

Cities Getting Full Hearing in Capital

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

Concern with the urban condition has reached a saturation point in Washington this week.

A group of 2,400 city planners and allied professionals, including a delegation of 100 members from the Town Planning Institute of London, are meeting at the Shoreham Hotel through Friday at the American Institute of Planners' 50th anniversary convention. Their theme is the next 50 years of planning, or "the future environment of a democracy."

A splinter group of young professionals called Planners for Equal Opportunity is staging through Wednesday a kind of vest pocket "counter-convention" in the hotel, called "Planning: Black and White: Today." The group has about 230 members.

The Institute of Planners' New Towns Tour of the Washington area will be paralleled by a Planners for Equal Opportunity New Towns Tour of Washington slums.

The off-shoot meeting, which is causing some unhappiness among the parent planners, is billed as "a call to the profession to end racial discrimination, the war in Vietnam, and give decision-making power to the poor and minority groups."

House Investigation

At the same time, the Subcommittee on Urban Affairs of the Senate and House Joint Economic Committee, headed by Representative Richard Bolling, Democrat of Missouri, is holding a continuation of hearings on "Urban America: Goals and Problems."

The hearings, also through Wednesday, will complete the first phase of a long-range Congressional investigation of the urban crisis.

The subcommittee hearings are at the Capitol. Planners for Equal Opportunity has its headquarters in a hotel room. The sessions of the Institute of Planners overflow the grand ballroom, where brilliant embroidered and patchwork banners commissioned from Norman la Liberté, the artist, cover the walls, eclipsing conventional crystal and brocade.

Behind the podium, as part of a group featuring birds, butterflies, stars, moons, mermaids and lions, one banner reads, "The best of everything is what I want for everyone but it costs millions."

The items look as if they might have been made by flower children, but they were stitched up by Mr. la Liberté's students at Newton College in Massachusetts.

A group of the colorful banners scheduled for the Rock Creek Park Bridge at the entrance to the Institute of Planners' convention area was vetoed by a recently changed District Commission as "childish."

The opening session this morning was keyed by Bertrand de Jouvenel, the economist and political philosopher, who edits a journal of writings about the future. Mr. de Jouvenel, an impeccable French intellectual, with silver hair and goatee and starched white collar and cuffs, plunged right back into the 19th century in a discussion of short-term objective.

The broad roles of art, spirit and science in the environment were treated by Dr. Harold Taylor, art educator and former president of Sarah Lawrence College; Joseph Sittler, a theologian of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago; John R. Platt, biophysicist, and Ralph G. H. Siu, chemist. The session was led by Charles Blessing, director of Detroit's Planning Commission.

The afternoon meeting dealt, equally broadly, with the culture of American cities. Papers were given by Carl Feiss, a pioneer American city planner; John Burchard, educator and

urban historian, and Robert C. Wood, Under Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Planners for Equal Opportunity rebels moved their workshops to the hotel's rose garden terrace. The balmy sunshine brought the Institute of Planners' young in heart out of the ballroom to swell the revolution to about 200.

"We are the wayward children of the planners," one clear-faced young woman explained. "We range from liberal to radical. We want to reform our elders." Many are members of the institute.

"It's a grass-roots movement," noted an English visitor. "We've had it in Britain. They want to join citizenship participation to political action in the planning process."

In the ballroom, Mr. Wood

observed in apparent harmony: "The basic decisions will be made in the political arena. We need involvement in the political process."

Later in the week specific programs and policies will be discussed. There will be panels on housing, transportation, resources, technology, and the problems of minorities.

Speakers will include Bayard Rustin, civil rights leader; Robert M. Hutchins, president of Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions; Charles Abrams, housing authority; Colin Buchanan, British transportation expert; Lyle C. Fitch, president of the Institute of Public Administration; Orville L. Freeman, Secretary of Agriculture; August Heckscher, New York City parks commissioner, and Gunnar Myrdal, Swedish sociologist.