Professional Police, Tough Courts Will Reduce Crime

Lafayette is making steps toward improved police protection. But much remains to be done.

Despite new men, material and a new professionalism among our policemen, armed robberies have continued at an alarming rate, visitors to our city have been attacked and beaten, three men have lost their lives in downtown attacks, the drug problem remains with us, our homes remain prey to burglars, and the toll from traffic accidents in property damage and personal injury is still high.

And as Lafayette continues to grow, we can expect these problems to become even more severe unless first-rate police protection and vigorous prosecution of criminals within our courts.

The answers to keeping the crime rate down are found in more manpower, increasing coordination among agencies, and consolidation whenever feasible. Police agency must coordinate with police agency, and all must coordinate with prosecutors for the prevention of crime, the quick apprehension of criminals, and effective prosecution to put the guilty behind bars.

We have suggested in the past, and continue to believe, that coordination-consolidation between the city police, sheriff's office, state police, U. S. security officers and other police agencies, is the only way in which the limited man and moneypower available in Lafayette can be effectively used in combating crime here.

The parish, the city, the campus alone cannot provide the needed manpower for the increased patrols that are the largest deterrent against crimes of the nature recently witnessed in Lafayette. We believe the ultimate solution is in the formation of a metropolitan police force, with parishwide jurisdiction, that would eliminate present duplications of facilities, supplies and services. Continued consolidation within the existing agencies should be continued toward that end, whenever and wherever feasible.

The newly formed coordinated drug squad is an excellent first step in that direction. Composed of officers of several agencies, we hope that it will be enlarged, improved and bring about the coordination of information and effort, the lack of which has hampered drug law enforcement in the past. We hope, too, that efforts will be made to bring the state narcotics enforcement office back to Lafayette and include it as a full-working partner on the drug squad. It is regrettable that conflicts arose that caused them to leave our community. Every effort must be made to insure that such interagency conflicts do not again arise among those working toward the common goal of good law enforcement.

There is an increased professionalism within both major law enforcement agencies here, particularly within the city police department. It is long overdue. Professional criminals have found easy prey in Lafayette. Police and professionals in that field are needed to combat that element.

We hope, however, that several incidents noted in recent months do not mean that this professionalism is equated with discourtesy, that effectiveness becomes one with unnecessary roughness, particularly when young offenders and persons taken into custody for minor offenses are involved.

The policeman has a thankless job. He works long hours for short pay, is ever exposed to the risk of death or injury, is asked to fulfill a number of roles—from marriage counselor to markman—and sometimes in the face of personal abuse. But, as a professional, he must realize that each of his tasks must be done always with courtesy, always with the least force necessary, and always with an eye toward the spirit, as well as the letter, of the law. Each individual member of the force must remember that his every action is a reflection upon the entire force, as well as himself. If he and his fellow policemen are to acquire the status and respect due professional lawmen, each must act professionally—always.

On the reverse side, policemen acting professionally should be recognized as such by the citizenry and respected for the performance of a tough and necessary role in our community.

Perhaps the policeman's most frequent public contact is as a traffic officer, and we hope that this professionalism holds particularly true in those instances.

The get-tough policy on drunken drivers and tighter enforcement of traffic laws have increased driver awareness of their responsibility on city and parish streets and roadways. Our dismal traffic death record of last year must certainly be erased and we appeal police efforts toward that end.

We wonder, however, what purpose is served by ticketing persons driving only slightly over the speed limit (say for going 28 in a 25 mile per hour zone, as in one instance that we can cite), when the driver was clearly not jeopardizing life or property and a simple warning would have been as effective—and left a better impression of our police force.

(Part of the problem, we believe, is that many streets here are so feasible. The newly formed coordinated drug squad is an excellent first step in that direction. Composed of officers of several agencies, we hope that it will be enlarged, improved and bring about the coordination of information and effort, the lack of which has hampered drug law enforcement in the past. We hope, too, that efforts will be made to bring the state narcotics enforcement office back to Lafayette and include it as a full-working partner on the drug squad. It is regrettable that conflicts arose that caused them to leave our community. Every effort must be made to insure that such interagency conflicts do not again arise among those working toward the common goal of good law enforcement.

There is an increased professionalism within both major law enforcement agencies here, particularly within the city police department. It is long overdue. Professional criminals have found easy prey in Lafayette. Police and professionals in that field are needed to combat that element.

We hope, however, that several incidents noted in recent months do not mean that this professionalism is equated with discourtesy, that effectiveness becomes one with unnecessary roughness, particularly when young offenders and persons taken into custody for minor offenses are involved.

The policeman has a thankless job. He works long hours for short pay, is ever exposed to the risk of death or injury, is asked to fulfill a number of roles—from marriage counselor to markman—and sometimes in the face of personal abuse. But, as a professional, he must realize that each of his tasks must be done always with courtesy, always with the least force necessary, and always with an eye toward the spirit, as well as the letter, of the law. Each individual member of the force must remember that his every action is a reflection upon the entire force, as well as himself. If he and his fellow policemen are to acquire the status and respect due professional lawmen, each must act professionally—always.

On the reverse side, policemen acting professionally should be recognized as such by the citizenry and respected for the performance of a tough and necessary role in our community.

Perhaps the policeman's most frequent public contact is as a traffic officer, and we hope that this professionalism holds particularly true in those instances.

The get-tough policy on drunken drivers and tighter enforcement of traffic laws have increased driver awareness of their responsibility on city and parish streets and roadways. Our dismal traffic death record of last year must certainly be erased and we appeal police efforts toward that end.

We wonder, however, what purpose is served by ticketing persons driving only slightly over the speed limit (say for going 28 in a 25 mile per hour zone, as in one instance that we can cite), when the driver was clearly not jeopardizing life or property and a simple warning would have been as effective—and left a better impression of our police force.

(Part of the problem, we believe, is that many streets here are so feasible. The newly formed coordinated drug squad is an excellent first step in that direction. Composed of officers of several agencies, we hope that it will be enlarged, improved and bring about the coordination of information and effort, the lack of which has hampered drug law enforcement in the past. We hope, too, that efforts will be made to bring the state narcotics enforcement office back to Lafayette and include it as a full-working partner on the drug squad. It is regrettable that conflicts arose that caused them to leave our community. Every effort must be made to insure that such interagency conflicts do not again arise among those working toward the common goal of good law enforcement.

There is an increased professionalism within both major law enforcement agencies here, particularly within the city police department. It is long overdue. Professional criminals have found easy prey in Lafayette. Police and professionals in that field are needed to combat that element.

We hope, however, that several incidents noted in recent months do not mean that this professionalism is equated with discourtesy, that effectiveness becomes one with unnecessary roughness, particularly when young offenders and persons taken into custody for minor offenses are involved.

The policeman has a thankless job. He works long hours for short pay, is ever exposed to the risk of death or injury, is asked to fulfill a number of roles—from marriage counselor to markman—and sometimes in the face of personal abuse. But, as a professional, he must realize that each of his tasks must be done always with courtesy, always with the least force necessary, and always with an eye toward the spirit, as well as the letter, of the law. Each individual member of the force must remember that his every action is a reflection upon the entire force, as well as himself. If he and his fellow policemen are to acquire the status and respect due professional lawmen, each must act professionally—always.

On the reverse side, policemen acting professionally should be recognized as such by the citizenry and respected for the performance of a tough and necessary role in our community.

Perhaps the policeman's most frequent public contact is as a traffic officer, and we hope that this professionalism holds particularly true in those instances.

The get-tough policy on drunken drivers and tighter enforcement of traffic laws have increased driver awareness of their responsibility on city and parish streets and roadways. Our dismal traffic death record of last year must certainly be erased and we appeal police efforts toward that end.

We wonder, however, what purpose is served by ticketing persons driving only slightly over the speed limit (say for going 28 in a 25 mile per hour zone, as in one instance that we can cite), when the driver was clearly not jeopardizing life or property and a simple warning would have been as effective—and left a better impression of our police force.

(Part of the problem, we believe, is that many streets here are so feasible. The newly formed coordinated drug squad is an excellent first step in that direction. Composed of officers of several agencies, we hope that it will be enlarged, improved and bring about the coordination of information and effort, the lack of which has hampered drug law enforcement in the past. We hope, too, that efforts will be made to bring the state narcotics enforcement office back to Lafayette and include it as a full-working partner on the drug squad. It is regrettable that conflicts arose that caused them to leave our community. Every effort must be made to insure that such interagency conflicts do not again arise among those working toward the common goal of good law enforcement.

There is an increased professionalism within both major law enforcement agencies here, particularly within the city police department. It is long overdue. Professional criminals have found easy prey in Lafayette. Police and professionals in that field are needed to combat that element.

We hope, however, that several incidents noted in recent months do not mean that this professionalism is equated with discourtesy, that effectiveness becomes one with unnecessary roughness, particularly when young offenders and persons taken into custody for minor offenses are involved.

The policeman has a thankless job. He works long hours for short pay, is ever exposed to the risk of death or injury, is asked to fulfill a number of roles—from marriage counselor to markman—and sometimes in the face of personal abuse. But, as a professional, he must realize that each of his tasks must be done always with courtesy, always with the least force necessary, and always with an eye toward the spirit, as well as the letter, of the law. Each individual member of the force must remember that his every action is a reflection upon the entire force, as well as himself. If he and his fellow policemen are to acquire the status and respect due professional lawmen, each must act professionally—always.

On the reverse side, policemen acting professionally should be recognized as such by the citizenry and respected for the performance of a tough and necessary role in our community.

Perhaps the policeman's most frequent public contact is as a traffic officer, and we hope that this professionalism holds particularly true in those instances.

The get-tough policy on drunken drivers and tighter enforcement of traffic laws have increased driver awareness of their responsibility on city and parish streets and roadways. Our dismal traffic death record of last year must certainly be erased and we appeal police efforts toward that end.

We wonder, however, what purpose is served by ticketing persons driving only slightly over the speed limit (say for going 28 in a 25 mile per hour zone, as in one instance that we can cite), when the driver was clearly not jeopardizing life or property and a simple warning would have been as effective—and left a better impression of our police force.

(Part of the problem, we believe, is that many streets here are so feasible. The newly formed coordinated drug squad is an excellent first step in that direction. Composed of officers of several agencies, we hope that it will be enlarged, improved and bring about the coordination of information and effort, the lack of which has hampered drug law enforcement in the past. We hope, too, that efforts will be made to bring the state narcotics enforcement office back to Lafayette and include it as a full-working partner on the drug squad. It is regrettable that conflicts arose that caused them to leave our community. Every effort must be made to insure that such interagency conflicts do not again arise among those working toward the common goal of good law enforcement.

There is an increased professionalism within both major law enforcement agencies here, particularly within the city police department. It is long overdue. Professional criminals have found easy prey in Lafayette. Police and professionals in that field are needed to combat that element.

We hope, however, that several incidents noted in recent months do not mean that this professionalism is equated with discourtesy, that effectiveness becomes one with unnecessary roughness, particularly when young offenders and persons taken into custody for minor offenses are involved.