

ST. Almond 20 Sept 72
Social Security Boost He Opposed

Flap Over Nixon 'Taking Credit'

Washington

Democratic Senators charged yesterday that Social Security checks to be mailed to 28 million recipients on October 3, one month before the election, will include a printed note giving President Nixon credit for the 20 per cent boost in benefits — despite the fact that the administration actively opposed the 20 per cent and favored holding it down to 5 per cent.

notes from including any direct reference to Mr. Nixon, lest it allow the President to take credit for the increase at a time when he is running for re-election.

But the Social Security administration said the use of such notes is traditional, non-partisan and not intended in any way to boost one candidate or another. A spokesman said inclusion of such notes dated back throughout the whole post-war era, although the use of the President's name on them had started only in 1954, when Dwight Eisenhower was President.

BLOCKED

Church was joined in his protest by Senators Abraham Ribicoff (Dem. Conn.), Alan Cranston (Dem. Calif.) and

John Tunney (Dem. Calif.), but Republicans blocked any action on his resolution.

"When 28 million Social Security increases are mailed out next month, the government envelopes should not contain a personal message from President Nixon because President Nixon vigorously opposed the increases," said Ribicoff.

The envelopes containing the checks to be received October 3 are scheduled to include the following notice: "Your Social Security payment has been increased by 20 per cent, starting with this month's check, by a new statute enacted by the Congress and signed into law by President Richard M. Nixon on July 1, 1972.

"The President also

signed into law a provision which will allow your Social Security benefits to create automatically if the cost of living goes up. Automatic benefit increases will be added to your check in future years according to the conditions set out in the law."

'DUPLICITY'

Church called this "a shameless attempt to create the impression that somehow the 20 per cent increase is the result of presidential leadership." Tunney called it "duplicity."

But a Social Security spokesman said such notices had been sent out under Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon previously — though this is the first time

since 1950 that the notice is to be received just before an election. On all the other occasions, said the spokesman, the increases were enacted either well before or well after election day. This increase just happened to be enacted at a time when October 3 was the first available check in which to include the notices.

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