

## Washington: The Revolt of the Civil Servants

By JAMES RESTON

WASHINGTON, May 19—Robert Finch, the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, is caught in an awkward conflict between his convictions and his loyalties, but the uproar at H.E.W. is more complicated than that and needs some explanation.

In the first place, there is nothing new about differences between Presidents and Cabinet members over policies and priorities. John Gardner, Robert McNamara and Clark Clifford all had fundamental differences with President Johnson, which they swallowed for quite a while and didn't really make clear until they were out of office—and not always then.

There are two reasons for this. First, Presidential government is not like parliamentary government in Britain. We don't really have "Cabinet government" in this country; we don't even have a functioning "Cabinet," except in name. The members have no political constituencies of their own. They are the personal creatures of the President and therefore owe him some loyalty.

The other reason is that the art of resigning on principle in this capital has disappeared particularly for ambitious young politicians like Secretary Finch

who think, not always accurately, that "to get along you have to go along." It's too bad, but it's the habit of the age.

### The Backstairs Issue

Back of the revolt in the department against Secretary Finch's acquiescence in the President's Cambodian, school desegregation, and civil rights policies, there is also considerable anxiety over his decision to delegate responsibility for executive manpower in the department to Frederic V. Malek, a 33-year-old former West Point graduate and industrialist from Orangeburg, S. C., who is believed to be taking instructions on top jobs from the President's aides in the White House.

The latest case in point concerns the resignation of Dr. Joseph T. English, a 37-year-old Philadelphia psychiatrist, who has been administrator of H.E.W.'s Health Services and Mental Health Administration, which is responsible for a \$1.5-billion Federal health program employing over 25,000 people.

The official announcement was that Dr. English was resigning to take over a \$70,000-a-year job as president of the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation, the largest non-Federal health job in the nation, and technically this was

accurate. But the truth is that it was made clear to Dr. English that the White House wanted him to resign, and this was done while his immediate boss, Dr. Roger O. Egeberg was in Italy. And as soon as he resigned, his job was taken out of the civil service and published last Friday in the Federal Register as an appointive position.

This is not the first time the White House has cut across Secretary Finch. He chose Dr. John C. Knowles, head of Massachusetts General Hospital, to be the nation's top physician and was overruled by the White House under pressure from the American Medical Association. And last week, against Mr. Finch's advice, the Justice Department announced that it would support the tax-exempt status of private schools deliberately set up to circumvent public school desegregation rulings that Mr. Finch's department had supported.

### Finch's Dilemma

In short, there is a revolt at H.E.W., not because the employees in that vast bureaucracy don't like and respect Secretary Finch, but because they do like and respect him. They want him to be faithful to himself and them to lead the protest against the war, assuming that

he has more political wallop with President Nixon than he really does.

Or failing that, at least they want him to keep control over his own department and maintain a balance between the politicians in the White House and outstanding young doctors like Joseph English, who has been one of the few links between this Administration and the young doctors and critics in the universities.

In fairness, it should be said here that the Administration is not getting rid of men like Dr. English in order to put incompetent political hacks into top H.E.W. jobs. Dr. Vernon Wilson, who is replacing Dr. English, was director of health affairs at the University of Missouri and is highly respected even by those at H.E.W. who are critical of Bob Finch and the new manpower director, Frederic Malek.

Nevertheless, H.E.W. is in turmoil. The new thing here is the extent of the revolt at H.E.W. and at the State Department against the policies and priorities of the Administration. Like the students, the civil servants are protesting against being taken for granted and this could have a profound effect on the future of the American Government.