

Panel Votes

\$405 Million

Refugee Aid

By Lawrence Meyer

Washington Post Staff Writer

A House Appropriations subcommittee, cutting the Ford administration's request by \$102 million, approved \$405 million yesterday to pay for the maintenance and resettlement of Vietnamese refugees in the United States.

The subcommittee acted under pressure from the House leadership to move the administration proposal quickly.

Two hours after the Appropriations subcommittee action, the House Judiciary Committee, meeting in an unusual evening session, approved, 30 to 4, an open-ended authorization for "such funds as may be necessary" for the housing, feeding and resettling of Vietnamese refugees. *

Committee Chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr. (D-N.J.) said the bill will be taken up by the House next week and predicted passage.

The Senate meanwhile swiftly passed a bill that could make as much as \$147 million available for refugee aid, and adopted 91 to 7 a "good Samaritan" resolution welcoming the refugees.

The House Appropriations subcommittee concluded its action on the administration request only 30 minutes before the full Judiciary Committee met to discuss and vote on the authorization bill that must be passed before the money can be appropriated. Subcommittee Chairman Otto E. Passman (D-La.) told the members, "the pressure is on to get this bill marked up and get this bill moving."

The full committee chairman, Rep. George H. Mahon (D-Tex.), acknowledging that the subcommittee had not had a chance for an adequate hearing, said, "This has to be kind of a quickie action." The full committee

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is to vote Monday or Tuesday.

The subcommittee cut the administration request after several members said the administration had overestimated the expected number of refugees and the amount needed to support them. For purposes of the bill, the administration had estimated that it would need funds for 150,000 refugees; so far about 114,000 are known to be in the process of coming to the United States or already arrived.

The subcommittee, using an estimate of 115,000 refugees, reduced the administration's request for \$185 million to cover the cost of daily maintenance for the refugees to \$155 million. It reduced from \$99 million to \$65 million the amount to fly refugees from western Pacific staging areas to the United States. The amount for resettling the refugees was reduced from \$78 million to \$70 million.

The administration's request of \$125 million for welfare and medical costs was reduced to \$100 million, with the proviso that the subcommittee would consider additional requests later. Finally, the subcommittee cut from \$20 million to \$15 million the amount needed to move refugees to third countries for resettlement.

At one point in the free-wheeling subcommittee session, Passman conceded the lack of any firm grasp on whether the funds being voted were enough, too much or too little. "I don't know what we're doing," Passman said. "It's a guess. It's an estimate. This is a crash program."

The Senate money bill, introduced by Sen. Mark O. Hatfield (R-Ore.) and passed by voice vote just 24 minutes later, could make as much as \$147 million in previously appropriated military aid available for the Vietnamese refugee program.

The Senate's "good Samaritan" resolution of welcome for the Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees was sponsored by Sens. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.) and James B. Allen (D-Ala.). Cranston in the past has expressed concern about an influx of refugees to Southern California.

** Sen. William L. Scott (R-Va.), the lone vote against the resolution, was heard to murmur, "I'll be goddamned if I'm going to let all those people in this country." The senator would not respond to an inquiry about his vote.

* The four "no" votes in the House Judiciary Committee were cast by Democrats Jack Brooks (Tex.), John

Conyers (Mich.), Barbara Jordan (Tex.) and William L. Hungate (Mo.).

The Congressional Black Caucus issued a statement calling on the Ford administration to sponsor programs for the benefit of all Americans in the area of jobs, housing and social welfare. The 17 black House Democrats said "these hapless people are entering a nation that has historically denied and scapegoated its racial minorities... The real issue is how can we apply our enormous resources to effectively service the needs and respond to the priorities of all people in the nation."

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) suggested that the refugee money be enlarged to provide funds for those who change their minds and want to go home.