

3/8/69

The College's Information Service has prepared the following factual account of a recent "happening" at the College:

On February 5 a group of 10 students -- six women and four men -- removed their clothing at a campus meeting as a protest against what they said was the exploitation of women by Playboy magazine. A representative of Playboy was speaking at the meeting, which was held as a non-public event in one of the residence-hall lounges. The meeting was one of a series exploring the many and various facets of interpersonal relationships, including sexual attitudes.

Approximately 75 persons were present, including the 10 demonstrators. After disrobing, the latter remained nude for 10 minutes or so and throughout conducted themselves quietly and in a non-provocative manner (in other words, this was not a "strip-tease" act). The speaker continued his remarks after only a momentary pause as the demonstrators began their protest. The audience, also only momentarily diverted, returned its attention to the speaker. However, photographers were present to cover the demonstration, and subsequently two of them sold pictures of the disrobing scene to Des Moines news media, one of which was a wire service which distributed at least one of the pictures on its national wire with captions which sensationalized the whole episode.

As the college was preparing to take action by identifying the demonstrators and bringing their case before the Faculty-Student Judicial Council, certain state legislators, without waiting to make sure of all the facts in the situation, called upon the state attorney general to investigate the incident. This he proceeded to do, with the result that any action contemplated by the college had to be summarily postponed in order not to becloud any legal considerations involved for either the student demonstrators or the college as an institution. Subsequently, nine of the demonstrators (the tenth remains unidentified) were charged with "indecent exposure" (a misdemeanor, not a felony, under Iowa law). They pleaded innocent. Eight were bound over to the district court, and one case was dismissed. No further information will be available until the court takes action.