

FINCH ENDORSES CAMBODIA ACTION

H.E.W. Employees Hiss as
His Statement Is Read—

Secretary in Hospital

MAY 19 1970

By RICHARD LYONS

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 18—

Robert H. Finch, hospitalized by a puzzling arm ailment, today sent a message endorsing the movement of American troops into Cambodia to 800 Federal employes he had been scheduled to meet to hear complaints on his leadership of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

John G. Veneman, Under Secretary of the department, read the statement to the employes, many of whom had been critical of Mr. Finch's actions as secretary.

Hisses and boos punctuated the reading, underscoring the discontent that many people within and without the department have voiced because Mr. Finch had refused to criticize the troop move.

The critics have felt that the Secretary, who is usually regarded as the liberal voice in the Cabinet, should have spoken out against the Cambodian affair because it has divided the country.

Walter Reed Army Hospital, to which Mr. Finch was admitted at 2:30 P.M., reported that he was being "evaluated for neurological involvement of his left arm."

Mr. Veneman, who is Mr. Finch's chief aide, said the

Continued on Page 16, Column 3

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

Secretary "has no feeling in his arm, but can move his fingers." Mr. Veneman said "preliminary evaluation indicated" that Mr. Finch had not suffered a heart attack or a stroke.

In an interview late this morning, Mr. Finch, who looked drawn and tired, agreed that the domestic reaction to the Cambodian move had been "horrendous."

He voiced his support for Mr. Nixon's Indochina decisions. He added, "If I didn't think they were getting out by the end of June . . ." He did not finish the sentence.

Secretary Finch has been bombarded by telegrams and letters asking him to condemn the move into Cambodia and to rebut the statements of Vice President Agnew concerning dissension.

"I am not going to get in a whipsaw with the Vice President," he said.

Affirms Integration Goal

A second statement prepared by Mr. Finch that also was to have been read this afternoon reiterated his position "that I personally am committed, that this department is committed, and that the Administration is committed unequivocally to" the integration of schools.

Today's meeting was demanded 10 weeks ago by more than 2,000 health, education and welfare employes who had sought an explanation from Mr. Finch of the Government's seemingly ambivalent attitude toward desegregation.

Petitions calling for the meeting were circulated only days



United Press International

John G. Veneman, Under Secretary, telling employes of Department of Health, Education and Welfare that Secretary Robert H. Finch could not make planned appearance.

after the resignation under fire of three of the department's key civil rights aides, including their leader, Leon J. Panetta. Mr. Panetta subsequently charged that pressure from White House aides, including men close to Mr. Nixon, had brought about his ouster.

During today's interview, Mr. Finch denied that there was

friction between his office and White House personnel, but he added that "there has been some sniping in some quarters about some practices."

It is known that Mr. Finch has been under pressure in recent week stemming from student unrest, campus disturbances and shootings by the police and National Guardsmen.

The strain was reflected by his countenance this morning. He was obviously tired and spoke slowly in a low voice.

It is two months since Senator George Murphy, Republican of California, decided to seek re-election this fall. Mr. Finch, who was known to covet Mr. Murphy's seat, has been working nights and weekends trying to solve what he freely admitted are tremendous problems in his department.

Mr. Finch's aides have said that school desegregation problems, student unrest and the uproar over Cambodia have added to his burdens.

Complicating the obvious strain on his health, Dr. Finch, while on a brief vacation in Mexico two months ago, contracted an uncommon intestinal infection caused by a protozoan organism named *Giardia lamblia*. He spent almost a week in bed and lost more than 20 pounds.

Mr. Veneman, who said the Secretary was still taking drugs to combat the infection, told reporters that Mr. Finch began to feel ill about 1:30 P.M. and that "15 minutes later he thought something should be done about it."

The Under Secretary said Mr. Finch, who is 44 years old, had been examined by a nerve specialist, that further tests were being made, and that "present studies reveal no evidence of vascular involvement of the arm."

Mr. Finch received a telephone call from the President this afternoon inquiring about his condition, White House aides announced.

Early tonight the hospital re-

ported that the Secretary would at least spend the night there pending completion of examinations and laboratory tests.

In the statement read by Mr. Veneman, Mr. Finch, who met and became friendly with Mr. Nixon almost 25 years ago, said he stood behind the President because "his goal in Vietnam is to end the fighting and the killing."

"And every decision he has made has been consistent with that goal—Vietnamization, the phased withdrawal of United States forces, the present limited operation against the Cambodian sanctuaries," he continued. "United States forces will be out of Cambodia on or before June 30."

The reading of this part drew hisses three times.

The statement said: "I reiterate my support of the President in his commitment to end the war in Vietnam because only then can we totally and effectively address our long list of domestic concerns."

Mr. Finch warned: "The nation cannot move forward in the present highly-charged atmosphere of anger, fear, mistrust and recrimination. It is not sufficient simply to lower our voices; we must sincerely want to listen, and to understand what people really are trying to say to one another."

In the second statement dealing with desegregation, Mr. Finch said: "This department will enforce the 1964 Civil Rights Act because the law requires it; because education development is greatly aided by it; and, more importantly, because elementary concepts of humanity demand it."