

A Little Lesson in History

New Concord, Ohio

President Nixon made "small talk" about football and surfing to put college protesters at ease in a surprise confrontation at the Lincoln Memorial but he really wanted to help them to understand the "lessons of history," White House Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said yesterday.

It was the first indication that the White House was chafing a bit over reports by some of the student dissenters of their surprise dialogue with Mr. Nixon when he showed up at the monument at 4:30 a.m. May 9, the day of their big demonstra-

tion against his decision to move into Cambodia.

"He might, of course, have talked about the obvious issues — about Cambodia and the detailed rationale for why he acted as he did or about the other pressing questions of the moment," Ziegler said in a commencement address at Muskingham College.

"But he wanted to leave those students with something more — not what they heard debated every day in the newspapers and on radio and television, but rather something deeper and more fundamental," the press sec-

retary said.

Ziegler said Mr. Nixon wanted to leave the protesters with "some thoughts" about the basic questions that face their generation in the future.

"He was reaching out in the hope of touching not only their minds, but also their spirit," he said.

"You may have read that he talked about football and surfing," Ziegler said. "Let me tell you what really happened:

"He made some small talk, of course, to try to put them at ease — after all, most of them when they went to sleep under the stone statue

of President Lincoln hadn't expected to wake up and find themselves talking to President Nixon in the flesh.

"He asked them where they were from, and chatted with them a bit about their colleges and what they were studying, and about Washington, which a lot of them had never visited before.

"But essentially, he talked with them about some of the longer-term lessons of history, and about the various countries of the world and the importance of getting to know the people of those countries in order to understand the world."

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