

## Capital Seeks Grant to Develop Mass Arrest Contingency Plan

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WASHINGTON, July 12—The District of Columbia has asked the Justice Department's Law Enforcement Assistance Administration for a \$14,900 grant to help develop a contingency plan for the "Humane" confinement of persons arrested in mass protests.

The request, which is under review by the agency, was submitted by the city's department of Corrections shortly after the so-called Mayday protests two months ago.

More than 12,000 young people were arrested during the three days of antiwar demonstrations, placing a severe strain on the city's jails. There were reports of overcrowding and of inadequate medical and sanitary facilities and food supplies.

Stephen F. Blake, the corrections department official who submitted the request, said that Washington "has more demonstrations than any city in the Western world," and that the need for a prearranged response by various agencies to mass arrests had been conclusively demonstrated by the Mayday events.

Mr. Blake said that the city adopted an emergency arrest plan three years ago but that it was now out of date.

"Then we projected an excess capacity of 1,100 for mass arrests," he said. "During Mayday we got 1,100 in the first hour."

Noting that the Mayday Tribe, organizer of the protest, had expressed its intent to return to the capital in the fall for more demonstrations, Mr. Blake said he hoped the contingency plan would enable the city by then to "know ahead of time who's going to do what."

"If we need 1,000 beds, we want to know where to get them," he said.

The application cites statements by Attorney General John N. Mitchell endorsing large-scale arrests as the proper method of dealing with mass demonstrations.

In an appearance last week on the American Broadcasting Company's Dick Cavett Show,

Police Chief Jerry V. Wilson said that the only alternative to mass arrests was "martial law, which is much worse because the individual doesn't even get released."

But he said that the need to suspend temporarily the normal arrest procedures, which include the completion of field arrest cards for each prisoner, had made it difficult for prosecutors to obtain convictions.

Figures released by the District of Columbia Superior Court show that, out of the first 3,949 Mayday cases to come before it, convictions have been obtained in 79.

In the same interview, Chief Wilson said he knew at the time of the protest that "any mass arrest situation tends to generate a lot of cases that are very difficult to make in court."

But, he said, "the fact that we cannot in every case prove the case in court does not make it a false arrest."

"I don't think I would agree that we violated [the demonstrators] civil rights," he added.

### Many Cases Dismissed

Charges against thousands of the more than 7,000 arrested May 3, the first day of the Mayday demonstrations, have been dropped or dismissed.

Twenty-three cases still await trial.

A lawyer in the public defender's office, which is handling about 2,600 cases arising from arrests at a demonstration the following day outside Justice Department headquarters, said that about one defendant in five was going to trial. He said the rate of convictions for those tried was 20 to 30 per cent.

On Wednesday, May 5, the last day of mass demonstrations, 1,100 protesters were arrested and charged with unlawful entry after they massed on the steps of the Capitol to sing antiwar songs. Today, before Superior Court Judge Stanley Harris, the prosecution began arguments in the first eight of the Capitol cases.