Lafayette Must Be Always Alert Against Crime Threat

These figures are worth noting:
- Over 3.8 million serious crimes were reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation during 1967, the last year for which statistics are available, a 16 per cent rise over 1966.
- Risk of becoming a victim of a serious crime increased 15 per cent in 1967, with almost two victims per 100 inhabitants.
- Property worth $1.4 billion was stolen during that period.
- Police solutions of serious crimes declined eight per cent in 1967.
- The 1967 rate of two police employes per 1,000 population was unchanged from 1966.
- Arrests for narcotics drug violations rose 165 per cent from 1960 to 1967. Narcotics arrests in 1967 were up 60 per cent from 1966.

These FBI statistics reflect the national crime picture, one that is becoming increasingly mirrored in the statistics of any community emerging from small town status to metropolitan center.

Last year the Lafayette City Police Department answered 22,633 service calls, ranging from picking up stray animals, to investigating homicides, rapes, armed robberies and narcotics violations.

We are happy to point out that our city force has made large strides, along with other parish law enforcement agencies. More men, equipment and training have been used up the effectiveness of our own agencies. A modern headquarters makes the city police more efficient and easier.

There is still much to be done.
Lafayette, city and parish, along with the state police force, needs more policemen, better pay for them, advanced training, modern equipment, and the backing of the public for the men who protect us.

Lafayette's 72-man city police force is below the national standards prescribed by the National Association of Police Officers. This association recommends three policemen for every 2,000 inhabitants.

The population of this city is now estimated at 70,000 and the metropolitan area contains in excess of 100,000 persons. By these figures, 30 additional officers are needed for the city force.

To hire 30 new officers, at minimum pay, would require $165,600. This, coupled with needed equipment, maintenance of present equipment, training costs, and other expenditures of the department, calls for a sizeable increase in the enforcement budget.

The story is the same for other agencies. Progress is being made by all law enforcement agencies in reducing vice in the Lafayette area. The incidence of prostitution, gambling, and other illicit operations has been significantly lowered.

(Condensed move to involve the public and enlist their aid in crime prevention was instituted by the sheriff's department when it named a citizen's advisory group).

On the other hand, thefts, burglaries, auto theft, and other crimes have increased.

This is an unpleasant fact that must be faced by any community growing as rapidly as Lafayette. The key to elimination of these crimes is the patrol officer. The understaffed police department cannot patrol all places it should at all times.

Increased patrols—resulting from increased manpower—would reduce these statistics.

It is becoming more evident that traffic in dope and other narcotics is steadily on the rise throughout the nation. This is a signal that we must be more than ever on guard against this menace invading our community.

We are a university community. Parents from throughout the state entrust their youth to Lafayette for higher education. The traffic in dope is geared to introduce these young people into its web.

There is a strong possibility that high schools have been infiltrated. We must make every effort to eradicate this insidious practice.

The City Police Department now has only four narcotics officers. The serious nature of the crime, its potential for harm, and the threat of narcotics in this area, warrant the addition of men to that division, advanced training for each of the men on the squad, and full prosecution of those persons they prove guilty.

Lafayette is a dynamic city. Such a community attracts persons both good and bad. The criminal, as well as the legitimate businessman, will flow to the city where there is economic gain to be had.

We must make every sustained effort to ensure that our progress does not bring in its wake vice, corruption and crime. This of course takes money but any community seriously interested in its welfare will take whatever measures necessary to implement such an effort.

This newspaper pledges its wholehearted support in any endeavor to keep our city clean of the crime element.

(Tomorrow: Water Pollution)