

Wilson Gives Views on 'New Police Look'

Reveals Results of 20 Months of Changes

(Final article in a series)
 BY CLAY GOWRAN

Police Supt. Orlando W. Wilson spent two hours in his office the other day answering questions from a TRIBUNE reporter about the Chicago police department and what has happened to it in the 20 months it has been under his control.

One of the first queries was based on the fact that there have been repeated references to an "11,000-man plus" department which Chicago does not have.

On Jan. 1, 1960—before the Summerdale police scandal, and before Wilson assumed command March 4 of that year in its aftermath—Chicago had 10,630 "sworn police personnel" [as distinguished from civilian employes of the department].

Hundreds Leave Force

Between March 1, 1960, and Oct. 1, 1961, hundreds of policemen left the force. A total of 453 "resigned with pension" [men under the normal 63 year old retirement age, but with 25 or more years of service], 339 resigned, altho they were not eligible for pensions, 84 were discharged, and 83 were retired on pension at the compulsory age of 63.

The total number of sworn personnel as of Oct. 1 was 10,470 policemen, despite Wilson's efforts at recruiting. He was asked about the situation. Were there fewer policemen on the streets, was recruiting falling down, what did the future hold?

"The total number of sworn police personnel is lower," he said. "However, changes we have made have countered that reduction. Consolidation of police districts has freed 180 men, formerly tied up in district station operations, for outside duty. Substitution of civilian personnel for policemen in desk jobs has put another 350 policemen on regular police work."

Wants Faster Recruiting

"We would like to see faster recruiting of new policemen, and had anticipated we would be able to place new men more rapidly. But recently so many candidates took the police examinations that we believe we will be in a position to bring the force up to its budgeted strength in 1962."

The proposed 1962 police budget, which totals \$84,545,- provides for 11,121 police officers, and 2,728 civilian employes in the department. Civilian workers today total 2,247.

Is crime being combated more effectively today than before Wilson took over and instituted his drastic changes?

Looks to July Report

"I think the department is more efficient in fighting crime, but I can't prove it satisfactorily at this stage," Wilson said. "I will be able to show results, one way or the other, next July. At that time, we believe, an accurate crime reporting and record system we have instituted will have been in operation for 12 months. We will be able to get a true picture of what is happening."

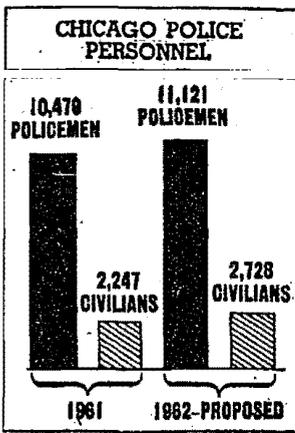
Is the police department, generally, more honest today than it was in March, 1960, when Wilson assumed command in the wake of disclosures that some policemen of the Summerdale district had turned burglar?

"I think there is less evidence today of irregular practices on the part of police," he said.

Completes "Foundation"

Does Wilson have in mind any new and big changes in structure or operations of the police force on the scale of his reorganization of the detective division, and establishment of a special 400 man bureau to watch over policemen and criminals?

"Nothing on that scale is contemplated," Wilson said. "I like to believe that the big change we have accomplished



was the building of a proper foundation. From now on, we are going to concentrate on improvement of the department's effectiveness in combating crime. We hope these efforts will be reflected in the city's crime rates.

"If the force will think of its job as far more than just dealing with individual incidents as they arise, if it will think of its duty as one of actively and aggressively attempting to prevent crime, in that way we will improve."

"Must Block Criminals"

How does a police department "actively and aggressively prevent crime?" the superintendent was asked.

"By putting policemen where the criminal is," he replied. "By blocking the opportunity for criminals to commit crimes."

Wilson was asked for an answer to assertions by a leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People that, while Wilson has opened up opportunities for Negro policemen on the force, "a lot more should be done to distribute Negro policemen throughout the entire city so there will be integration in every unit and at every level of the force." [Views of the N. A. A. C. P. and the Chicago Urban league were given in an earlier article in this series.]

"In our assignments of police, we have followed a simple policy which I think is sound," Wilson said. "We try to assign policemen to duty in the general areas in which they live, as far as possible. This automatically results in a lack of integration in certain areas. But, for the most part, integration of the police department

has been carried out reasonably well."

Discusses Internal Unit

One of Wilson's innovations has been establishment of an "internal investigation division" within the department—a special unit which has the duty of watching other members of the force for dishonesty, brutality, and other serious misconduct. He was asked if this unit is temporary, or just a short-lived aftermath of the Summerdale scandal? Or, is it to be permanent?

"It will be a permanent adjunct of the department, so far as I am concerned," said Wilson. "It should be remembered that the unit not only is concerned with gathering evidence of guilt, where a policeman is guilty, but is equally concerned with proving his innocence of allegations when he is innocent."

"I think that, in the passage of time, policemen will realize the importance of the IID for their own protection."

Answer to a Complaint

The reporter doing the groundwork for this series on the police department heard numerous complaints from policemen about Wilson's employment of one man police patrol cars. Police said that a lone man was at a disadvantage in patrol operation, that the perils he faced were greater because of his lack of a partner. Wilson was asked for comment.

"I'm not convinced of the hazard of one-man patrol operations, if they are properly conducted," he said. "When I went to the Wichita police force in 1928, it had had nine men killed in the preceding nine years. Each had had a partner at the time he was killed."

"In 1929, we went into one-man car operations, and Wichita has operated in that manner since. We didn't lose a single man to bandit gunfire."

"False Sense of Security"

"In two-man patrol operation there is a false sense of security, all out of proportion to the actual aid provided by that second man. We don't ask, or expect, a one-man squad to go in on a case where there should be support."

"For instance, no policeman should go in alone on such a call as 'a burglary in progress.' For one or even two policemen to go in on a situation like that more often than not would result in the criminal's escaping. There should be fast action to see that the site is properly surrounded and that adequate numbers of officers are on hand."