

WILL GET BUSES

For additional transportation in emergencies, police planners have arranged to get buses from the Department of Corrections to transport prisoners.

Discussing the logistics of dealing with masses of looters, Assistant Chief Jerry V. Wilson, in charge of field operations, said in an interview that policemen were in a bind during much of last month's rioting.

"If a policeman arrests a looter," Wilson said, "he has to hold him till a car can get there, so he's out of the fight. The men know it's better to disperse people, get them out of there, than to let them go on looting while he holds onto one looter."

"Even with that, we were able to arrest far more looters and other criminals than any other city where a riot occurred."

In the four days of rioting, according to Wilson's figures, Washington police made 8,424 arrests, of which 831 were juveniles who were turned over to parents or guardians.

Wilson and Deputy Chief Raymond S. Pyles, commander of special operations, which includes the Civil Disturbance Unit, agreed to discuss what they consider misconceptions, rumors and myths about the rioting and subsequent attempted extortion of businessmen.

The officials frequently referred to a transcript of their radio conversations with police dispatchers during the first night of the riots. Here are some of the charges made by congressmen, businessmen and other local residents and the police officials' replies:

1. The charge: That some order was issued not to make arrests.

Not true, said Wilson, citing at least two police broadcasts the first night.

He quoted the dispatcher notifying all tactical units:

"Orders are: Any violations to take proper police action and arrest."

He also quoted an 11:06 p.m. broadcast from Inspector Mahlon Pitts to Pyles saying:

"I have eight cars ready to leave with instructions to proceed south on 14th Street as per your orders to start arresting."

Pyles said he had told Pitts earlier that night that he wanted 120 men in 30 cars to cruise 14th Street and "as you assign four men to each car, you are to instruct them that they are to enforce the law and make arrests."

2. The charge: That police were ordered not to shoot looters.

False, said Wilson. Police were operating under a 1954 order, last revised in 1956 and in force at the time of the riot.

Under that order, police were told they must be constantly alert to three factors: That the offender could be captured only through extreme methods, that the offense is of sufficient gravity to justify the possibility of serious injury or death and that the lives of innocent persons should not be endangered through the use of the service revolver.

Both Wilson and Pyles emphasized that the widespread use of tear gas made use of guns and billy clubs unnecessary in most cases. The Kerner report on civil disorders advocated using tear gas and it was used more widely here than anywhere else.

The two police officials believe that the tear gas and the curfew were the reason the Washington riots ended in four days while rioting went on elsewhere for a week or more.

3. The charge: That police on the street didn't know what to do.

BROADCAST CITED

Pyles was quick to refute this.

All the men on the street were under supervision of some official, and getting instructions from captains, inspectors and deputy chiefs.

For an example, Pyles turned again to the transcription of the broadcast and cited a 1:31 a.m. message he received from the dispatcher asking, "Do you have any extra officials? There are about 20 men at 14th and Monroe and 14th and Park Road with no officials?" Pyles' reply was swift: "I've got a sergeant up here. I'll send him."

4. Other charges: That policemen's hands were tied by higher officials, that police were ordered to unload their weapons and that snipers were all over the place.

Both Wilson and Pyles denied they were handcuffed from above, denied that guns were ordered unloaded and denied that snipers abounded.

Soldiers' weapons were unloaded but not police guns, they said.