State Police in the United States

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INTRODUCTION

In this country, particularly in the several states, a movement for the creation of a law enforcing body under state control has been gaining impetus. In most cases it takes the form of a military constabulary.

In 1910, Mr. F. C. Miller said before the Minnesota Academy of Social Sciences:

"The modern state police of this country is to be considered primarily as the state's agent to assert its sovereignty to the end that the general welfare may be endangered neither by the machinations of the great corrupters nor by the transgressions of the smaller malefactors. And herein lies the true significance of the state police. There seems to be a growing consciousness that the state has allowed to pass by golden opportunities for the promotion of the general welfare."

A Committee of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology defines State Police in this manner:

"A state police is a specially organized and highly trained body, acting under state rather than local authority, and constantly employed in the prevention of crime, the apprehension of criminals, and the protection of life and property generally throughout the state and especially in the rural and sparsely settled districts. In most states the state police force is organized on a military basis and distributed over the entire state in small groups for patrol duty, but quickly mobilized in larger units in an emergency. In the selection of such a force the greatest care is taken to eliminate political considerations and to secure persons with the highest physical and moral qualifications and with more than average intelligence.

"The movement for the establishment of state police forces in this country is the resultant of a number of causes or factors, operating sometimes separately and sometimes in combination:"

1Submitted as one of the Requirements for the Diploma of the Library School of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, June, 1923.
“(1) The movement responds primarily to the increasing consciousness on the part of dwellers in rural and suburban districts of a need for a greater degree of police protection. The coming of the automobile and improved highways has widened the range of crime and rendered its control more difficult.

“(2) Local sheriffs and constables are not adequate nor especially fitted for this work.

“(3) State militia is a clumsy and extremely expensive agency and is not trained for police duty. It is designed primarily as a supplement to the standing army for national defense.

“(4) It is a movement toward centralization of government for the purpose of economy and efficiency.”

Early forms, some of which are still maintained, are to be found in the Connecticut State Police Department, Massachusetts District Police, Texas Rangers, South Dakota State Constabulary and Idaho Department of Law Enforcement. A few of these were organized as early as 1865 and 1870.

Pennsylvania was the first state to adopt the form of armed and mounted force now known as state constabulary, and it is not necessary to here describe its organization and equipment. To convey some idea of its efficiency we need but to read these brief statements of Paul S. Reinsch in his Readings on American State Government: “Heretofore, Pennsylvania has relied largely upon its National Guard to awe the turbulent factions that gather around the coal mines in time of strike. Two thousand armed men to one troublesome town was the militia’s ratio for pacification. By the ethics of the constabulary a sergeant and ten men are expected to handle such a district.” Much has been written in praise of this perfected organization, among which are the stirring and convincing books by Katherine Mayo. New York State Troopers, likewise, have become noted for organization and accomplishment.

On the other hand, there have been and are still set forth many strong attacks against such an organization, particularly regarding the constabularies of New York and Pennsylvania. Evidence and testimony of quantity and sincerity have been published to prove that these forces are militaristic and unfair in events of labor strikes. Perhaps the most thorough work from this viewpoint is the Final Report and Testimony submitted by the U. S. Industrial Relations Commission to Congress in 1916. The Commission closed its report with a recommendation opposing maintenance of state constabularies as a method of policing industry.
At the present sessions of several state legislatures bills for the creation of state mounted police departments have been presented. At previous sessions the same question has been discussed and experience has shown that material on the subject is not readily available. Likewise, this is a current subject for debate in schools, political and social organizations, etc. For these two reasons this bibliography is compiled in a hope that it will be of some aid in a more speedy access to references at hand. Also, because of the argumentative approach to the subject, it seemed logical to arrange the bibliography (1) under general statements with established laws, and (2) according to affirmative and negative arguments.

Because of the dissimilarity of conditions in foreign countries and the United States, references to foreign mounted police systems have not been included. Among the most noted of such organizations is the Royal Northwest Mounted Police of Canada. Material on this and European constabularies will be found listed in the bibliography on State Police and Similar Law Enforcing Organizations compiled by the Library of Congress, November, 1922.

There is no attempt to cover the allied fields of municipal, county and district police, but, in a few instances, by reason of theories expressed and for comparison and contrast, articles concerned with these subjects have been included.

Newspaper articles and a few references too slight to bear mention have been eliminated, but, in the main, this bibliography is intended to cover discussion of State Police Systems in the United States in the material available through a variety of indexes and other bibliographies. In order to do this the resources of several large libraries have been exhausted.

STATE POLICE IN THE UNITED STATES

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Contains 151 references of which all those on the United States are included herewith. The 57 remaining are concerned with the earlier forms of state police and like organizations of other countries. It is a good basis for a detailed and comparative study of world constabularies.

GENERAL REFERENCES

   Excellent reference resumé of the influences of state police systems will be found on pages 243 and 459.


   This was not available for examination, but is here accepted on the authority of the Conference.

Chandler, G. F. The policeman's art. 1922. Funk & Wagnalls.
   "The author, who is superintendent of the Department of State Police, New York, has made this compilation of the most important subjects taught at the New York state school for police. Part one includes a history and outline of police, rules for first aid, use of firearms, riots and riot duty, etc. Part two covers such information about the law and statutes, especially the criminal and penal violations, as the policeman should possess."—Book Review Digest.

   Excellent summary of state legislation on state police, with history of foreign precedents. Not an argument.

   ——. Legislative notes and reviews: state police; ed. by W. F. Dodd. 1921. Harvard University.
   Reprinted from American Political Science Review, Feb., 1921.

   This contains little material on state police, but is included for its comparative value.

   Discussion of theory and constitutionality of state police.

   Contains good arguments from this viewpoint.

   This was unavailable for examination, but is included on the authority of the Conference.


   Excellent arguments for and against emphasizing local self-government feature.


Summary of cost, organization and foundation.


Somewhat of a personal controversy, but contains a discussion of certain situations with regard to New York police.

A response to this is found in the issue of The Masses for March, 1915, pp. 18-19.


Praises county police. Does not directly bear on state police, but shows relation in organization and work.


Editorial suggesting tolerance on part of citizens and kindliness on part of police.


Very brief statement of the creation and organization of state police in New Jersey and Wyoming.

STATE DOCUMENTS

Governors' Messages

All of the Governors' messages are in pamphlet form and are issued by the respective states. Those in this list for which paging is not given were not available for examination.


Recommends provision for state police.

——. Message, Jan. 14, 1921.

Gov. Shoup suggests making state police permanent.


Asks for some kind of police control.


Gov. Denny asks for highway police.

Idaho. Governor. Message to the legislature, fifteenth session, 1919, p. 11.

Gov. Davis suggests creation of a state police force.

——. Message, 1923.

Gov. Moore asks for repeal of state constabulary law.


Gov. Sleeper asks that the state police force be put on a permanent basis.
Gov. Hyde recommends state police force.

In his message of 1915 he recommends organization of sheriff forces into an emergency state police.

Suggests organization of existing police forces under state control.

Nebraska. Governor. Inaugural address of S. R. McKelvie to the thirty-seventh session, Nebraska legislative, 1919, pp. 22-23.
Requests a consideration of a measure for state constabulary.

Gov. Keyes urges careful consideration of the advisability of establishing a force of state police.

Requests establishment of some practical method of police protection under state control.

——. Message, 1922.
Gov. Edwards urges repeal of statute creating state police and dismissal of the force.

Gov. Whitman expresses satisfaction with state police organization.

Recommends a provision for state police.

Suggests organization of a small mobile force for state police duty.

Gov. Tener describes work of state police and asks that its size and appropriation be increased.

——. Message to the general assembly, Jan. 7, 1919, pp. 18-19.

South Dakota. Governor. Inaugural address of Peter Norbeck to the fifteenth legislative session, 1917, pp. 31-32.
Advocates the organization of the sheriffs, police officers, etc., as a state constabulary under the governor's control.

Asks for consideration of military constabulary to supplant the National Guard.


Offers suggestion for state police department on a small scale.


Gov. Cornwell recommends the creation of state police.

**Laws and Reports**


Gives summaries of laws with statute citations of fifteen states of the Union.


A study of the state police systems of various states with special recommendation for New Jersey. A fine reference work on the subject.


**AFFIRMATIVE**

A few of the following titles are fiction which were inspired by true incidents of state police work. They are included on the authority of the authors or for the expression of a viewpoint.

**Books**


Juvenile, but descriptive of mounted police work in several states and Canada.

Best account of the work in Pennsylvania.

——. Mounted justice. 1922. Houghton.
"The nine narratives of this collection are authentic cases in which the Pennsylvania state police have traced crimes and brought the criminals to justice. The object is to demonstrate the importance of the organization as protectors of life, peace and property among country folk."—Book Review Digest.

——. Standard bearers; true stories of law and order. 1918. Houghton.
More narratives of the Pennsylvania police.

Scholarly treatment of organizations existing at that time and of duties which may be delegated to state police.

"An unofficial but reliable account of the first five months' work of the New York state police."—Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology.

Contains reference to organization and development of Pennsylvania police, especially on pages 381, 426 and 532.

"The story of the New York state troopers, organized in 1917, to provide an adequate protective system for the country sections where town constables and deputy sheriffs wore badges and did nothing. To know the troopers Mr. Van de Water lived their life, catching so much of the spirit of the organization that he was given the only warrant of 'Honorary Trooper' that has been issued."—Springfield Republican. This reference is included on the authority of the quoted note, as it was not available for examination.

Origin and duties of Massachusetts state police.

Periodical Articles

Editorial comparing constabulary and militia and favoring state police.

Sane statement of duties as carried out by New York state police at time of origin.


Not available for examination.


Brief acknowledgment of good work of Pennsylvania state police, from the address given by Judge W. G. Hargest to Association of Attorneys-General at St. Louis.


Summary of the needs of Michigan for military police.


Arguments for mounted police.


Narrative of its organization and some incidents.


Shows the work of the state police, particularly in their relation to the rural dweller.


Editorial showing possibility of relieving unemployment by state police.


Account of the tournament on Oct. 12, 1921, at Harrisburg, Pa. It was field day for all troopers, including the Canadian Royal Mounted.


Incidents in the work of the Pennsylvania constabulary.


—. Murder of Sam Howell. Outlook, April 10, 1918, v. 118, pp. 584-586.

Origin of New York state troopers and an account of their work.
Similar material by Miss Mayo may be found under: I want the state troopers, Outlook, Nov. 21, 1917, v. 117, p. 451; State troopers, operator! Outlook, Feb. 28, 1923, v. 133, pp. 398-400; New York state troopers, Outlook, April 17, 1918, v. 118, pp. 622-623 +.


On ethical and legal rights of state supervision of municipal police.


Comment on the then newly organized rural police.


Brief history, incidents of the work and recent changes in the Texas Rangers.

Opposition to the establishment of state constabularies, a social folly. Social Service Review, Feb., 1917, pp. 15-17.

Stresses need of constabulary.


Explains how state police can enforce law.


Editorial commending Pennsylvania law and discussing possibility of satisfaction in a state police program.


Recommends in editorial a state police force for New York and the states of the South.


Brief reference to work of the Pennsylvania police in the curbing of the illicit liquor traffic.


History of rural police with a review of Chandler's Policeman's art.


Account of the activities of the Pennsylvania police.

Policing a state. Nation, April 17, 1913, v. 96, pp. 382-383.

Editorial praising work and organization of Pennsylvania troopers and contrasting them with militia.


Editorial on the needs of New York at the time of the introduction of its bill for state troopers.

Problems of the Texas Rangers.


This is the Report of Committee I of American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology. It contains a definition and analysis of the state police movement, the existing organizations, and a bibliography.


Quotes William J. Burns and Frederic R. Coudert advocating establishment of New York police.


Editorial suggesting organization of state police in North and South.


Discussion of the bill introduced into the New York legislature for a constabulary.


Advocates a military force for Tennessee.


Editorial favoring police systems, particularly relating incidents of the steel strikes in Pennsylvania.


Study of organization and equipment.


Same article in Social Service Review, Jan., 1918.

Exposition of duties and actual work of state police systems.


Testimony offered in defense of the Pennsylvania police.

To have mounted police. Wisconsin Agriculturist, Jan. 27; April 7, 1923.

Shows need of rural mounted police.

NEGATIVE

Bishop, J. B. State police control. Nation, 1898, v. 67, pp. 405-406.

Firm editorial discouraging state constabulary in New York because of its destruction of the right of self-government in cities.
Reasons for the opposition to a state constabulary on the part of labor unions.

Testimony against the Pennsylvania mounted police.

History of the creation of the Pennsylvania police and numerous testimonials against its conduct.


Argument for legal duties of state police in time of strike.


Valuable information and conclusions obtained by this investigation, and recommendations against the maintenance of a state constabulary as a method of policing industry, which will be found in the Report of the Commission for 1915, pp. 149-151.

Also published as U. S. Senate Document. 64th Congress, 1st session, v. 29, pp. 10929-11025. (Serial No. 6939.)

Frank statements condemning actions of the Pennsylvania police during the steel strikes.