

Suspended Fines Given 3 Protesters

A D.C. Superior Court judge imposed and then suspended \$100 fines for three White House prayer protesters yesterday and the U.S. attorney's office dropped charges against seven others.

Judge Orman W. Ketcham imposed and then suspended the fines against the Rev. James F. La Croce, 43, William T. Ireland, 32, and Brandon D. Walsh, 30, all of Baltimore. The men, members of a Catholic pacifist group, were among 158 arrested at the White House between July 6 and Aug. 14 for kneeling and praying for an early end to the bombing of Cambodia.

All 158 were charged with unlawful entry. The three men were the first to be tried in the White House incidents, and they argued their own case. They were convicted by a jury after several days of testimony last month.

Protesters against whom charges were dropped yesterday included Elizabeth McAllister, a Catholic nun and wife of antiwar activist Philip Berrigan.

Willie King, a principal assistant U.S. attorney in the Superior Court, said the decision to drop the seven cases was "based on the facts of these specific cases."

King said a factor in the decision was that the seven, unlike most of the prayer protesters, had not actually entered the White House but had knelt and prayed outside, in the tourist line.