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Monday, Jun. 15, 1970

TIME

Nation: HEW's New Secretary

I THINK of myself as a career public servant," says Elliot Richardson, 49, the Harvard-trained Boston lawyer named last week to succeed Robert Finch as the boss of HEW. He knows the premises; he served as HEW Assistant Secretary in the Eisenhower Administration and turned down the HEW under-secretaryship under Nixon, explaining that "I had already been through all that." Instead, he has been the No. 2 man in the State Department, where he has displayed a talent for management that will be exercised to the full in picking up the pieces at diffuse and demoralized HEW.

He has some specific credentials for his new task as well. As Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts from 1965 to 1967, he drafted mental health programs and welfare reform legislation. As Massachusetts attorney general from 1967 to 1969, he handled many cases arguing the cause of civil rights. Officials sitting in meetings with Richardson are often fascinated by his endless, highly intricate doodles. They soon find that the verbal points he is making simultaneously with his doodles are just as well structured. "He speaks in paragraphs," says an admiring friend.

Richardson's welcome of staff initiative and readiness to exchange ideas should help soothe the temper of HEW, which employs many of Nixon's in-house dissenters. Those liberal dissenters are getting a Secretary cut from the same moderate-to-liberal mold as his predecessor. At the 1968 Miami convention that nominated Nixon and Agnew, Richardson's was one of the few dissenting shouts from the floor when it was moved that Agnew's nomination be made unanimous.

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