

U.S. Vote Called World 'Disaster'

Washington

Robert S. McNamara, the president of the World Bank, said yesterday that the vote Wednesday by the House of Representatives to deny new United States contributions to the bank was "an unmitigated disaster for hundreds of millions of people in the poorest nations of the world."

In an unusual public statement on an action in one of the bank's member countries, McNamara said the arm of the bank that was affected, the International Development Association, "is the major source of development assistance for 21 countries classified by the United Nations as 'least developed,' to whom the United States and other nations have pledged a special assistance effort."

Most of these countries are small and most are in Africa. But the association is also important to much larger countries. In the past year it supplied 30 per cent of all the aid received by India, for example.

The sharing agreement, negotiated last September in Nairobi, Kenya, at the annual meeting of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, or World Bank, provides for \$4.5 billion over three years, with the U.S. share \$1.5 billion.

This is the smallest share

ever for the United States, which, unlike the others, would be allowed to spread its contribution over four years instead of three. It was this contribution that was killed by the house Wednesday.

Secretary of the Treasury George P. Shultz was in charge of the negotiations for the United States and pledged to do his best to win congressional approval. Shultz, it has been reliably learned, was taken by surprise by the adverse House vote, having believed that the bill would pass. The vote to kill it was 248 to 155, with Republicans voting overwhelmingly against the bill.

Shultz is still groping for the best means of trying to revive the legislation. One possibility would be to seek passage in the Senate and then, in the words of one official, "give the House another chance to do the right thing." But no decision on tactics has been made.

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