

From the Chairman

JNB/PT

University of Essex

Department of Chemistry  
Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex  
Tel: Colchester (OCO 6) 5141

**T of E Ref. 1**

17th May, 1968.

Dear Dr. King,

Although I was not present at the meeting on Tuesday, May 7th, I felt it would be useful if the Committee of Inquiry received a brief account of the events prior to the meeting.

The University of Essex Chemical Society has received official recognition by the University of Essex Union. Its membership includes both staff and students and its business is conducted by a committee which includes one staff representative. The majority of its academic activities are operated in conjunction with the Department, largely because this enables it to make use of financial resources provided by the Chemical Society of London. However, each year the students themselves organise three lectures of more general interest and Dr. Inch's lecture fell in this category.

It appears that the decision to invite Dr. Inch was taken by students and members of staff only heard about it after the invitation had been made. On the other hand, I do not believe that any member of staff would have wished to reverse this decision. Dr. Inch's talk was not, of course, concerned with any aspect of chemical or biological warfare or indeed had any military implication. For obvious security reasons, he would not have been permitted by the Ministry of Defence to speak on such a subject even if we had wished him to do so. Members of my Department are better qualified than I to describe the proposed content of his lecture.

My first indication of a possible demonstration came indirectly on the previous day from Mr. Evans. I first ensured that the maintenance staff had been informed and then asked Dr. Tillett to take the chair at the meeting. Although these meetings are only rarely attended by members of staff I felt it advisable on this occasion not to leave students in charge. I also asked as many members of staff as possible to attend the meetings. I hoped that these moves would help to keep the "temperature" down. My instructions to the staff were to admit any students who wished to attend and, in the current phase, to "play it cool" by trying not to provoke any demonstrators.

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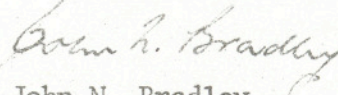


On the following day, I learnt of the decision to change the venue of the meeting at the last moment. I believe this was first suggested by the maintenance department and I concurred with it although I was not entirely happy with it, not because I felt it to be inflammatory but because I thought it was unnecessary.

The subsequent events will be made abundantly clear to you. I feel I should say that I made two errors of judgement: firstly in believing that one could ask any speaker to the University to speak on an academic subject without interference and secondly, after hearing of a possible demonstration, in totally misjudging the nature and extent of the interference planned.

Finally, I would like to add one request. Several accusations have subsequently been made about the conduct of members of my department and one in particular was published in Wyvern which referred to damage to a pair of spectacles. I know myself that this accusation is completely unfounded and I would request your committee to investigate this incident.

Yours sincerely,



John N. Bradley  
Chairman  
Department of Chemistry

Dr. A. King,  
Dept. of Government.