

CAPITAL LETTER:

Our 40,000 Police Forces

By RUTH MONTGOMERY

WASHINGTON: A team of distinguished English criminologists, after completing an on-the-spot survey in the U.S., reports that the "least admirable" aspect of American criminal justice is our "multiplicity of small police forces" without common standards of training or behavior.

Sir Charles Cunningham, Home Office secretary who heads Britain's law enforcement division, found the American lack of centralized training "most puzzling."

So does Judge George Edwards, former Detroit Police Commissioner appointed by President Kennedy to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, who accompanied an American survey team of law enforcement officers to England two years ago.

Although English common law is the foundation of American justice, the resemblance stops there. In Great Britain every new police recruit is given identical training at a school financed by the Home Office. The most promising regulars are also given advanced training in criminology.

Judge Edwards is now attracting considerable congressional interest with his proposal that the Federal government finance a national police training college, where local rookies and likely prospects for advancement could be schooled in modern methods of police detection.

In a recent speech here Judge Edwards convinced his audience that such

uniform training would in no way impinge on the local autonomy of police departments, or create a national police force.

Rather, it would establish common practices and encourage mutual exchange of ideas which could interlink America's 40,000 separate autonomous state and local police departments.

In England this has long been proven. Although British police officers are centrally trained, they return to their home districts to serve under local police chiefs.

The smaller cities and towns of America obviously cannot afford adequate facilities for training local policemen. Once a year the FBI brings a couple of hundred police officers to Washington for specialized training in crime detection, but this is a drop in the bucket since the U.S. has 300,000 local policemen.

Once a year the International Association of Chiefs of Police holds a convention, but informed sources say this huge assemblage is more given to camaraderie than to police training.

We have three national academies for training Army, Navy and Air Force volunteers as officers. These men make a career of the military, and become highly respected professionals.

If policemen were also college-trained in the tools of their trade, a higher caliber of personnel would be attracted to a line of work which is at least as vital to the security of Americans as our NATO forces in Europe and troops in Viet Nam.

Judge Edwards' proposal seems worthy of congressional consideration.

Hearst Headline Service



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11-9-60-10M (A-6)

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To: Eliot H. Lumbard

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From: Orvell York

~~.....~~ Your information and files

..... Please note and return

This clipping was handed to me rather second-handedly so I can't identify the date or the paper in which it appeared. However, I think it was the New York Journal-American.

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