

Nixon Fund Slashed by House Panel

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A House Appropriations subcommittee cut the \$350,000 requested for Richard M. Nixon's allowances as a former President by more than half yesterday, and missed by a single vote denying him \$200,000 more.

The subcommittee approved \$398,000 for the fiscal year ending next June 30 to provide office and staff help during the transition period, and the \$60,000 annual pension, and permanent help, which a 1958 law provides for all former presidents who were not impeached.

Specifically refused was \$110,000 requested by President Ford to build a vault near Mr. Nixon's California home to store his presidential records while he is sorting them out during the six-month transition period.

Chairman Tom Steed (D-Okla.) said his subcommittee was unanimous in opposing such a public expense until the public interest in Mr. Nixon's records is better protected than by the agreement worked out the day before Mr. Ford pardoned Mr. Nixon. The agreement gave Mr. Nixon control over access to his records and the eventual right to destroy or dispose of them as he sees fit.

Steed said the committee will write in its report that Mr. Nixon's records should not be transferred from Washington until the Watergate special prosecutor has approved their removal. This would not have the force of law, but language in reports of appropriations committees is usually complied with.

The money is in two separate funds under two different laws, one providing aid in answering mail and sorting a former President's papers during his first six months out of office, the other providing permanent benefits.

The \$400,000 requested as the first annual installment of permanent benefits was reduced to \$152,915. The ex-

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cluded vault funds may be voted later, Steed said, if the government gets a better agreement on access to Mr. Nixon's papers.

The \$450,000 requested for transition aid was cut to \$245,000. But Mr. Nixon won't be hurt as much as that appears. The government has detailed 25 federal employees, including the former First Family's valet and maid, to work for the Nixons. They could be assigned for the entire six-month transition period, and their salaries are about the same as the amount cut from this fund.

Steed said he wouldn't be surprised if the full House cut the Nixon fund figure even more. "I'm surprised I got out of the subcommittee with as much as I did," Steed told reporters. "It is close to election and my colleagues are under pressure."

"The timing was bad," said Steed. "We wouldn't have had such trouble if the pardon thing hadn't hit when it did. But the six months (for the transition period) is running. We couldn't put it off." The fund, cut by 53 per cent, was approved 7 to 6.

Steed, who has no election opponent, voted for the \$398,000 figure as did all five Republicans and Rep. George H. Mahon (D-Tex.), full committee chairman and ex-officio member of all subcommittees.

The subcommittee's six other Democrats voted to cut the total back to \$200,000 and the nvoted against the final figure. Rep. Tom Beville (D-Ala.) said he and some other members wanted to vote only the \$55,000 needed to pay the pension for the 11 months that remained in this fiscal year when Mr. Nixon resigned, Aug. 9.

He wanted all other funds held back pending assurance of eventual public access to the records, especially since Mr. Nixon has the use of 25 federal employees.