

State Talks

MAY 2 1975
On Refugee

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Situation

Sacramento

Mario Obledo, the state's welfare chief, said yesterday he will confer with local and federal officials Monday about the Vietnamese refugee problem during a visit he plans to make to Camp Pendleton.

The U.S. Marine base in Southern California is one of three "tent cities" in this country where tens of thousands of refugees are being housed temporarily.

Representatives of California's largest counties and the mayors of the state's three largest cities—Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco—have been invited. Obledo said.

Mayor Joseph L. Alioto's office announced that Alioto, who is expected to return this weekend from an overseas trip, plans to attend the meeting.

Meanwhile in Washington, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Wilson Riles urged Californians to "hold out their arms" to the refugees.

"I know discrimination," the black educator said, "and I would hope that most people . . . would not join the chorus of bigots."

His views contrasted with the concern expressed by many other California political figures—among them, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr., and U.S. Senators Alan Cranston and John V. Tunney—about the potential impact of refugees on the state's economy.

Riles was in Washington to urge the state's congressmen to get the federal government to underwrite the cost of educating Vietnamese refugees.

At a Sacramento press conference yesterday, Obledo said he wants state and local leaders prepared to offer the refugees interim help, such as temporary housing, "if the federal government defaults" on handling these problems.

Obledo also warned that state and local government will have to pay for the problems if the federal government does not.

"We don't have any money readily available," Obledo told a press conference. "But I will say that this state has always been able to take care of people in need."

California has not gotten any information from the federal government as to what funds or other help it will provide the refugees, Obledo added.

Meanwhile, Assembly Speaker Leo McCarthy (Dem-S.F.) told a luncheon meeting of San Francisco Bay Area labor leaders that "it is safe to say 20,000 to 30,000 Vietnam refugees will stay in California."