

The second comment I would like to make is in relation to the force itself. I think certain factors should be brought to the committee's attention as far as the morale of the Department and the effectiveness of that Department is concerned. Chief Layton is here and can substantiate to you the fact that we have substantially reduced the resignation rate in the Department, and the rate of our policemen going to other agencies. We have substantially reduced the vacancy factor and within the next two or three weeks we will be at total strength. As of last week we were down to 82 vacancies compared to 385 back in November. We are recruiting at the rate of almost 75 net per month. We have over 200 in the pipeline, processed for appointment.

I think these factors indicate that we are able to recruit. We have a strong Department, and that Department has the full support and cooperation of the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner and we feel that we can adequately operate that Department.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Fletcher, on that subject, I notice that you have been able to get some encouragement as to new recruitments. Have you let the standards down, or do you require the same examination?

Mr. FLETCHER. The same standards, sir. We have not reduced the standards one bit.

The CHAIRMAN. The same physical and mental standards?

Mr. FLETCHER. Yes, sir.

PURPOSE OF BILL

The CHAIRMAN. I believe a number of people must have the wrong impression, or at least I have the wrong impression. I do not think there is anyone on this committee who wants to tear up the White House Police Department or the city Police Department.

I have not been in favor of the actions which have already been taken in moving valuable policemen from one agency to another and consolidating precincts at a time when police should be better acquainted with the people where he is patrolling.

Your statement sounds as though we were advocating tearing up the Police Department. I thought the bill we introduced here was to have a man at the top to coordinate all the Departments together in their present status, and in case of emergency or a real riot we would have somebody at the top who could be held responsible and handle all police orders and not let the criminals burn up the city before all the police could get together. That was the idea I had in mind, not to tear down any Department.

Mr. FLETCHER. Mr. Chairman, I do not believe my statement indicated or used the term "tear down." My statement indicated that we would be opposed on the basis that there would be inefficiency and waste involved.

The District of Columbia Government must coordinate many activities in terms of civil disturbances and fighting of crime.

There are other factors which must be coordinated simultaneously in the Department.

The CHAIRMAN. Would this new legislation prevent you from doing that?