

Grade School Kids Discuss the War

By Marshall Schwartz

The peace movement went to elementary school yesterday as about 90 students at Madison School in Presidio Heights discussed the war with a speaker from the local Student Mobilization Committee.

The program was the brainchild of 11-year-old Eric Brody, a sixth grader at Madison, who took advantage of a new school district policy which allows students to organize assemblies on political topics.

So Eric, having heard about the Student Mobiliza-

tion Committee from material the group distributed at a local Unitarian church, got permission for an assembly and obtained a speaker, Carole Seidman, staff coordinator for the committee.

She gave the students — mainly fifth and sixth graders — a simplified version of standard anti-war arguments, running the program as a sort of a special lesson.

“We’re dropping seven-and-a-half ton bombs in Vietnam,” she said. “Who knows how much seven and a half tons is?” “It’s 15,000 pounds,” a little girl in a yel-

low blouse quickly replied.)

But the response from the kids — both for and against the war — was not simplified.

“Why is it right to kill people in Vietnam, even 25 or 30 people, without being punished, but if you kill even one person here you get sent to the gas chamber?” Eric asked.

Another long-haired youngster argued that the United States was only trying to get North Vietnam to leave the South Vietnamese alone so they could decide on their own form of govern-

ment by themselves, without outside pressure.

“How will marching help get us out of Vietnam?” asked one student. “Why should we start something (the war) and not finish it?” queried another.

Miss Seidman carefully replied but her answers were not satisfactory to at least some of the kids.

“She’s too one-sided,” a tow-headed youngster whispered to his friend as they hurried from the auditorium as the bell rang, ending school — and the assembly — for the day.