

PROPANE BLASTS HIT TRADE CENTER

4 Explosions Are Described as an Industrial Accident

By LAWRENCE VAN GELDER

Propane gas explosions, described by the Fire Department as accidental, shook the skeletal south tower of the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan yesterday, injured six workmen and caused a suspension of operations for 2,000 other construction men and employees of nearby businesses.

Police and Fire Department officials said it was coincidental that the explosions, which rocketed flame more than 100 feet into the air and shattered windows across the street came less than a half hour after a telephone warning that a bomb had been planted at the construction site.

Other bomb threats yesterday in Manhattan—where three buildings were damaged by bombs last Thursday—caused an early closing of the Commodity Exchange and a delay in some long-distance telephone calls.

• Shortly before 5 P.M. yesterday, a telephone call to the police said a bomb had been planted at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, where Vice President Agnew was staying. The Vice President left minutes after the police and firemen arrived to carry out a search. The police reported later that no bomb had been found.

At City Hall, in response to a request by Mayor Lindsay, Deputy Mayor Robert M. Morgenthau reviewed existing legislation on dynamite and pronounced New York City's statutes and regulations complete and adequate, but he recommended tightening of state and Federal laws.

of transactions involving dynamite.

According to Chief Fire Marshal Vincent M. Canty, the explosion at the World Trade Center construction site took place at about 1:30 P.M., after a truck struck a tank of propane gas, loosening a valve on the tank. The escaping gas was ignited and the explosion of that tank, Mr. Canty said, ignited three others.

At the time, about 200 workmen were busy in the structure, just west of Greenwich Street between Cortlandt and Liberty Streets. The World Trade Center, a \$600-million Port Authority project scheduled for completion in 1973, is to consist of two 110-story towers.

The police said that the threat of a bomb at the site was received at 1:04 P.M. The Fire Department responded to an alarm at the site at 1:31 P.M. and quickly extinguished the fire that followed the propane explosion. Fire Marshal Canty said the explosion was "purely an industrial accident."

Another bomb threat caused the evacuation yesterday of most of the 2,600 employees in the New York Telephone Company buildings at 221 and 227 East 37th Street between 10:30 A.M. and 11:10 A.M. Among those who left the building were a number of operators whose departure caused some delay in the handling of long-distance calls requiring the services of operators.

In Newark, the Federal Building was emptied for about 90 minutes yesterday after a telephoned bomb threat.

At City Hall in New York, Deputy Mayor Morgenthau called state and Federal laws on dynamite inadequate. He recommended revision of the Federal Gun Control Act of 1968 to include a requirement for the licensing of buyers of dynamite.

He also recommended tightening of state licensing provisions and improved recording