

# WILSON'S NEW POLICE SETUP NOT PERFECT

## Here Are the Major Difficulties

BY ROBERT WIEDRICH

The police department's detective bureau reorganization is suffering growing pains. Lack of equipment needed to make the new system work well is a major problem.

In an effort to learn how policemen are accepting and functioning under Supt. Orlando W. Wilson's decentralization plan, TRIBUNE reporters talked with scores of detectives.

Attitudes of policemen ranged from stubborn resentment to confidence that the new system will succeed if given a fair trial.

### Cite Major Drawback

The end of the patrol function of detective squads was mentioned frequently as one of the main drawbacks of the new system. Detective squads in the past ranged the city, knew many of the thieves and hoodlums by sight, went in on scores of felony calls a day, and made "stops" of known and unknown criminals.

"What they've done, in effect, is remove 1,200 men from the street and put them in the stations, except when they are out on a specific assignment," one long time detective said.

Under Wilson's new system, detectives will work only on specific assignments. Patrolling the streets will be left to the patrol [uniformed] division, a unit which detectives contend is ill fitted for the task of keeping tabs on professional criminals often known only to plain clothesmen.

### Premature Launching

Many of the irritations encountered by detectives can be traced to the launching of the system before all the physical equipment was ready.

For example, some of the new area headquarters—there are six — are equipped either with new squad cars minus radios, old squad cars minus radios, or old squad cars with radios not equipped to receive calls in the section of the city to which they are assigned.

### Park Blocks Away

Some detective bureau units have been assigned blue and white, plainly marked squad cars, complete with red revolving lights. When a car like this is used on an assignment requiring anonymity, the squad has to be parked blocks from the assignment.

The radio problems will be straightened out when a detective bureau radio band goes into use this fall. But meanwhile, some detectives feel they are operating in a radioless void that reduces their effectiveness.

New squad cars—unmarked—were promised. But delays in meeting department equipment specifications have slowed delivery.

In at least one area headquarters, detectives arrive for work early and line up to get squad cars on a first come, first served basis.

### Cheat on the System

The shortage of equipment has led some unit commanders to cheat on the system in order to get the work done and use their men effectively.

Under the system, detectives are not to work in teams, except when specifically assigned to do so, and then, only for specific jobs.

Unit commanders are putting two and three men in a car, regardless, and letting them divide their time so that all three can accomplish their individual chores.

There are shortages of desks and tables, chairs and typewriters.

### Mixup Over Offices

There are stenographers without a place to work. Some small units are assigned large offices, large units small office space.

Detectives without squad cars and without assignments claim they have paced station floors so much they know the exact count of the colored squares in the new flooring.

Part of the reason for inactivity in some units is the delay in receiving reports of crimes that fall within their specialty.

The new system calls for the patrol force to initially investigate a crime, then turn a report into a recording center, where it is transcribed and

multiple copies made for distribution.

### Must Await A Call

No longer does the roving detective squad or the district detective race in when there is a robbery, burglary, or other felony committed.

They await a telephone call from the patrol force men on the scene or for distribution of the written report. Detectives report there have been delays of 12 or more hours in receiving reports. By the time a detective is assigned, the trail of the criminal may have cooled or disappeared.

Some detectives admitted they believe some policemen are deliberately "loading" the recording system with ridiculous reports, either because they fear to exercise judgement or seek to sabotage it.

This accounts for homicide units receiving dog bite cases or burglary and robbery units receiving \$6 larcenies which in the old days would have been handled by a patrolman on a three wheeled motorcycle.

"It's good public relations for the department," one detective said.

### Time Lag In Reports

"The complainant today, in a minor case, gets more attention than he ever did. First he sees the uniformed man. Then the next day, a detective visits him. But detectives often get petty things which the districts should handle."

Stolen auto detectives also complain of the time lag in receiving reports of stolen cars. A stolen car may have been used in several robberies and dumped before they even know it is missing.

Others feel there is no communication between area headquarters so that detectives can be kept abreast of developing patterns of crime.

Robbery detectives contend

that unless a series of robberies, committed in a short space of time and establishing a gang pattern, happen in their area, they have no way of knowing there is a crime pattern.

### Will Be Ironed Out

It will take several days, they contend, before the evaluation section gets all the reports, notes the pattern, and filters its report down to the individual units thru the system.

When policemen could hear everything that was going on in the city on their radio, they could detect patterns on their own and devise methods for anticipating and trapping the criminals in a short span of time.

Many of the complaints — equipment shortages, absence of radios, overloading of recording centers, and what detectives believe to be too much paperwork — undoubtedly will be ironed out.

But one factor which Wilson and his chief of detectives, Maurice Begner, must overcome if their system is to work is the deep seated resentment of many of their men against change from the old to the new order.