nixon in "a saturation of cynical television commercials" and in a "self-serving message" enclosed Oct. 3 with the first increased checks to 28 million people receiving Social Security.

Propaganda Cited

Walter Newburgher, vice president of the Senior citizens council and head of the local Congress of Senior Citizens, which say it has 250,000 members, elaborated on recent reports that "the elderly are being inundated with campaign propaganda disguised as reports from Government agencies."

The council's decision to set up "truth squads to blow the whistle on some of the propaganda" was stimulated by the veto of extension of the Older Americans Act when Congress had already adjourned, according to participants in the news conference.