

Police Assailed by Mayor On Laxity at Peace Rally

By MAURICE CARROLL

While Police Commissioner Howard R. Leary sat grim-faced at his left, Mayor Lindsay charged yesterday that New Yorkers had "witnessed a breakdown of the police as the barrier between them and wanton violence" on Friday.

He ordered Mr. Leary to conduct a "thorough investigation" of what he called "failures of police performance" when a band led by helmeted construction workers roamed lower Manhattan on Friday, beating antiwar demonstrators and storming City Hall, forcing officials to lift the United States flag atop the building to full staff. Seventy persons, including four policemen, were injured in the disorders.

The Mayor — angry over

charges that the police had failed to marshal enough force to meet the mobs and that some policemen had been slow in guarding youngsters from the construction men — summoned the city's three top police officials to Gracie Mansion yesterday.

Joined by Deputy Mayor Richard R. Aurelio, he met privately for more than three hours with Mr. Leary, First Deputy Commissioner John F. Walsh and Chief Inspector George P. McManus.

Then reporters were called in and Mayor Lindsay read a statement saying that the violence by "marauding bands of construction workers" had been

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AT GRACIE MANSION: Mayor Lindsay with Commissioner Howard R. Leary talking to newsmen after their meeting.

Mayor Assails Police on Rally Laxity

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"appalling and that the police had failed to contain it.

He ordered the following:—

¶A "thorough investigation to fix responsibility at the command level" and "prompt disciplinary action" against those who failed to perform their duty, with the Commissioner to report back to him by Friday.

¶A request to the bar association for the creation of an "independent corps of civilian lawyers" to serve as "impartial observers" at demonstrations.

¶A "thorough review of police planning for protests and demonstrations."

'Impartiality Essential'

Mr. Lindsay and Mr. Leary declined to go much beyond the language of the prepared statement at the news conference.

In it, Mr. Lindsay said that "police impartiality is essential." Did that mean, he was asked, that he had evidence that some policemen had been partial? The Mayor shook his head impatiently. "It's a thorough statement," he said. "It stands by itself."

Most of yesterday's meeting, he said, consisted of a "long chronology, a step-by-step description of the events."

The police officials, he said, told him how the crowd of construction workers had rampaged through the Financial District, then deflected off to City Hall, how some had splintered off to invade Pace College across Park Row from City Hall, beating some students and shattering massive plate glass

windows with crowbars and metal tools.

Antiwar demonstrators who had spit on and cursed the flag in front of construction men had been "highly provocative," the Mayor said.

Among those criticizing the police performance was Deputy Manhattan Borough President Leonard N. Cohen, who charged in a telegram to the Mayor yesterday that the police had shown "gross negligence" in failing to restrain an attack led by construction workers on the demonstrators.

"They were mingling amiably on the steps of City Hall with the construction workers while the students were brutally beaten," according to Mr. Cohen, who said he had "shrieked" at the police from the City Hall Steps.

"The Mayor is disturbed by reports of inadequate police response during the events that took place yesterday—particularly in lower Manhattan," Thomas Morgan, the Mayor's press secretary, said as the private meeting began.

He added: "I would describe the Mayor's mood as angry at these reports."

Mr. Morgan said that "yards and yards of film footage of the events are going to have to be looked at"

The Mayor went to the mansion meeting after attending, with his wife, the installation of the Right Rev. Paul Moore Jr. as coadjutor Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York.

In an immediate reaction to criticism, Commissioner Leary

had said that the police had been stretched thin by the large number of demonstrations.

When the crowd swarmed through City Hall Park at 1 P.M. on Friday, it stopped at a double row of wooden barricades at the edge of City Hall Plaza, which was guarded by a handful of policemen.

"That kind of verbal violence is almost as bad as physical violence," he said with a troubled frown. But whatever the provocation, he said firmly, it gave no one "the right to take the law into their own hands."