

House Backs Observatory Site For Vice President's Residence

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WASHINGTON, June 12 — The House of Representatives voted today to give the Vice President an official residence—an 81-year-old house at the Naval Observatory in North west Washington that has served as the home for the Chief of Naval Operations for the last 40 years.

The measure, which passed 380 to 23, now goes to a Senate-House conference to be reconciled with a similar bill that passed the Senate by voice vote last month.

The wide margin of support for the measure indicated that Congress was on the verge of finding at least a temporary solution to a long-standing problem of where to house the Vice President and thus ending the Government's costly practice of installing security improvements at the private residences of the Vice Presidents.

Funds Lacking Earlier

In 1966 Congress authorized the construction of a \$750,000 permanent residence for the Vice President, also on the grounds of the Naval Observatory. But the money was never appropriated to begin construction and since then the estimated cost of the project has soared to \$1.8-million.

By taking over the existing house at the observatory for the Vice President when the present occupant, Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr., retires June 29, the Congressional Armed Services Committees estimated that the cost of redecorating and installing security equipment would be \$48,000. The committees' plan to provide funds

to improve quarters at the Washington Navy Yard for the Chief of Naval Operations.

Representative Melvin Price, Democrat of Illinois, the floor manager of the bill, told the House that security improvements so far at Vice President Ford's home in Alexandria, Va., had cost the Government about \$81,000 and that \$245,000 had been spent at the home of former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew in Maryland and \$123,000 had been spent at the homes of former Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey in Washington and Minnesota.

The Senate bill would have designated the house at the observatory as the permanent official residence of the Vice President and would have repealed the 1966 law authorizing a new house. But the House bill provided that the residence would be temporary until Congress decided to appropriate the money to build a new official residence.

In urging support for building a new residence, Representative Kenneth J. Gray, Democrat of Illinois, said the existing house at the observatory was unsuitable for official entertaining.