

# New City Detective System to Begin Today - Critics Ready

## Some Say Wilson Plan Won't Work Out

BY GEORGE BLISS

The Chicago police department will complete today the decentralization of the detective force which involves more than 1,000 men and is the most far-reaching and controversial project since Orlando W. Wilson took command of the department nearly 14 months ago.

The reorganization, which includes procedures never before experienced by the investigative staff of the police department, is considered by Wilson and his aids as the most important move of the new regime—and a factor which eventually will give Chicago the best crime fighting machine of any city in the country.

### Some Take Dim View

Wilson expresses complete confidence in the new detective set-up, but his critics, and even some of his followers, insist that he has blundered and the results are apparent and will become more so in the lack of solutions to major crimes.

The decentralization of the detective division doubles the size of the force under Chief Maurice Begner and creates six new area headquarters, the final one to be activated tomorrow in the Prairie avenue district station, 330 E. 29th st. The functioning of the Wilson plan also creates entirely new concepts and approaches to the handling of investigations and work procedures of Chicago detectives. Among these are:

1. The abolishment of detective "teams." Detectives will work alone unless more than one man is assigned to a case. Teams of detectives who have worked together for years have been broken up and sent to different areas.

### Only Patrols in Districts

2. There will be no detectives, with the exception of a few men assigned to vice, working out of police districts. All district detectives have been transferred to the six area headquarters under the command of the chief of detectives.

3. District command officers will no longer lead investigations of major crimes in their districts. The function of the district force will be uniformed patrol work.



Maurice Begner

4. Uniformed policemen, or patrol officers, will conduct a detailed preliminary investigation of all crimes which involve interviews with complainants, witnesses, and others. Specific field report forms covering every possible type of a crime are completed at the scene and "follow-up" investigations are performed by detective personnel. In the past, uniformed police stepped back at a major crime and detectives handled all details.

### Drop "Roaming" Squads

5. Detectives no longer will rush to the scene of all felonies. If it is deemed necessary that they go to the scene immediately, they will be sent there. Otherwise they will study the reports from the patrol officers and take up their investigations from there.

6. There are to be no "roaming" detective squads. When a detective is in a squad he will be on a specific assignment with instructions to be on the alert for wanted criminals and acts of crime.

7. Detectives will rarely visit the detective bureau headquarters, 1121 S. State st., formerly the home base for the 500 bureau detectives. Only 37 men of detective rank will report to the bureau headquarters.

### Create "Review Units"

8. Creation of "review units" composed of six men in each of the five bureau sections, homicide, robbery, auto theft, burglary, and general assignments. These 30 detectives, considered the most experienced in their specialties, will review investigative reports for possible errors or mishandling of cases.

9. The unofficial title of

"front office men," the detectives who were assigned to the chief and took orders from the chief and no one else, has been abolished. Whenever the detective chief has a special assignment he will "borrow" men from units under his command.

10. Abolishment of cartage and other details on the theory that the details had become more or less special guards or policemen assigned to specific industries that should hire their own private guards. This move, according to Begner, releases many men to work on other cases.

The new detective plan places 1,250 detectives under the command of Begner. Half of these men formerly worked in 38 district or patrol stations.

### Each Area Different

Begner said a careful and detailed study has been made to determine the number of men to be assigned to each of the six area headquarters. Consideration, he said, was given to the number of burglaries committed in the areas, the number of robberies and other crimes.

Area 4, in the Maxwell street station at 943 Maxwell street, has been assigned 290 detectives because of the high crime rate in the near west side districts, Begner said. Area 2, with headquarters in the Burnside station, 9059 Cottage Grove av., has only 119 men. Area 1, which will cover near south side districts with high crime rates, from the Prairie avenue station, has 267 men.

The number of men and locations of the three other detec-

tive areas are: Area 3, Brighton Park station, 3900 S. California av., 136 men; area 5, Shakespeare avenue station, 2138 N. California av., 188 men; and area 6, in the North Damen avenue station, 3801 N. Damen av., 204 men.

### Admits Some Mistakes

Begner was quick to admit that there have been some mistakes made in putting into operation the new detective system. But he said the errors were not the fault of the system, but in getting it into operation.

Tribune police reporters have noted since the first detective area headquarters was opened March 1 in the Burnside station that reports of some major crimes were delayed. Begner said that the delays were caused when patrol officers failed to follow instructions in reporting by telephone details of crimes to area recording centers.

What occurred, Begner said, was that policemen, when dictating to the recording machines, were talking in "dead" phones because they ignored dictation instructions outlined in the extensive blue covered field reporting manual every policeman must now carry as part of his police equipment.

### Probe "Dog Bite" Cases

In several instances homicide detectives were assigned to "dog bite" cases. The astonished investigators followed thru on these investigations, but were unable to find out just how the assignments were routed thru to the homicide division.

Begner said he heard of such

incidents, but added that if a rabid dog should bite a person it possibly could end up a homicide, altho he admitted there hasn't been a "mad dog" case in Chicago in quite a few years.

"I know there are bitter objections to the new system and I have spent hours talking to the men who claim the system won't work," Begner said. "But their objections just don't hold water when you get right down to cases.

District captains insist that the major mistake in the new detective system is removing district detectives from districts where they were acquainted with hoodlums and other criminals and had established valuable informants, or "stoolies."

### "Hasn't Lost a Thing"

"The department hasn't lost a thing because the record will show that knowing the hoodlums in a district doesn't help much," Begner said. "Our mission is putting criminals in jail."

It is important, Begner said, for policemen to establish good contacts and he hinted that a system is being worked out so that detectives, who in the past were forced to give "expense" money to informants out of their own pockets, might have money available to work on a case when it is necessary.

As to the complaint that it is dangerous to order a detective to work alone, Begner said that police officials in some cities have established that the vast majority of policemen

killed on duty were working with a partner.

### "Lone Man More Alert"

"A man who works alone is much more alert to danger than one who has a partner and is depending on his partner to be alert for danger," Begner said.

There has been a great waste of manpower in the detective division in the past, Begner pointed out. He said on many cases one detective would interview and take notes from a person while his partner or partners would sit around and wait.

"Each assignment is studied and if needed we will assign a score of detectives," Begner said. "We are not dropping 'stake outs' or jobs of surveillance where needed."

### Exceptions to Rule

The rule that a Chicago policeman can lose his job if found in the company of a known criminal will not necessarily pertain to his detectives, Begner insisted. He said if the detective could establish that he was obtaining information from the criminal he had nothing to worry about.

Begner said he hasn't been able to determine whether there has been a slow down in solution of crimes or whether fewer men are being sent to the penitentiary. He said he knows that major arrests are being made and when the new police record system has been in effect long enough so that a good comparison can be made he will be able to know whether the crime rate is being cut down and if criminals are being arrested.