

REFUGEES ARRIVE TO SETTLE IN MAINE

State Is Second to Begin a Home and Job Program

Special to The New York Times

STANDISH, Me., Aug. 5—A group of 310 Vietnamese is coming to Maine in a program making the state the second to start a government-sponsored refugee resettlement and job placement program.

The first of two Maine-bound refugee contingents flew into Portland Airport on July 27 from the huge refugee reception center at Indiantown Gap, Pa. The remaining 150 refugees are scheduled to come next Saturday, when the early arrivals leave for the home of volun-

teer sponsor families throughout Maine.

Until the Maine program began, the state of Washington—which has now resettled 750 refugees—was alone in contracting with the Federal Government to sponsor Vietnamese settlers.

Now that Maine has followed Washington's lead, however, other states "are exploring the idea" of inviting refugees, according to Elinor Green, public information officer for the Inter-Agency Task Force for Indochina Refugees. The task force guarantees sponsoring states resettlement funds up to \$500 per refugee while pledging full Federal reimbursement for all state Medicaid and Social Service outlays.

Pending departure for their new homes in Maine, the refugees are trading the Quonset huts of Indiantown Gap for a row of vacant student town-house apartments at St. Jos-

eph's College, a small school in the southern Maine town of Standish, run by the Sisters of Mercy religious order. The Vietnamese have seemed at home in the pleasant surroundings of the college campus despite their brief stay.

During one muggy afternoon last week, an elderly Vietnamese woman, clad in black pajamas and carrying a broom, performed housekeeping chores in the dormitory courtyard, as small groups of young men and boys played soccer on the hill above and swam in Sebago Lake at a beach below the college administration building.

Meanwhile, a large party of refugees held a picnic beneath a grove of pine trees. One visitor there was a Vietnamese woman who has been living in the United States with her American husband, a Maine native. She had already visited the refugee center at Camp Pendleton, Calif., and now had

come to talk to the newcomers in a continuous effort to get news of family members still living near Saigon.

The refugees spend much of their time being interviewed and processed by two dozen representatives of state education, labor and social service agencies. At the same time, instructors from the State Education Department have been conducting crash courses in basic English and "survival" classes on the use of such basic facilities as banks and post offices.

The state had already done some screening of the refugees before their arrival here. Armed with lists of available jobs, officials of the Maine Office of Economic Opportunity and Division of Employment Security interviewed refugees at Indiantown Gap in early July before inviting them to participate in the Maine pro-

gram.

According to the state office director, Timothy Wilson, whose agency is coordinating the refugee project, the idea was to attract workers who "had something to offer our area" and "wouldn't be wasting their time" seeking jobs in Maine. Among the Vietnamese coming to Maine are computer programmers, heavy equipment operators, welders, doctors, and nurses.

Nguyen Dinh Loc, an English-speaking 25-year-old Vietnamese who wants to be trained as a journalist, explained that a number of the refugees wanted to come here, despite fears about severe winters, because they believe they can easily find jobs in a state like Maine where the "population is rare."

But their expectations may not be justified by the economic life of this state, where

unemployment stood at 9.8 percent in June, a month when the jobless rate is normally near its low point.

Mr. Loc, a former South Vietnamese navy officer, came to Maine with his cousin, Nguyen Thi Kieu Nga, an 18-year-old high school graduate who wants to study medicine. Both say they hope to be able to return to South Vietnam some day, and they think most of the refugees have the same hope.

A bomb scare at the Portland airport terminal marred the arrival of the first 150 refugees more than a week ago, but otherwise their privacy has been threatened only by a few sightseers. Now a sheriff's deputy has been posted with a walkie-talkie beneath a tent at the entrance to St. Joseph's College, checking credentials of people coming through the gate.