

Verdict Sealed in ABM Fight

Washington (AP) - President Nixon's Safeguard antiballistic missile (ABM) defense system won a third Senate test today. Its backers defeated, 70 to 27, an effort to bar deployment of the system's missiles while permitting installation of its radars and computers.

The vote, coming on top of two dramatic votes Wednesday, sealed the verdict for the current round on the ABM and opened the way for the Senate to proceed to other parts of the \$20 billion military procurement authorization bill.

Rejected was an amendment by Sen. Thomas J. McIntyre, D-NH, put forth as an effort to compromise the Senate's basic ABM split but scorned by both sides during the long debate.

Another opponent, Sen. Clifford P. Case, R-NJ, said "I seriously doubt that Safeguard will ever be deployed."

And Sen. John Sherman Cooper, R-KY, one of the leaders of the anti-Safeguard forces, said he doubts the Pentagon expects to be able to deploy Safeguard soon.

Cooper told reporters the Pentagon plans to spend \$120 million this year on advanced antiballistic missile - ABM - research, beyond Safeguard, although the sum is not mentioned in the report on the legislation currently before the Senate.

The decisive ABM votes, after months of controversy and weeks of debate, came Wednesday on two somewhat similar amendments aimed at barring deployment of the Safeguard system but continuing ABM research.

Neither would have eliminated any of the \$759.1 million earmarked for the ABM in the \$20 billion military procurement authorization bill.

The first, offered by Sen. Margaret Chase Smith, R-Maine, failed on a 50-50 tie. Vice President Spiro T. Agnew cast a 51st but unnecessary negative vote. Mrs. Smith's proposal was to bar any further spending except for components such as radars and computers.