

YOUTHS WONDER WHO HEARD THEM

Colorado Conferees Unsure
White House Will Act

By NAN ROBERTSON

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WASHINGTON, May 2—"We are listening; we do care and do want to know what are your concerns and how you rank the priorities among these concerns," Elliot L. Richardson, the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, told the opening session of the White House conference on Youth two weeks ago today.

Less than a week after the four-day meeting ended in Estes Park, Colo., President Nixon's press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, said:

"We will indicate those areas where there is agreement and where we are doing things such as were proposed, and those areas where Administration policy is not consistent with what was suggested by the White House conference, and will say why, and give an indication as to why we are pursuing the policy we are."

The conference, marooned in a blizzard high in the Rockies, 1,500 miles from Washington,



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Elliot L. Richardson

had been contemptuously written off by liberals and radicals as Mr. Nixon's "silent majority" gathering of young Americans.

Stephen Hess, the conference chairman, replied that the delegates had been chosen scientifically as the most representative cross-section of the nation's young people ever assembled by the Federal Government.

The delegates themselves overwhelmingly agreed it was. And after the long-hairs and the short-hairs got over their initial cultural shock, they began to talk with each other.

They told the Administration loudly and clearly: Stop all American military operations in Indochina immediately; pull out all United States troops and support groups by the end of this year; nationalize the coal industry; give health care to every American.

They wanted to legalize marijuana under Government regulation; have the President go on television and denounce racism as "the cancer of American society"; authorize an all-volunteer Army; declare amnesty for all draft violators and exiles, and limit the defense budget to \$50-billion a year.

Stimulated but Skeptical

A random telephone poll taken this week of participants from every walk of life all over the country indicated the following:

They were personally rewarded and stimulated by the conference; they were amazed at how much they were in agreement on major issues; but they were skeptical that anybody in official Washington was really listening, or cared about what they had to say.

Mr. Richardson spent 45 minutes last Tuesday reporting the conference results to the President and his Cabinet colleagues at the White House. Mr. Hess was not invited.

After the report, Mr. Nixon told each cabinet member to "spend time" with Mr. Hess to analyze and assess the youth conference recommendations.

Later that day Mr. Ziegler told reporters: "I don't know that there will be a further need for the President to specifically sit down with Steve. Perhaps he will." The press secretary said that the youth conference chairman's responsibilities were "now complete."

In response, Mr. Hess said Mr. Ziegler was "mistaken," and that his staff here would be working "pretty full pace" through June. In addition, the delegates elected a follow-up committee of 40 members to meet in Washington with Government officials three times during the coming year.

Panel Member Has Doubts

Marla Dawn Cowling, a 23-year-old sociology student and housewife who attended Portland State University in Oregon, is on the follow-up committee. She said in a telephone interview that she "honored" Mr. Hess for picking a real diversity of participants from across the nation, but "I'm really afraid the White House doesn't want to deal with us."

She said of the follow-up committee: "I think Hess doesn't want us to have any power at all. We're just a pacifying body so they can say youth can have some role in implementation. I hope and pray it won't be so."

Navy Lieut. Alan S. Cameron, 24, a Vietnam veteran who works at the Pentagon, is also a member of the follow-up committee. It expressed surprise and disappointment at Mr. Ziegler's response to the delegates' recommendations.