

HOUSE SIDETRACKS WAR PULLOUT PLAN PASSED BY SENATE

Direct Vote on Mansfield's
Amendment Is Blocked by
Procedural Maneuvers

VICTORY FOR PRESIDENT

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But the Margin Represents
High Point for Critics of
the Vietnam Conflict

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 19—Administration forces, by a 23-vote margin, succeeded today in blocking a direct vote in the House on the Vietnam war issue, thus sidetracking a troop-withdrawal amendment passed by the Senate.

The Senate amendment, sponsored by Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, Democrat of Montana, called for the United States to withdraw all its troops from Indochina in six months if American prisoners of war were released. To shelve it, Administration forces in the House had to engage in procedural maneuvers to avoid a direct vote on it.

On the key vote, the House voted 215-192 to end debate on sending the military procurement authorization bill to a Senate-House conference, which would seek to reconcile the two versions. The effect was to prevent a House vote on whether to accept the Mansfield amendment, which the Senate attached to the procurement bill by a 57-38 vote. The bill provides annual authority for weapons procurement research and development by the Pentagon.

Gain for War Critics

The relative narrowness of the margin by House standards, represented a high-water mark for critics of the Vietnam war in their repeated efforts over the last two years to get a direct vote on the war issue. It reflected some shift of House sentiment against the war. On a similar procedural vote last June on a Mansfield amendment attached to the draft-extension bill, the war critics failed by a 44-vote margin.

The war critics immediately asserted today that the procedural tactics of Administration forces constituted an admission they did not have the votes to block the amendment in the House. That assertion was disputed by Representative Gerald R. Ford of Michigan, the House Republican leader, who sought to describe the issue as one of protecting the prerogatives of the House against the Senate.

The tactics were worked out between the House Republican and Democratic leadership and the White House in a parliamentary situation tailor-made for procedural maneuvering. The question before the House was whether to send the military procurement bill, already passed by the House and Senate, to conference, and if so on what terms.

Representative Charles W.

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HOUSE SIDETRACKS PULLOUT MEASURE

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Whalen Jr., Republican of Ohio, was prepared to offer a motion instructing the House conferees to accept the Mansfield amendment.

But the Speaker, Carl Albert, Democrat of Oklahoma, said he was bound by House rules

and precedents that the minority leaders chooses the member to make such a motion on instructions. At the suggestion of Mr. Ford, Mr. Albert recognized Representative Leslie C. Arends of Illinois, the ranking Republican on the Armed Services Committee and the Republican whip.

Mr. Arends offered a motion instructing the House conferees not to accept any Senate amendment to the bill that would not be germane under House rules. As the basis for his motion, he pointed to a provision in a legislative reor-

ganization act passed last year that limits the authority of House conferees to accept Senate amendments that would not be germane in the House.

One effect of the Arends amendment was to have the issue of the Vietnam war give way to the traditional jealousy and annoyance of the House over the way the Senate is free, under its liberal rules, to add amendments to bills passed by the House.

Mr. Arends told the House question was, "Are we going to abide by the rules of the House or are we going to roll

over and play dead and let the other body take complete control of the legislative process of the Congress?"

Mr. Whalen when protested, saying, "Today young Americans are getting their guts blown out in Vietnam, and we are standing here debating the rules for germaneness."

The only opportunity open to the war critics to defeat or amend the Arends motion was to defeat a motion on the "previous question" — a technical motion used in the House to cut off debate and force a vote. The "previous question"

motion offered by Mr. Arends carried by a 215-192 vote, the 23-vote margin.

Having blocked any move to amend the instructions to include the Mansfield amendment, the House then by a 215-192 vote defeated the Arends motion of instructions against acceptance of nongermane amendments.

The effect of the seemingly contradictory votes was to leave the conferees free to oppose the Mansfield amendment conference. The expectation was that the amendment would die in conference, par-

ticularly because the same conferees had adopted a modified version of the amendment to the draft bill calling upon the President to set a "time certain" for troop withdrawals, subject only to release of war prisoners.

In a statement issued after the House vote, Gerald R. Warren, White House deputy press secretary, said President Nixon was "gratified by the outcome of the vote in the House, which in effect was a refusal to instruct the House conferees to accept the Mansfield amendment."

But John W. Gardner, chairman of Common Cause, the citizens lobbying group, which had sought acceptance of the amendment, charged that the House Democratic and Republican leaders had "cynically and cleverly blocked the effort to get a clear-cut vote on the Mansfield amendment."