

FARM RIOT IN AMIENS

35 mm. developed positive ~~15 meters - 50 ft~~ 15 meters - 50 ft

A peaceful demonstration staged by some 30,000 farmers turned into a three-hour pitched battle yesterday afternoon in AMIENS in the north of France. Farmers from seven northern departments had met in the town in front of the old Circus, for a protest against government price policies, but according to a statement issued last night by the Interior Ministry in Paris, the riot was blamed on a group of 1500 to 2000 agitators who were not farmers and attacked the police turning an orderly demonstration into a riot.

Hurling bricks and stones, demonstrators attacked the riot police guarding the center of the city and the office building of the Prefecture (regional governor). Police counter-charged several times, protecting themselves with riot shields and hurling tear-gas grenades while firemen turned powerful hoses on the rioters. Despite the tear gas and the drenching fire hoses, the demonstrators smashed through several cordons of police but were stopped by barrages of parked police trucks.

When order was restored after the battle, some 50 police were reported injured as well as 70 rioters. Some 80 arrests were made, mostly for identification checks.

While shouting their demands for increases in farm-product prices for no reason came out of the crowds yells of "Vive Massu" and "Algerie Francaise". These were the rallying cries of the insurgents in Algiers, and it seems to indicate as told the Government statement, that nationalist provocators were scattered among the protesting farmers.

French farmers throughout France claim that small and medium-size farms no longer make a profit due to the rise in the cost of living, notably the price of agricultural machinery and equipment.