

Q & A

In-Depth Look At KMPD

(From page 1A)

ROPER- I don't want any of the officers talking about the others. If they have a complaint they should go to their shift supervisor and get it ironed out. If that doesn't work, then it's time to come to the chief about it.

MIRROR- In a board meeting a couple of weeks ago, Sgt. Tommy King made a statement to the effect that the former chief had told the men he was going to ask for raises but that the commissioners said they had never heard anything about it. Will you make pay increase requests?

ROPER- Well they've (city board) already been approached about raises. We asked for 15 per cent across the board plus a raise of one dollar per year of service for longevity pay. They are studying this request now. Of course the men who have recently been promoted to sergeant will get a raise for the rank. In talking about the 15 per cent pay raise, I was asked what effect it would have on my salary. I feel that if the men can get their 15 per cent raise, I'm satisfied with what I'm making now as chief without getting a raise myself.

MIRROR- What do you make now?

ROPER- \$212.50 per week.

MIRROR- What you're saying is that if the men get a raise, you don't need or want one for yourself?

ROPER- Yes. I think the chief's salary is a fair enough pay scale. I do feel the officers are underpaid.

MIRROR- What was your salary before as captain of detectives?

ROPER- \$145 per week.

MIRROR- Do you think there is too much difference between the salary of a captain and a chief?

ROPER- Yes I do.



"I'm going to work closely with the men and give the citizens a good job."

MIRROR- The difference in pay between a patrolman who has been with the city a year and your present salary is around \$80 per week. The rookie officer now also has to go through 160 hours of training in and out of the classroom. Do you think that difference is too great?

ROPER- I think \$130 per week is a fair wage to start off with.

MIRROR- At what level would you recommend a raise in salary?

ROPER- If a man comes into police work with the starting pay \$130 and stays a year, proving he's police material, I think then his pay should be increased.

MIRROR- Have you given any thought to merit pay raises?

ROPER- Yes I have. I know other departments have it and I know it causes controversy.

MIRROR- Who else has it?

ROPER- Cleveland County has it.

MIRROR- Why does it cause controversy?

ROPER- It has its good points and bad points. Take for example a sergeant and a lieutenant. On merit raises, a sergeant could make more than the lieutenant and it causes hard feelings. My thought is we're here to do a job and if it's outstanding, it's part of the job anyway.

MIRROR- Then what are your thoughts on awards of recognition, such as an award for an outstanding arrest or community service, etc?

ROPER- These awards are somewhat different. If a man gets out here and does a really fine job on a case I plan to write a letter commending him and will put it in his personal folder.

MIRROR- As far as the various schools, do you plan to send the men to them?

ROPER- We're going to get as many men into schools as we can. Right now we have three civilian dispatchers and as soon as a jail detention school opens close, we're going to enroll them.

MIRROR- Who pays for these schools?

ROPER- The city pays travel expense which is all the money required anyway. There usually is no cost for the courses sponsored by the community colleges.

MIRROR- What is your concept of a modern day police officer and his role in the community?

ROPER- There is a lot of difference now than when I joined. A policeman today needs an education and needs to be level-headed. He has to make split second decisions. If he stops a car or grabs a man to make an arrest, he has to decide immediately what is right and what is wrong. Then he has to go to court and prove his decision in front of an attorney that has been practicing law for years and this officer has to be alert

enough and familiar enough with the law and court to testify in the case. The days of blackjacking are gone.

MIRROR- Again by my close association with the department, I've noticed that despite pay, etc., the men in the KMPD are very dedicated. Why don't they quit and go to another department where they could make more?

ROPER- A man has to be dedicated to police work to stay in it anywhere. After you're in it a while you get dedicated to it and it gets in your blood. If you stay with a department say eight, ten or 12 years, you feel like it's your home and you put up with a whole lot before you'd swap jobs. I have been here almost 18 years and I'd hate to lose my seniority or retirement that I would if I left and went to another department.

MIRROR- It's said a happy worker is a productive worker. Is that your goal for the KMPD?

ROPER- If a man has a happy home life and a job he enjoys, he'll come to work with a smile on his face and do a good days work. If he has problems on his job, he's not going to give the citizens and taxpayers what they're paying for because his mind is on those troubles. If the job is running smoothly, you can tell a difference in the man.

MIRROR- In that personnel meeting, the talk of new equipment arose. What will be done in this area?

ROPER- We're going to try to get as many new automobiles as we can for this next fiscal year. We're going to request four new cars, one for each shift. I think we need at least one new car on a shift.

MIRROR- Where have the cars come from before?

ROPER- We've been getting them from the state.

MIRROR- Are they not used highway patrol cars?

ROPER- That's right. The state has proven beyond doubt that 50,000 miles is the life of one of those automobiles out on patrol or they'd keep them for another year. That's why after a state auto gets anywhere from 46-50,000 miles on it, they sell it and get a new one as a replacement.

MIRROR- Then are the cars "shot" when the department gets them?

ROPER- Yes.

MIRROR- Is the stock of equipment such as pistols, uniforms, etc. plentiful and in good shape?

ROPER- Yes. Everything seems to be alright at present.

MIRROR- Have you received any applications from people wanting to join the force?

ROPER- I believe I've had three since I have been chief.

MIRROR- A statement was made in a meeting recently that there was no men in the department qualified to be chief. What are your thoughts on this?

ROPER- I think there are several qualified to be chief of police. I think it was a statement made without thought.

(See Q&A p.5A)



"No one man makes a police department. It takes the men to make a good department."

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Dr. Logan Carson, assistant professor of religion at Gardner-Webb College, pays a return visit to the Alpha and Omega Bible Class next Monday. The class, which consists of high school and college age young people, will meet at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Bill and Betty Moss, 1403 Grover Rd.

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