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# POLICE SCIENCE



CALVIN GODDARD [Ed.]

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## RECENT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT<sup>1</sup>

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E. W. PUTTKAMMER<sup>2</sup>

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The reputation of Chicago as the crime capital of the United States is notorious. Whether the reputation is entirely deserved, and whether local conditions are any worse than in many other cities are other matters not now in point. Suffice it to say that such statistics as there are make its pre-eminence at least doubtful. Conditions, however, were and are bad enough to raise an insistent public demand for improved police protection. About four years ago the Chicago Crime Commission focused and largely directed this demand, and the then Commissioner of Police, William Russell, was also in sympathy with it. As a result a Citizens' Police Committee was organized in January, 1929, to make a complete non-partisan survey of the department.<sup>3</sup> An operating staff was set up, headed by Bruce Smith, an expert on police organization. After two years of in-

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<sup>1</sup>The substance of this article appeared in a committee report to the Chicago Crime Commission.

<sup>2</sup>Chairman of the Committee on Police, Sheriff and Coroner of the Chicago Crime Commission, professor of law at the University of Chicago.

<sup>3</sup>The personnel of the committee was suggested to Commissioner Russell by Judge A. A. Bruce, President of the American Institute of Criminology, Mr. Frank J. Loesch, President of the Crime Commission, Mr. Arthur Dill Scott, President of Northwestern University, and Mr. Frederic C. Woodward, acting president of the University of Chicago. These gentlemen selected Professors E. W. Burgess, E. W. Puttkammer and L. D. White of the University of Chicago, and A. A. Bruce, F. B. Crossley and J. H. Wigmore of Northwestern University, Mr. George Fairweather and Col. Henry Barrett Chamberlain, operating director of the Crime Commission. Prof. Wigmore was later succeeded by Dean Leon Green, also of Northwestern University.

tensive work the results were published in January, 1931, in a volume entitled "Chicago Police Problems."

This volume contained a large number of definite recommendations, and a start toward putting them into effect was at once made by Commissioner Russell. Before more than a beginning had been made, however, he left office, and was succeeded by John H. Alcock as acting commissioner. During the latter's time in office all progress was completely halted, and some of the reforms already instituted were abandoned. But immediately upon the appointment of the present<sup>4</sup> Commissioner, James P. Allman, progress was resumed, and has been steady ever since, due to his helpful, intelligent cooperation. Under his efficient administration everything possible is being done to further the plan of reorganization. The following pages contain an outline of the extremely diverse improvements already made or begun.

One of the first, because one of the simplest, concerned the patrol wagon service. Formerly each station had to take independent care, not only of its wagon calls to bring prisoners in, but also of its outgoing work, to send prisoners to the Municipal Court, to the Bureau of Identification, to the Jail, etc. Station wagons were gone a large part of the day on these routine trips, usually carrying only a small number of prisoners to each destination, and meanwhile leaving the stations without wagon service. Now a small number of pick-up wagons performs all this routine work, calling at all stations on a regular schedule, thus leaving station wagons free to answer police calls. As a result of this more intensive use wagon service has been made far more speedy, and in addition 140 men have been released for other duties. The saving to the city, through having these men available where otherwise additional men would have to be engaged, amounts to \$350,000 annually.

In the past a lock-up has been maintained at practically every police station. Many of them were extremely unsanitary, and it was early decided to recommend that some be discontinued. Twelve have been closed.<sup>5</sup> However in selecting those to be closed it was found necessary to give somewhat less consideration to the element of sanitation, and more to that of the importance of a station, its nearness to another station, etc. The improvement of physical conditions of this sort, while extremely important, must be left to the future.

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<sup>4</sup>November, 1932.

<sup>5</sup>The number of police stations in use throughout the city fluctuates within narrow limits. It is about forty.

Through the closing of these lock-ups fifty-six men have been released for other duties, an annual saving of \$140,000.

An improvement that has attracted wide attention and comment was the establishing of a central complaint room at Police Headquarters. Through the cooperation of the local telephone company practically all calls for police help come to it in the first instance. They are then relayed to whatever police organization is appropriate. The radio broadcasting is part of the duties of the central complaint room, which by its unifying control is able to assign calls to the most available squad cars. Considerably speedier police response is possible under the system of a central complaint room. Another, and wholly separate, advantage is that it makes possible more complete and reliable police records and statistics and a greater control over districts and district commanders, due to the greatly increased difficulty of "covering up." Wide newspaper publicity has centered popular interest on this improvement.

The call-box lines (used by officers on post to report to station headquarters) have been rearranged and consolidated, so that all calls now go directly to the stations where the proposed division headquarters<sup>e</sup> are located, instead of to the particular station to which the officer is attached. The efficiency of the patrol force should be increased by this far more impersonal handling of calls, as the patrol officer and the call receiver will be, to a much larger extent, unknown to each other. To cover the cost of rewiring, etc., \$85,000 has been set up in the city's budget, but the estimated saving under the simpler new system will be over \$200,000 annually, or far in excess of the entire cost of the consolidation.

After the termination of their work with the Citizens' Police Committee Mr. Bruce Smith and his staff were engaged directly by the department itself, to act in an advisory capacity, and have aided in the preparation of the department budget. Through careful consideration of all expenditures the budget shows an economy of \$646,000. By the same means a revision of the Police Ordinance has been made and laid before the City Council for its consideration.

Miscellaneous changes, many of them of great importance, will be listed in more or less the order of their adoption.

Thanks to the steady cooperation of the Civil Service Commission a more vigorous policy in disciplinary trials can be followed. Nor do reinstatements follow dismissals. In the selection of re-

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<sup>e</sup>See below, p. 715.

cruits the civil service rules have been altered to change the minimum and maximum age range from twenty-three to thirty-one years, as it formerly was, to twenty-one to twenty-eight years. (In considering these ages it should be remembered that normally more than a year elapses between passing a candidate and his appointment, thus in effect raising the age range by that much.) The arbitrary ten per cent increase in applicants' grades, so as to pass a larger number and yet ostensibly conform to the statutory requirement of a grade of not less than seventy to pass, has been eliminated. If examinations are not made more easy (and there has so far been no sign of this) it should gradually bring about a more intelligent personnel.

A widespread reduction has taken place in the number of special details which, until recently, in fact reduced the rolls of the department considerably below their ostensible numbers. Thus, for example, details assigned to guard the merchandise trucks of loop stores have been returned to general duty, and special license officer assignments, a meaningless sinecure, have been discontinued. Numerous other examples might be cited, as in all about 400 men have been returned to their proper time rolls. In addition 242 patrolmen have been returned to uniformed duty who had been assigned to citizen's dress at the various stations. All stations now operate on a rigid maximum of men assignable to citizen's dress.<sup>7</sup>

Transportation charges will show a large saving. The issuance of street car coupon books, for the use of non-uniformed members of the force, has been placed under the control of the Commissioner's office. The resultant more rigid control should, it is estimated, save about \$50,000 annually. A new gasoline contract has been entered, with a saving of 4½ cents a gallon, an item of consequence due to the greatly increased gasoline consumption of a partially motorized force.

Other economies of man-power and material, of diverse natures, include a redistribution of squad and patrol cars, according to experience as to need for police service. Along the same lines a new schedule for fire runs for patrol and squad cars is in effect, and a rearrangement of box pulls for detective bureau squads is being made. Disabled policemen have been reallocated to work most suitable for them, and a disability pension rate has been established under the department surgeon. The Garfield School, lent by the Board of Education on condition of paying maintenance costs, but not used,

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<sup>7</sup>This has nothing to do with citizen's dress men operating from the Detective Bureau at Police Headquarters.

has been returned, thus saving these costs. An inventory system for department storekeepers has been installed. These random illustrations will show the sweeping and thorough nature of the economy effort.

To meet charity cases all officers have been supplied with a new and accurate list of social agencies to which to refer such cases. Both city and park police are supplied daily with a bulletin of stolen automobiles.

A specialized school is being conducted for motor vehicle accident prevention squads, and is proving very successful.

Extremely important is the critical review of the 500, more or less, forms in use in the department, with a view of eliminating or consolidating as many as possible, with a resultant increased saving and possibly increased usefulness. At the same time the Probst civil service ratings for efficiency are being given an experimental trial, previous rating methods having proved almost wholly valueless.

An experiment begun by Acting Commissioner Alcock, and in which the Citizen's Police Committee had no share, is the setting up of a so-called "Scotland Yard" in an abandoned police station near the downtown district. While the term is vague and may mean almost anything, the idea seems to be to set aside a group of picked men who would work with as little publicity as possible, and who would be free to stay on an important case as long as it held any promise of solution. While it is still much too early to speak positively, there is considerable promise in the experiment, not only in the immediate objective of solving cases but also in the chance of gradually building up a constantly growing group of well-trained and expert detectives, equipped with the most modern technical knowledge of their profession.

By far the most important innovation now being worked on<sup>8</sup> is the dividing up of all of the city's forty-odd police districts into six approximately equal divisions, with one station designated as division headquarters in each division, and with a higher officer in command of the whole division. This should produce greatly increased control over district commanders and their activities, and heighten inter-district cooperation. Over these six divisional commanders will be a single commanding officer responsible for the work of the entire uniformed force and answerable directly to the Commissioner of Police who by this means will be freed from a mass of petty detail

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<sup>8</sup>Its adoption was announced while this paper was in press.