

MAY 21 1975

# Conferees Agree On Refugee Fund

The House voted yesterday to authorize \$8 million to help needy Americans and their dependents who were forced to flee Indochina.

At the same time, Senate and House conferees reached agreement on a compromise \$455 million authorization for resettlement of Vietnamese refugees. The measure now must be approved by both houses before it goes to President Ford.

Congress last week sent legislation appropriating \$405 million for refugee resettlement to the White House before completing action on the authorization bill. This unusual step in effect told the President it was all right for him to start spending the money immediately and the ground rules would be set later.

The conferees dropped an amendment by Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.) that would have required the government to pay transportation costs for any refugee who wants to return to Saigon. They said the legislation already provided for that possibility.

The \$8 million House authorization bill to help relocate Americans from Indochina was passed on a voice vote and sent to the Senate. The actual funds will have to be appropriated in separate legislation.

Unlike the alien refugees, Americans who receive relocation assistance would have to repay the government unless exempted in special cases by the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare.

The money would cover such items as care at a reception center, transportation to a final destination, and location of friends or relatives.