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**House Panel Seeks to Cut
Over Half of Nixon Funds**

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 17—A House subcommittee voted today to bar the use of Federal funds to lease a storage vault in California for Watergate tape recordings and other documents and to reduce drastically a budget request for former President Richard M. Nixon's transition to private citizen.

The House Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service and General Government Appropriations voted unanimously to cut from President Ford's special budget request a \$110,000 item to provide for a storage vault for the tapes and Mr. Nixon's Presidential records.

The committee voted 7 to 6 to cut by more than half—from \$850,000 to \$398,000—the total amount for the former President's pension, staff and office expenses through next June. All six opponents of the compromise figure wanted to reduce the total even more drastically.

"I was surprised that I got out of committee with as much as I did," the subcommittee chairman, Representative Tom

Steed, Democrat of Oklahoma, told reporters after the closed, two-hour meeting.

The subcommittee action, the first step in an appropriation process that Mr. Steed said could result in an even lower budget for Mr. Nixon, was the most visible symbol of Congress trying to grapple with issues left dangling by the former President's resignation and the pardon granted to him nine days ago by President Ford.

In the Senate, the Government Operations Committee was preparing to draft legislation Thursday that would require President Ford to preserve the Watergate tape recordings and documents for use by Congress, the courts and the public, despite an agreement that would give Mr. Nixon eventual control of the material.

Elsewhere in the House, a panel of the Judiciary Committee was scheduled to begin hearings next Tuesday on a number of related proposals, including

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constitutional amendments that would give Congress a veto over Presidential pardons and resolutions that would reflect dissatisfaction with Mr. Ford's pardon of his predecessor.

'Pardon Thing' Involved

The appropriation for Mr. Nixon would not have encountered so much difficulty, Mr. Steed said, "if it hadn't been for this pardon thing."

He said that the subcommittee would have voted to ban the use of government money to transfer any of Mr. Nixon's White House materials to, or near, his home in San Clemente, Calif., had it not been for the likelihood that the full House would object on technical grounds to substantive legislation in an appropriations measure.

Mr. Steed added, however, that a report to accompany the appropriations bill would make clear that the subcommittee "took a very strong view" against the agreement under which Mr. Ford was guaranteed, in essence, ownership

rights to the tapes and documents.

A subcommittee majority, consisting of five Republicans and two Democrats—Mr. Steed and Representative George Mahon of Texas, the chairman of the full Appropriations Committee—narrowly defeated a substitute measure that would have pared the total appropriation to \$200,000.

Representative Tom Bevill, Democrat of Alabama, who offered the substitute, said later that he would have preferred to limit the amount to the \$55,000 allotted for Mr. Nixon's pension for the remainder of the fiscal year ending June 30.

If it should develop later that more funds are warranted for the former President's use, Mr. Bevill said, there will be time to appropriate them.

Mr. Steed attributed the subcommittee's attitude to public opposition to the \$850,000 sought for Mr. Nixon and the timing of the request, shortly before the 1974 Congressional elections.

The subcommittee chairman smiled and said that Representative Howard W. Robinson, Republican of upstate New York, who is retiring from Congress, and Mr. Steed, who has no opponent in the Nov. 5 election, "were the only two comfortable people in the room"

when the budget was trimmed.

No Support for Vault

The request for \$110,000 to store the tapes and documents in a General Services Administration vault near Mr. Nixon's San Clemente estate had no supporters in the subcommittee.

"I couldn't see recommending \$110,000 for a vault and \$50,000 a year for guards to preserve papers and tapes there was not assurances we'd ever get the public benefit of," Mr. Steed said.

The full Appropriations Committee will take up the Nixon budget request next Tuesday, and Mr. Mahon said that it would probably go to the full House the following Friday or Monday before being sent on the Senate.

Members of a Senate appropriating subcommittee, who have already begun hearings on the measure, have given comparable public notice that the \$850,000 request would be cut sharply.