

Most of U.S. is behind anti-war protests

By MICHAEL PRENTICE

WASHINGTON (Reuter). —

AMERICA'S anti-war movement earned new respect with Saturday's peaceful protest by 200,000 opponents of the Vietnam conflict, and its aims now apparently have the support of a majority of Americans.

Organisers rated the massive protest as probably the most effective ever staged here against the war. It was almost certainly the most orderly and peaceful of the big anti-war demonstrations that are now an annual event in Washington.

Policemen lining the parade route had almost nothing to do except joke and talk with the casually-dressed crowd. Police Chief Jerry Wilson described the protesters as "a very peaceful crowd."

Although most of the demonstrators were young, public opinion polls now show most Americans are wary of the war and favour setting a date for total withdrawal of U.S. forces.

President Nixon did not see or hear the protesters as he was out of the city for the week-end. But he has said he will not tip his hand to the enemy by fixing a date for an end to U.S. involvement.

Several members of Congress took part in the demonstration, including Indiana Democratic Senator Vance Hartke, who has a measure before the Senate calling for an immediate withdrawal from Vietnam. The protest marked the peak of this year's anti-war demonstrations here — although others are still to come. More radical groups will seek to bring life in the city to a halt in the first week of May by civil disobedience.

Saturday's demonstration, in size alone, was impressive, with crowds packing the public grounds in front of the houses of Congress and a sea of people stretching away a mile along Pennsylvania Avenue and the Mall.

By police estimates the turnout of 200,000 was the second largest ever staged against the Vietnam War.

The latest protest was dismissed as "a parade of hippies" by right-wing broadcaster Carl McIntyre, who heads a movement demanding nothing less than a U.S. military victory in Vietnam.