

Police Poll Raps 'Ineffective'

Long-smouldering friction between many policemen here and the force's police community relations unit was underscored today.

The unit "is believed to be ineffective, there is little rapport between the unit and other officers," the report on the Police Officers Association questionnaire said.

Eighty percent of the officers polled said the unit has not been effective. The reasons listed included:

The unit "is not a 'genuine part of the police department in thought, action or involvement.'" Many officers are opposed to the unit's men not appearing in uniform "or behaving as they felt any officer should."

Also, the unit's members were charged "with working only with minorities instead of the whole community; of taking the side of minority civilians in disputes with other policemen and the concept of law."

And no reports of what the unit does are seen by other officers, "leading to a belief by some to be an 'easy job'

with an advantageous income for men who could not make the 'regular' force . . . They feel other officers are not being helped by the unit's actions, since their point of view is not being told to the community."

To the question, "Do you feel a police community relations unit is necessary," 70 percent answered yes. The majority of these felt it should not exist in its present form.

Asked, "Do you feel you understand the objectives of the police community relations unit," 60 percent answered no, another 20 percent said yes, and the remainder gave no answer.

Eighty-five percent said officers assigned to the unit should work in uniform. Some felt the uniform would "remind public and unit officers that they were policemen first and social workers second."

One officer commented:

"If a uniform makes some of these minorities uneasy,

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that's too bad because when I have to deal with them my uniform is on. Why should they have two images of police, one as being 'one of the guys,' and the other as 'here comes the pig.'"

"All police officers feel the need for a better understanding of their place in the community . . . Yet how this unit can accomplish its mission, and what guide lines it is supposed to follow in developing support from the community, are not spelled out or understood by most officers.

The analysis report said:

"In this atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty, about the purpose and functions of the unit, too many replies indicate a jealous attitude toward the officers composing the unit."

On the overall matter of race in the department, the report said:

"The racial issue in general seems to stem more from a suspicion of 'political advantage' than skin color.

"It is evident from the (questionnaire) replies that, as in the community as a whole, there are a few 'racists' — on both sides of the color line.

"However, a majority of the officers replying do not regard race or color as a barrier to mutual respect, and believe a man should be judged solely on the basis of his demonstrated ability.

"There is great apprehension that allowing race, color or creed to mitigate for or against a man runs contrary to the desire to free the department of politics and favoritism.

"The danger zone in race relations within the police department lies with the few who seek advantage solely on the basis of being either white or black.

"Joining together to force recognition on any other basis than a man's worth can only weaken the department and those honestly working for the benefit of all."