

Brazil Tries Cops For 14 Slayings

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, April 12 (Reuters)—The trial has begun here of the first of seven police officers indicted for the murder of 14 beggars.

If given the maximum on all charges, the first officer, Pedro Saturnino Dos Santos, could get a sentence of 500 years in prison.

The seven officers confessed in February 1963, that they murdered the 14 beggars by drowning them.

The police were taking part in an official campaign to clear Rio of out-of-town beggars. But when the same tramps kept reappearing the officers decided they must take what they called "A final decision," a prosecuting attorney alleged.

One Of Them Escapes

He claimed the beggars were drowned in the Guandu and Guarda Rivers on the borders of Guanabara and Rio de Janeiro States between October, 1962, and January, 1963.

A woman among those rounded up was raped and abandoned, he said.

When the police dumped six of the beggars into the Guarda River Jan. 17, 1963, five were drowned but the sixth, Olindina Alves Japaissu, swam ashore and told his tale—to the military police.

The attorney said the seven officers made confessions with detailed descriptions of the beggars' pleas for mercy, imitating the sound of breaking bones and the noise of their bodies hitting the water.