

Speech by
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Since becoming Attorney General, nothing has given me more pride than being able to say that I am the Chief Law Officer of our State. So it was with special pleasure that I accepted your kind invitation to speak here tonight. I don't think I could tell you how fascinating my two and a half years of formal association with law enforcement have been, and I have certainly come to respect even more the dedication and talents of the men and women in this profession. Tonight I would like to share with you some of the observations I have made since becoming your Attorney General and, if I may, talk a little about where I feel we ought to be moving in the days ahead.

Even before I began my campaign in 1968, I was aware of the need for many changes in law enforcement, but it was not until I had assumed office that I realized just how badly limited we were in North Carolina. Perhaps the most glaring example was our State Bureau of Investigation, where morale and resources were at a critically low ebb. The Bureau sorely needed new vitality and we were quite fortunate in

finding Charles Dunn willing to take on the challenge of revitalization.

Since that time, I think the S.B.I. has illustrated the great progress we have made in law enforcement. Mr. Dunn immediately presented to the 1969 General Assembly an ambitious but realistic program designed to expand and develop the services of the Bureau to local law enforcement agencies.

The Legislature gave its approval and in the last two years, the S.B.I. has doubled its number of field agents from 40 to 80, quadrupled the staff of its crime laboratory, moved into more adequate facilities, and expanded its services to local law enforcement in every area of the State. Without question our Bureau is today substantially more effective, and the lot of the criminal in North Carolina has become more difficult as a result.

The same General Assembly which made this possible, also appropriated funds for the establishment of a Police Information Network in the North Carolina Department of Justice, dedicated to the service of our 100 sheriffs and 375 police departments. Development of the system is moving rapidly and its Director, Howard Livingston, is optimistic about an early completion date.

I observed the other day that the last time I spoke to this club some two years ago that vendors of Police Information Systems were present to display their machines and urge the establishment of such a system in North Carolina. Since that time, the General Assembly of North Carolina has appropriated funds, a sophisticated site has been prepared, equipment purchased and installed, and the first phase of the North Carolina Police Information Network has almost been completed. Though we have not been able to move as quickly as we all would have liked, the progress we have made is amazing to me. I think you will agree.

Some local terminals already have been installed. Others are coming on the system almost daily. And just as soon as we possibly can, we will expand our base terminals so that before too long, hopefully, every law officer in North Carolina at a stationed desk or in a patrol car will have access to a wealth of State and federal information within a matter of seconds or minutes. I am sure I do not need to explain to you how much this will mean in terms of protection for the people in North Carolina and in fact the officer himself, and how much safer and easier it will make our jobs.

Talking about the PIN Network brings another example of our progress to mind, for I certainly do not want

any of us to forget that the Network was conceived through the efforts of the Governor's Law and Order Committee. It illustrates so very well the kind of leadership the Committee has provided in its brief history and the kind of role it can play in coordinating projects which involve many agencies and cross jurisdictional lines. It shows too, I think, how the Law and Order Committee can supplement the efforts being made in local towns and communities to upgrade law enforcement services.

Yet another fine example of recent progress is the Law Enforcement Association Council, to which I know that this group belongs. The Council's goals are quite admirable: promoting professionalism of law enforcement, creating better understanding of law enforcement, and improving communication among law enforcement organizations. And already, I think, the Council has done all of these things. I am sure that many of you have seen the billboards which have been erected in a hundred locations across the State to focus public attention on the services performed by law enforcement. The first series depicts a uniformed policeman giving artificial respiration to a small child, and the caption reads: "Some Call Him Pig".

Of course, the programs of the Council, as well as the development of the S.B.I. and the Law and Order Committee, are just a few examples of the progress we have made in the last few years, but I think that each points out very clearly what we are capable of achieving and that we are indeed ready for the challenges of the future; for the spirit of cooperation that is now in our ranks points the way to even greater progress.

And the time to continue our efforts is NOW. The same challenge which we met in 1969 is now facing us today; for as we have increased our efficiency and resources, so too has the criminal, and his increasing numbers have kept pace with our own. In fact, were it not for our extraordinary progress of the last two years, we might be hopelessly behind in the battle today.

Let us remember that we have advanced at a time when in many ways the odds have been stacked against us. Today's criminals have become even more sophisticated, and they do not often make the little mistakes that once were common. So, too, have recent Supreme Court decisions made our jobs more difficult. The result has been that while every day I marvel at the professionalism of our officers, so too am I alarmed at the growing professionalism in crime. For every case of our own efficiency, there is another of the criminal's inhumanity to his fellow man; his willingness to assault, murder, rob and steal.

Recent statistics point this out. According to F.B.I. reports, the rate of crimes of violence in the United States is rising ten times faster than the population, and the same increase is occurring on the State level. But I know that not all of this increase can be attributed to greater sophistication among our criminals or to Supreme Court decisions.

An alarming percentage of our rising crime rate is due to a new problem - the drug abuse that was next to nothing in North Carolina just a few short years ago. And our most recent statistics indicate that the use of heroin is the fastest growing of all illegal drugs. I know I don't need to tell you what this is going to mean in terms of crime. Financing a heroin habit is expensive; it can cost from \$20.00 to \$100.00 a day, and there are few legal ways that a person - especially an uneducated person - can raise that kind of money. Some form of thievery is, as you know, usually the result and a chain of unlawful acts is set off and so you see, after a while it becomes impossible to tell just how far the influence of illegal drug use does extend.

We do know that one major way to support a habit is to get others addicted - to make enough profit to support one's own habit and this of course leads to violence within the illegal drug community itself.

I'm sure some of you will remember an execution in the style of Chicago gangland murders which occurred not in New York or Chicago, but right here in North Carolina. The plot was simple. Two brothers, both unemployed, maintained an expensive apartment and a high mode of living. They had a \$50.00 a day habit themselves and a corner on the illegal drug market in their town. Competing pushers were squeezing in, so the brothers simply waited in an alley and gunned down their competition. I would submit to you tonight that in the future we will be faced even more with situations like this one.

But drugs represent only one aspect of our developing crime problems. I am increasingly concerned over the trends of extremist groups, for while their numbers seem to be diminishing, hard core members have become more bitter and more daring. Only two days ago a school administration building valued at \$500,000 was burned in New Hanover County. There is strong suspicion of arson. Bombings, shootings and a hijacking have occurred. Even an attempted kidnapping in a neighboring state apparently had connections in North Carolina.

And let us not forget what I feel sure we all know - that none of our statistics tell the whole story, for no matter how accurate they are, they still do not include the thousands of crimes that go unreported. Therefore they can be, at best, a very conservative estimate of the criminal activity in our State.

What remains is the fact that crime is on the increase. I think we would be less than frank if we did not also note that our high crime rate is related to some degree to the vast social ills that plague our country: poverty in the midst of plenty, substandard housing conditions, inferior education, unpromising job opportunities, and family breakdowns - all leading up to the kind of frustration and envy that breed crime. We must learn to cure these social ills as well as develop more effective law enforcement if we are to expect significant reductions in our crime rate.

Let us consider the future needs of law enforcement with this in mind. Let us remember that while we have closed the gap, we are not yet abreast of our adversary, and the end of the race is not in sight. So let us make this year - 1971 - the year for law enforcement in North Carolina, for it is now that we have the best opportunity that we have had in many years to advance our profession.

The General Assembly is in session and it has before it a program spearheaded by your Law Enforcement Association's Council. It is not only realistic, it is vital.

Thus far, two parts of this program have been enacted into law.

1. The first changes from 20 to 15 the number of years of contribution to the Law Enforcement Officers Benefit and Retirement Fund required for eligibility for retirement benefits.

2. The second pertains to sick leave and requires your employer to pay into the Fund to your account an amount not in excess of 10% of the gross salary that would have been paid to you as a retiring officer, had you not been compensated for all accumulated sick leave at the time of retirement.

Of course, both of these changes will mean greater security for you as law officers. but they represent only a small fraction of what must be accomplished during this year's legislative session if we are truly to progress. Several programs are still under consideration and I would like to talk a little about them if I may.

The North Carolina Criminal Justice Academy was brought into being in January of this year by an Executive Order of Governor Scott. Legislation which is currently before the General Assembly will give the academy statutory status. I hope that all of you are familiar with the plans for the Academy, but there are several misconceptions about it that I would like to dispel.

First of all, the Academy is not a single institution.

Rather, it is a comprehensive system for providing training and education for the criminal justice employees of both State and local governments. This includes not only law enforcement officers, but personnel of the courts, correctional agencies, and police traffic service agencies. One training center will be in Raleigh but there will be centers established in other areas of the State as well, utilizing, whenever possible, existing facilities, such as the Community Colleges.

Thus our goal is to provide a system of law enforcement training in North Carolina which will be second to none in the nation, while utilizing, whenever possible, existing institutions, agencies, and other resources. At the same time, it will allow training to be given as close as possible to local agencies, where it should be, and hopefully these regional centers will be in operation during the next fiscal year.

The center in Raleigh will serve as the hub of the Criminal Justice Training System and it will be located at the present Polk Prison Unit. In essence, all that will be required is the renovation of two already existing classroom facilities to convert them to the Central Academy's use. In terms of long-range appropriations, we will certainly need to be able to construct permanent classroom, office and housing facilities.

The Central Academy will be utilized for basic and advanced training and education by the various State agencies and, to some extent, by local agencies in the Raleigh area. In addition, we expect it to provide for research and evaluation of training programs.

I think our requests are quite reasonable and that this Legislature can give the Academy a good beginning. We need to get this program off the ground now. We cannot afford a delay of two years.

Still another proposal before the General Assembly concerns the establishment of a North Carolina Criminal Justice Training and Standards Council, which was proposed by the Governor's Task Force on Selection, Recruitment and Training of Law Enforcement Officers. As we presently envision it, the Council will consist of representatives of county and municipal law enforcement and of various State agencies. The Governor would appoint its Chairman and the Council would meet at least four times a year. Its most important powers would be:

1. To establish minimum educational and training standards for employment as a criminal justice officer.
2. To establish minimum salary and benefit standards for criminal justice officers.

The quickest way to provide the training which will be required is to build upon the resources now available - the Community College System and local and regional training programs. It is the feeling of the Task Force that the State should pay for 60% of the program.

Of course, the idea of minimum standards is not new. Many other states have already chosen this route to professionalism and increased career potentials. I agree with the Task Force that now is the time for North Carolina to move ahead by enacting the legislation to create the Council.

Certainly minimum standards will do much to increase respect for law enforcement, and I think that is admirable that the leading support for the Council has come from within our ranks. You know, three years ago this would probably not have been the case, and I think the fact that it is today is a healthy sign of a change in attitude on the part of all of us in law enforcement.

I've talked a little about these new proposals and how I think we need them if we are to move ahead, but I think that just as importantly, we must not neglect the programs we have already begun. Our past victories were hard won and our State has benefited greatly as a result, but let us not be deceived that because our "old" programs are working

effectively, they need not be sustained and updated to fit the challenge of tomorrow.

Two such programs have been put before the General Assembly with requests for continued improvement. I'm sure most of you know I am talking about the budget requests of the S.B.I. and the additional funding of the Law and Order Committee. I have talked briefly tonight about the great contribution that both of these agencies have made to law enforcement in recent years and I hope I have made it clear that their jobs are far from over.

The State Bureau of Investigation simply must continue its building program. Our field people are averaging about 60 hour weeks and still we cannot keep up with the requests for assistance. As I have emphasized, the need is especially critical in combating the flood of illegal drugs. Yet in spite of the need, in spite of the urgency, we heard last week that the budget recommendations for the S.B.I. made by the Advisory Budget Commission be cut to the bone.

There is some indication that the Law and Order Division is facing similar trouble in its requests for additional funding from the General Assembly, \$2.5 million, which would be the State's match for about \$18 million in federal funds over the next two years. This is block-grant money

which flows directly to local, city and county agencies. It requires only 10% local matching which is extremely low. In fact, local matching has been reduced. We simply must get this \$2.5 million supplemental budget request for without it, the Law and Order Division's program will cease to function on July 1, 1972. Needless to say, this would be tragedy at a time when survey after survey indicates that law, order and justice are a primary concern of the people of our State and nation.

Of course, I realize that money is limited and that requests outweigh the recently predicted revenue surplus of only \$18 million. But I believe that law enforcement should receive top priority.

I am reminded of the Governor's statement in 1969 that "[p]reserving civil peace has always been recognized as the first responsibility of government. A government that is unable to afford all its citizens the security of person and property is not likely to be able to do much else for them." I agree wholeheartedly.

We in law enforcement cannot do the job expected of us and we cannot insure the safe enjoyment of the rights and privileges of citizenship without the necessary resources. I think we have correctly assessed our adversary, and we have

realistically designed our requests. The people of North Carolina expect continued progress in law enforcement and we want to provide it. I hope we will be given the opportunity.

We have no large membership to write letters to the Legislators and we have no paid lobbyists. We can only present our case as factually and objectively as possible and depend upon the people we serve for support.

I urge your active interest and support because I know how effective each of you can be. You were effective in 1969 when the PIN Network seemed to be all but lost. Many of you here tonight came to Raleigh from all over the State to indicate your support. As we all know, that bill went through, but it did so only because of the collective effort of law enforcement officials like you. We need that sort of interest and collective effort again to get us through this year. We must let the people and legislators know just how badly we want to progress and how much these programs will help them. And we must let them know that effective law enforcement requires continued legislative support.

And at the same time, we need to spend more time explaining to the people of North Carolina just what our programs are all about. It is no wonder that we have so much trouble convincing a reluctant General Assembly when we have not fully convinced our neighbors. Let's begin at home to

inform the people, with city councils and county commissioners. If we do a good job there, in future years the job in Raleigh, perhaps, will not be so tough.

Let's begin at home. For it is from the local level, from our local agencies, that we must find our support. Statewide programs are vital, but they will never replace the need for ~~statewide programs~~ for good local enforcement and they will never be successful without it.

So tonight I leave you with a three-fold challenge. To give your support and ideas to our legislative program and to inform the public you serve of your jobs, your programs, and your needs. And thirdly, I challenge you to sustain, in the days ahead, the same outstanding dedication that makes me proud to stand before you tonight.

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