

FINCH CRITICIZES AGNEW REMARKS

But H.E.W. Secretary Later Issues a Statement That Softens His Comments

By JAMES T. NAUGHTON

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WASHINGTON, May 9—Robert H. Finch, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, told student demonstrators today that the public rhetoric of Vice President Agnew and Gov. Ronald Reagan of California had "contributed to heating up the climate in which the Kent State students were killed."

Mr. Finch made the remark to 40 young people on a grassy mall across Independence Avenue from his department's headquarters.

One student asked the Secretary if he saw any connection between the shooting of the four Kent State students by Ohio National Guard troops last Monday and Governor Reagan's remark last month that "if it takes a bloodbath" to deal with

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Finch Is Critical of Remarks by Agnew

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campus demonstrations "let's get it over with."

Mr. Finch replied that there had been "a whole series of casual relationships, including some of the Agnew rhetoric."

The student asked whether the Vice President's rhetoric had contributed to the deaths.

"It contributed to heating up the climate in which the Kent State students were killed," Mr. Finch said.

Later, when word of his remarks spread through Washington, Secretary Finch issued a statement in which he said the point he had been seeking to make was that everyone must take care in making public comments.

"Neither by direct statement nor by illusion," he added, "have I ever indicated that any statement by the Vice President contributed to the tragedy at Kent State University."

At Stone Mountain, Ga., Vice President Agnew made a subdued speech Saturday as he dedicated granite carvings of Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson and Jefferson Davis. Page 69.

Mr. Finch's exchange with the students illustrated the Administration's attempt to arrange a dialogue with its critics during the mass demonstration against United States policy in Southeast Asia.

Dozens of top-level officials in the Administration were holding private sessions with small clusters of students or meeting with them on the mall near the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

At the White House, young aides to the President were going out into the streets to invite demonstrators into their offices to discuss the issues that have alienated them from the President.

View on Judge Hoffman

Moments before Mr. Finch made the remarks about the Vice President, a high official of the Justice Department told another group of students that he thought Judge Julius J. Hoffman, who presided over the conspiracy trial of the Chicago seven, was fair-minded, although "personally I dislike him intensely."

An aide to the official later

asked a reporter who had listened to the conversation not to report it.

"He didn't know there was a reporter taking notes," the aide said.

Candor was evident elsewhere. Dennis J. Doolin, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asian Affairs, chatted with three men students at Carleton College in Northfield, Minn., the alma mater of Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird.

"If people keep their cool today," Mr. Doolin said, "you're going to have a hell of a lot of clout."

Some clout already was apparent. The contrast in the Administration's approach to the demonstrators today and its refusal to acknowledge their presence in antiwar rallies in Washington last October and November was enormous.

He said that discussions were under way to seek some method for a continuing Administration-campus dialogue.

Inside the White House Leonard Garment, special consultant to the President, and Edward L. Morgan, a young deputy counsel to Mr. Nixon, were in discussions with students. Representatives of the campus press were given access to the White House press room, where they were arguing with members of the Presidential press staff.

Students meeting with Attorney General John N. Mitchell in his office refused to be photographed with him, although a Justice Department spokesman said that Mr. Mitchell had not objected.

The White House declined to permit reporters to observe the discussions there. One official said it would run counter to an attempt "not to exploit these kids."

U. S. Pullout Stressed

WASHINGTON, May 9 (UPI)—Secretary Finch said today that President Nixon would have a "very serious case of credibility" if he failed to meet his target of removing United States troops from Cambodia by the end of June.

Mr. Finch made the statement

in a recorded interview after a series of meetings with young war protesters. One student said that the Secretary had indicated he would have to step down if Mr. Nixon did not meet his timetable. Mr. Finch did not respond directly to the question of whether he might resign if the withdrawal did not come about.