

Open-Ended Authorization Voted

Panel Speeds Refugee Funds

By Lawrence Meyer

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Moving with unusual speed, a House Judiciary subcommittee voted an open-ended authorization last night to cover the cost of evacuating and resettling South Vietnamese refugees.

The House Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship and International Law acted after House Judiciary Committee Chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr. (D-N.J.) made a special appearance before the subcommittee yesterday morning to urge it to act quickly on the Ford administration's request for \$507 million in new funds for the refugees.

Rodino's appeal came after President Ford urged Congress Tuesday night during his press conference to provide support funds for the refugees.

"When this country forgets its immigrant heritage and turns its back on the homeless of the world," Rodino told the subcommittee,

"it will have written 'finis' to the American dream."

The bill now goes to the full Judiciary Committee, which has scheduled a session for this evening, and with Rodino's strong backing is expected to report out the administration bill in time for action by the House some time next week.

Although several members of the subcommittee, including its chairman, Rep. Joshua Eilberg (D-Pa.) had expressed doubts about the administration request earlier in the week, Eilberg pushed the subcommittee to move the bill last night rather than waiting another day.

Two members of the subcommittee, Reps. Elizabeth Holtzman, (D-N.Y.) and Christopher J. Dodd (D-Conn.), asked Eilberg to wait a day. But Eilberg, with the support of other subcommittee members, allowed Dodd and Holtzman only one hour to prepare amendments to the administration bill, which was introduced earlier yesterday by Rodino.

The bill authorizes "such sums as may be necessary" for the evacuation and resettlement of Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees. The subcommittee left it to the House Appropriations Committee to determine whether the full \$507 million or some other figure should be appropriated for the refugee program. The subcommittee rejected by a 4-to-3 vote an amendment by Miss Holtzman that would have limited the authorization to the \$507 million requested by the administration.

The bill sets Sept. 30, 1977, as the cutoff date for the authorization. The only amendment accepted by the subcommittee was one offered by Rep. Hamilton Fish Jr. (R-N.Y.), requiring the President to keep the House Judiciary Committee and Senate Foreign Relations Committee informed about how the money authorized is spent.

Miss Holtzman also offered an amendment that would have required refu-

gees to sign an affidavit swearing that they had not participated in the persecution of any person because of race, religion, national origin or political opinion.

The amendment was designed to exclude from the United States war criminals and other Vietnamese who had engaged in other acts of torture or mistreatment of other persons.

It would have left a refugee open to perjury charges if the affidavit contained any false statements and also would have subjected such a refugee to deportation.

Miss Holtzman withdrew the amendment, however, after receiving assurances from Deputy Immigration and Naturalization Service Commissioner James F. Greene that the service would require all refugees to sign such an affidavit.

At another House hearing, L. Dean Brown, who heads an interagency task force on refugees, said a computerized job bank had been established as a means of helping to relocate some of the Vietnamese coming to the United States.

Brown told the House International Affairs Committee that eventually all of the new refugees' names would be entered in the computer.

He said officials administering the relocation program have been instructed to avoid sending large numbers to areas of high unemployment.

Brown also said no area of the country will be overburdened with refugees.

Labor Secretary John T. Dunlop said in a news release the computerized job bank maintained in Oklahoma City by the federal-state public employment services will be used "to see if there are jobs that could be filled" by the refugees who are being processed at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Ft. Chaffee, Ark., and Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

Wilson said the latest actual count of refugees was 113,340, substantially less than the 124,399 the administration had estimated Monday.