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George B. McClellan

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OBSERVATIONS ON POLICE LEADERSHIP

GEORGE B. McCLELLAN

George B. McClellan, Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, has served through the various ranks of his force and advises that he is one of its few remaining members who carried out patrols and investigations on horseback. During his years of service with the R. C. M. Police he has seen the department develop into a modern law enforcement organization with four crime laboratories, a Canadian Police College, and jurisdiction throughout Canada as a Federal Police force concerned with all Federal Statutes including suppression of the narcotic traffic, smuggling and counterfeiting on a National and International scale. This Force also performs Provincial Police duties in all Canadian provinces with the exception of Ontario and Quebec and is the only police force in the Yukon and North West Territories. The Force has ships and patrol boats on the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts as well as the inland waters of Canada, and 20 aircraft strategically placed across Canada and today the Force still patrols the Northern Regions of Canada with 300 sleigh dogs. Commissioner McClellan serves as Vice President of Interpol and his Force maintains radio contact with its Paris Headquarters. We are pleased to reproduce the major portion of his address presented last February at the graduating exercises at the International Police Academy in Washington, D. C.—EDITOR.

It is my opinion that there has been no time in history when the stabilizing influences of the world, including law enforcement bodies, have been so tested as they are today. Instead of the dream of One World and World Government, we have today, in increasing numbers, groups of people—new nations, cutting away the ties of former associations, and striking out alone in an effort to be masters of their own destinies.

Such transitions are not always easily made. When the status quo is changed, it is not done without resentment. Ancient loyalties are affronted and opposition results. Emotions run high and bitterness takes many forms. We have seen a variety of results of such situations all over the world. One common denominator is almost always present—little people get hurt.

Eventually there is a cry going up for peace and stability—those two lovely words in the ears of any policeman—and in due course it is the policeman who is called upon to restore peace and stability on the streets of the village, the city, and the nation.

He may appear first as a soldier of the United Nations in what is most aptly called a "Peace keeping mission". That is police language—police language as it should be—and if the soldier peace officer is successful in his mission, he will be replaced in due course by the Civil police—but that is not the end.

We here today know from our collective experience that the Civil police do and will face a

daily challenge to their authority, their integrity their loyalty, their courage, and their efficiency

In one country the challenge may come from criminals; in another from subversion or terror, or both; and yet in another, from corruption in high places. Combinations of any of these may and do occur.

It has been said many times that the police are the first line of defence in a country. I believe this and that this first line of defence is being challenged, tested, and probed for its weak spots; not only by criminal elements from within our respective countries, but by forces from outside the country.

It is no accident that the textbooks of subversion give a high priority to eliminating or absorbing the police force. Such a result may be achieved, they teach, not only by force but by disaffection, corruption and the creation of public antipathy to law and order.

If you accept my views so far, then I am sure you will agree that those of us charged with the efficiency and effectiveness of the police forces we command, must give an equal or greater priority to the creation of conditions in the police—an atmosphere, an esprit de corps—which will be highly resistant to the insidious or frontal attacks we face. What are these qualities we need and how do we develop them and retain them?

You gentlemen have just completed here in Washington a first-class course in modern police techniques and administration. It will no doubt

be your duty when you return home to use your new knowledge and skills as tools to build a better police force. But first you must be certain of the soundness of the foundation upon which you build, if your structure is to stand against the storms that will beat against it.

If I were called upon to build from the ground up a new police force—give me as my foundation stone—INTEGRITY. Webster's Dictionary defines "integrity" as: "The state or quality of being complete, undivided or unbroken." It is further defined as "Moral soundness, honesty, uprightness." It is all there in that one word "Integrity"; everything you need for a foundation upon which to build.

By itself, integrity will not give you trained men, first-class equipment, police experience or efficiency, but without it all else will fail you in the inevitable crises to come.

Can we develop integrity as a group quality? Yes, I believe we can to a high degree. Provided your recruit selection programme is sound, you must then, in my view, establish a tradition and you must instil in your men a pride in that tradition.

We teach every recruit the history of our Force—we tell them the story of its heroes, who so often stood alone in the early years—and of men who quietly and incorruptibly took the law into the far places of my country—often in the face of brutal weather, violence, and stupidity because of a sense of duty to be done in the tradition of those who had gone before.

Integrity walks hand in hand with loyalty, and loyalty is a two-way street. While all of us strive to develop the loyalty of subordinate ranks to their superiors, do we always make it quite apparent to all our men that Officers must exhibit an even greater loyalty to their subordinates? In loyalty as in all other endeavours the good Officer will always lead—not push.

After integrity and loyalty, give me discipline. No word is more misunderstood. A very wise Officer in my own Force once said to me that police regulations were meant to be a guide to wise men and a law for fools.

Much the same may be said for discipline. There is the discipline of the Roman legion; unquestioning obedience to the point of absurdity. There is a discipline for soldiers who will, for the most part, face their adversary together as a group, a platoon, a company, a battalion.

Police discipline differs from these. The policeman so often faces his problem alone and without immediate help at his side. His discipline must be self-discipline, drawn up from within him when he needs it most, and this discipline is the sum total of all the qualities of integrity, loyalty, courage, sense of duty, and self-respect which you have or should have instilled in your men.

I know of no other way to teach this type of self-discipline except by example. It is, for instance, letting it be seen by all that you yourself, as a superior officer, live by the regulations you expect your men to observe. It is in making it clear that you accept full responsibility for the decisions you make. It is in standing up and defending your men when they are wrongfully criticized—and once in a while it is defending them when perhaps the criticism was justified.

Know something of your men, their homes, their personal problems, their hopes and ambitions. Walk among them and talk to them about these things. Judge their failings with humanity and understanding—and never forget a word of praise for their successes.

From these and many other intangibles will grow discipline that, like a good tree with deep roots, will remain upright against the winds of adversity and provide protection for the people of our countries whom we serve.

I am very conscious that many of you go home from here to face serious problems of law enforcement in your own countries—problems that will require more wisdom than most of us possess. I feel sure that you are leaving this Academy far better prepared to face your responsibilities than when you came to Washington.

May I recommend a sense of humour, and remember once in a while that only in a police state is police work easy.

May I, in closing, leave with you a few words written by Max Ehrman. I have read them many times recently, for here in a paragraph is a complete philosophy and a way of life for a policeman. Ehrman said this:

"Go placidly amid the noise and the haste and remember what peace there may be in silence. "As far as possible without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.

"Speak your truth quietly and clearly, and listen to others, even to the dull and ignorant; they too have their story. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world."