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Guard Held Lax

N.Y. Police Probe in Riot

NEW YORK — (AP) — Police Commissioner Howard Leary and his top-ranking officers met privately with Mayor John Lindsay yesterday amid charges that police were negligent in protecting peace demonstrators against an assault by some 1000 construction workers and others near City Hall Friday.

About 70 persons were injured when the helmeted workers, swinging crowbars and clubs, waded through a crowd of protesters and attacked students in the lobby of nearby Pace College, smashing windows and furniture.

Although City Hall sources had said police had been warned of a possible confrontation a day earlier, Leary issued a statement saying his department had "no reason to anticipate major violence or disorder."

Only 6 Police

Only six regular officers were on duty when the workers first arrived, chanting patriotic slogans and, at one point, attempting to enter City Hall. Police were overpowered and unable to make arrests.

Charging "gross negligence" on the part of police, Leonard N. Cohen, deputy borough president of Manhattan, said yesterday he was prepared to testify at any investigation that "police, from my observation, stood by and negligently permitted this to happen in their presence."

Friday's confrontation came as most local colleges and all of the city's 900 public schools were closed in connection with student protests against U.S. military intervention in Cambodia and the killing of four students at Kent State University.

'Not Representative'

In a statement yesterday, strike committees at 17 city colleges and universities said the militant construction workers did not represent the working people but were instead, "para-military forces operating to divide the workers and students of this country — to pit them against each other."

The statement said the armed workers "seemed to be carefully organized and directed."