

April 1, 1969

Last night I was forced to make a most difficult decision. This was to bring police on to the Queens College campus to remove persons illegally occupying the Social Science Building. I did not do this without a great deal of forethought, and without exhausting every means of peaceful persuasion which I felt was at my disposal. Throughout this entire process I was in constant consultation with members of the faculty.

The form of protest was in violation of a widely disseminated and firmly declared policy governing the right of peaceful protest at the College. This policy was established in March 1968 and reaffirmed by unanimous vote of the Faculty Council. The Administration made a number of efforts to discuss and to partially accommodate the demands of the illegal occupants. A letter, indicating the steps we were taking, was transmitted to the protesters. A copy of this letter is published in today's Phoenix. We made several open and insistent attempts to carry on a dialogue with the protesters, but were prevented by them from doing so.

To ensure the safety of all students and to guarantee the responsible operation of the College it was mandatory that this illegal occupation be brought to a close before the opening of school on Tuesday. I was further moved by the very important consideration of making clear to the College as a whole and to the larger community our resolve to carry out our responsibility for orderly processes on the campus.

Our letter to the occupants evidenced a clear desire to re-open all the questions at issue for the most thorough examination, provided that it was understood that we could not, at the same time, uphold the principle of due process and yield to threats of disruption. To recognize their demands as non-negotiable would have effectively destroyed any semblance of due process or, indeed, the possibility of carrying out our public trust for the welfare of the College. It was the continued refusal of this group to acknowledge any basis of discussion or to recognize our earnest desire to search for fair and responsible solutions which forced me to abandon any hope of reasonable accommodation and act to end the occupation.

The police were brought in only after intensive efforts to open discussion and repeated requests for the occupants to leave. Immediately prior to the police being called they were given the opportunity to leave without any charges being preferred. The majority of the original occupants did, in fact, leave at this time. Those who remained and chose to be arrested were escorted away in a completely orderly fashion under the surveillance of thirty student, faculty, and administration observers present to ensure that no unnecessary force would be employed.

I wish to affirm the College's determination to do two things: to act promptly to bring to a halt any further disruptive acts which may occur on the campus, and to continue to evolve, with the widest possible participation, a stable and enduring structure for faculty-student cooperation to ensure maximum protection of the rights of all members of the Queens College community.