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Police Management: The Past Twenty Years and the Next Twenty[1]

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A friend once said that all managers could be subdivided into three types: architects; builders; and maintenance men, and that most of the ills of organizational life could be attributed to the fact that we have too many maintenance men filling positions requiring architects and builders. All of my career as a manager and leader I have envisioned myself partly as an architect but mostly as a builder. Consequently I have occupied most of my efforts towards planning and developing and honestly never spend much time going back to inspect structures and systems of past projects to see how they are standing up. After accepting this invitation to speak on "Police Management: the Past Twenty Years and the Next Twenty", I realized with slowly developing consternation that the task would require soul searching and some critical self evaluation; for my peers and I are responsible for whatever legacy derives from the score of years commencing 1967.

THE PAST TWENTY YEARS

The demarcation year 1967 was Canada's centennial year. My generation of fledgling police managers was just emerging into roles of marginal influence. We were the product of internal cultures where the norms were: rigidity of thought and structure; expectations of loyalty; observance of traditional patterns of behavior; discipline and the expectation of conformity. Our organizations were enforcement oriented. It was essentially a "one-front" mentality. That is not to say the system had no merit. For one thing, there were remarkable standards of civility. The norms for personal behavior were: tact and good manners; a cheerful and equitable temperament; emotional stability; acceptance of responsibility and the requirement to put service ahead of self. This definition was published in the RCMP officer's handbook of the day under the heading: Discipline and Morale.

> "Discipline is the result of training and morale. Sound discipline comes of volition. The fundamental ingredient of discipline is loyalty — a willing and voluntary compliance of the plans and the will of the leader. It is the will and desire to implement the intent of the leader."

I also recall reading the benevolent prose of one senior officer "Leave is for the purpose of resting men for further service."

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[1] Keynote address for Research Leaders in Policing Symposium, Canadian Police College, January 25-26, 1988.

Thoroughly imbued with this tradition of steely intent, discipline and courtly manners that conquered the plains, coped with the depression, endured a world war, and survived difficult post war economic fluctuations; but poorly prepared with the requisite skills and vision to deal with the new order to things, my generation of junior bosses found itself suddenly coping with the boisterous ranks of the baby boomers intent upon revolution, self fulfillment, instant gratification and mind altering drugs. It was a time also of innocence and optimism. Remember the promise of "The Greening of America?" Reflecting the ambivalence of society, our police organizations reacted both with protective and suppressive tactics while internally paralleling environmental change with an intellectual awakening of our own. University training programs for police officers were given real impetus; police colleges and college courses on law enforcement came into vogue. Educational standards for police recruits were raised and a new future orientation began to emerge at the senior levels of police departments.

Despite this promise of renaissance on the streets and in the squad rooms, there were no easy paths. The police were a clearly identified target for anti-establishment sentiments, respect for authority was out of style and law enforcement officers were "pigs". In the squad room, too, respect for authority slackened and willful behaviour and obdurate attitudes were not uncommon. The supervisors fell back in bewilderment and the managers just hung on. In the 1970's, often times, the measurement of success was just to keep things going, never mind make progress.

Technology came to our aid. Computer based information and control systems offered better data for decision making at more timely intervals. Radio equipment improved significantly and made possible better service to the public. The "instant cop", on line with his information source suddenly became reality. Towards the end of the second decade, national and regional automated finger print information systems were boosting the efficiency of crime scene investigations by ten and even twenty percent and the role of the computer in crime analysis finally came into focus. Private security agencies began to offer a new cost effective, low level protective service to business which complimented the public police.

In this flux of issues, the process of liberal-oriented law reform and constitutional change culminated in a Charter of Rights and Freedoms for Canada. Police were presented with more needs for adjustment, education and increased sophistication. Too painfully aware of some of the adverse effects of judicial decisions in the United States which reduced police powers to investigate crime and gather evidence, Canadian police leaders publicly opposed some elements of the legal rights clauses of the Charter. Our arguments and dire predictions were met with skepticism and the provisions passed into law. The police learned some valuable lessons about political influence: that the police must enjoin allies in purpose and involve the public.

Police associations and unions made great strides within the past twenty years, succeeding in raising wages and improving benefits for their membership. To the consternation of police managers, the associations also succeeded in gaining inroads into management prerogatives; conditions of work issues being extended to cover resource allocation, promotion and other

vital managerial tools. Too often, these concessions were given up by arbitration boards, appointed commissions or elected officials in a mood of short term expediency without any real concern for the impact on police effectiveness and efficiency. The past two decades were also marked by notable and usually disastrous instances of police strikes, distasteful episodes to the dedicated police manager.

Finally, towards the latter part of the 1970's and early 1980's stability began to return to the police officer's world. The baby boom generation matured as young adults, the social security network sustained Canada through the difficulties of boom and recession and a new self-help ethic became discernible through a resurgence of voluntarism and independence at the grass roots level of society. A new generation of school-smart realists began to appear at police recruiting offices. In the recession of the early 1980's, the final test of the two-decade period required police managers to deal with the effects of declining government resources and the urging to "work smarter" and "do more with less." Short term freezes and austerity programs were replaced with cut-back management tactics. The spectre of layoffs became a reality for some forces and a new and painful experience for this generation of police managers. For some of us that traumatic experience marked our final confirmation as managers and leaders.

To sum up, the past twenty years were turbulent and difficult. Much of the time we merely coped. Some of the time, it was the best that could be done. We endured, and when times changed and a semblance of order and good fortune returned, we found ourselves tested, tougher minded, more knowledgeable and blessed with a cadre of following police leaders potentially more able and waiting only the finishing touch of personal command.

THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS

The Premise

A wise man said, "I am passionately interested in the future because I intend to live there." So do we all. The police manager of the next twenty years, the remnants of the transitional generation and the new generation now assuming command, is facing a variety of alternative futures, some of them positive and optimistic and some of dismal portent. In order to establish the context for our review of the next twenty years, I ask first that you accept the premise of McLuhan's "Global Village" in which all events in the world are interrelated and no society or national entity will be untouched by conditions or movements, political, economic or technological, affecting mankind on this planet. We are already experiencing a global economy and the stress of competition for wealth and power on a world wide stage. Political interdependence has been manifest since the advent of the nuclear age. Canadian police are painfully aware that good conditions for opium crops half a world away have a direct bearing on violent crime on our own streets six months to a year later, and that grave political differences in foreign lands can result in death in Canadian cities and skies. In addition, I am applying the assumption that there will be no catastrophic world war and that while economic fluctuations may be comprised of wide and sudden variations, the economic system will continue to function.

There are several wild card influences with the potential for impact. If the effect of the AIDS epidemic is as serious as some predict, some societies and nation may be severely disrupted by population loss and the forced transference of massive resources to health care. The national productivity rate and competitive vitality of a nation may be adversely affected. Those nations which have insulated themselves through the discipline of epidemic prevention and even measures of social control may escape the worst effects, enabling them to achieve an economic advantage over those who merely treat the symptoms. It would not be the first time in history that disease has brought about the decline of nations and societies. This is but one of the uncertainties to ponder. One could also speculate on the influence of changing world climatic conditions upon the fortunes of nations, including Canada. Despite the possibility of these relatively drastic influences upon the long term, my underlying premise for the future is that events will be governed within the context of continuity of world civilization as we know it.

Let us consider now some alternative futures and later project into them the role of the police and the police manager. On a continental scale and in prospect of the declining influence of North America on the world global economy, futurists warn of a tendency towards deepening class distinctions resulting from the concentration of wealth in the hands of a select few. This will, it is argued, be accompanied by the demise of the broad middle class, to be replaced by a narrow class of professionals, facilitators and technologists, and leaving as dross an underclass of permanently impoverished people. The latter will experience no permanence of employment, will subsist on low wages and government welfare and will find it increasingly difficult to aspire upward by virtue of deficiencies in education and opportunity. The triple threats of violent crime, massive public disturbances and increasing recourse to drugs and alcohol accompany this scenario. This dismal vision of the future follows from the social discontinuities of the present: the breakdown of the traditional family; the disappearance of many permanent jobs to be replaced by temporary or part time jobs; instability of residence under pressure of economic forces which destroy the sense of community; and the continuing destructive effects of alcohol and drugs.

On the opposing scale of alternative futures is the proposition that North America will compete most successfully with the rest of the world and will sustain dominance during the next twenty years. While world wide economic competition will not permit the emergence of the leisure society predicted in the 1960's and 1970's, North America will work harder and with greater ingenuity. Stress symptoms will be painful adjustments on the road to a high tech future in which educational levels will rise as a result of the explosion of knowledge and the means of communication. Appropriately expanding social assistance programs will bridge the gap. People will accommodate to a redefined structural concept of the family or affinity group, and adapt readily to employment and career changes. Positive morale, self-help and improved standards of mental health will offset the need for opiates.

The Justice System

The choices and outcomes are not likely to be that clearly delineated but they are useful bookend scenarios for alternative futures. Some conditions may be common to either prediction. For the criminal justice system, regarded until now as the major theatre for police activity, I predict a steady

decline in relevance and influence. The legal profession which assumed control of the institutions of justice, mainly the courts, has gone so far down the road of legalism and obsession with process that it is already evident the public are losing confidence. The average citizen finds the developing web of laws, judgments and procedures so complex as to be incomprehensible and producing results in which the public can find no sense. As we travel further into an era that will be notable for manifestations of increasing individuality, more people are apt to decide that the purported justice system is in reality only a legal system that has little relevance for them. At that point, all manner of active and passive civil disobedience could result. The scofflaw attitude of thousands of Canadians in relation to outstanding traffic warrants is evidence of a growing refusal to comply with court orders, and there are notable recent examples of individual and collective non compliance with civil court orders.

Only a saving grace arising from public pressure and insightful reflection from influential members of the legal profession can avert the decline of the justice system as we know it. The remedies lie in restoration of the proposition that the protection of society is paramount, that justice should be done, that substance should take precedence over procedure and that effectiveness should be measured in terms of the probability of detection of offenders; the shortness of the interval between arrest and trial; and the certainty of any punishment imposed thereafter. While restoration of the traditional role of the justice system is the outcome I would prefer, my observation is that the legal profession will confirm its disposition to play at legalism and, by default of responsibility and refusal to adapt, society will gradually remove many issues from the purview of the criminal courts. Increasingly, what we now regard as minor crimes and public nuisance offences, (which happen to be the matters which directly affect the vast majority of citizens) will be dealt with through quasi-judicial and civil proceedings by methods such as litigation, referral to appointed bodies and other means of diversion and mediation. By reason of ineffectual performance and high social and economic costs, penal remedies for less serious crime will gradually be abandoned to be replaced by administrative sanctions, loss of civil privilege and punishment oriented public service work options. J.K. Galbraith said "anticipate change or be its victim". The current prominence of Canadian courts attendant to the interpretation of the Charter is but a passing effect. The dominating influence of the criminal courts will become as passé as the wigs and gowns which the legal profession cling to as evidence of their disinclination to adapt.

By contrast, the police have an important, even pivitol role to play in making and molding the future of this country, but only if enlightened management possesses the foresight and skill to make it so. The fight against violent crime and the predators who would deprive honest citizens of their property will remain a major role for law enforcement regardless of which future scenario prevails, and the investigation of serious offences and the apprehension of suspects must be done ever more effectively and efficiently. There must be a concerted effort directed towards the management of patrol operations, criminal investigations and crime analysis. Experimentation with tactics such as the targetting of career criminals will become normal practise and always the emphasis will be on imagination, productivity and results.

The next twenty years will see a significant increase in business-oriented crime. Police will require specialized professional expertise from outside their own ranks to deal with this threat. Criminal syndicates, many of them oriented to ethnic and international interests, will serve as carriers for political terrorism and violence used in the criminal pursuit of wealth and power. Large scale drug trafficking will continue throughout this period and drug abuse will be a prevalent factor in most world societies during the next twenty years. The threat and occasional outbreak of violent civil disturbances will remain a feature of Canadian cities. Ordinary hooliganism, labour disputes or political protest, will challenge police to refine order maintenance tactics.

Police forces will become increasingly more proficient and professional in character. The latest information technology will pervade every facet of operation and change the structures and systems of management. The predominant managerial style will be "hands on" in character. Decentralized decision-making will be normal and, while the traditional chain of command will be preserved for effectiveness' sake, the organizational structures will be flatter with broad spans of control. The influence of information technology and community based policing will be the prime reason for these adjustments. Police executives would be well advised to take preemptory steps to eliminate a significant percentage of redundant mid management positions now, for in the informational age an overburden of mid managers rendered obsolete by technology can represent an obstruction to internal communication and progress. Police recruiting standards will become more discriminatory in terms of education and skills and more sophisticated psychological testing will assist in selecting those possessed in greatest measure of an understanding of human behavior and the appropriate personal values required for the mix of regulatory and moderating tasks required of police.

Acting in concert with his community and governing body, the police manager will evolve, achieve internal concensus, and communicate the ethical principles adopted by the department, which will be recognized as a philosophy governing the making of all decisions and determination of policy. There will be a national code of ethics or values for good policing, collectively developed by police professionals. Increasingly, police policy will become value-driven as opposed to issue-driven.

Under this influence, the police will come to assume the role of true defenders of civil rights, upholding fundamental freedoms of conscience, religion, freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association. Together with equality rights, police will protect, facilitate and nurture the enjoyment of these rights. In addition, the police will accept a responsibility to serve an exemplary role in the sustenance and improvement of standards of public civility and tolerance, qualities which have traditionally distinguished Canadian society but which recent experience proves cannot be taken for granted. Community based policing with its emphasis on problem solving will become the accepted style of operation, with law enforcement priorities and practices increasingly in harmony with those of local governments. The networking of police resources with other social agencies and protective interests will become normal practice.

Police departments will use highly developed methods for sensing the environment and for strategic planning, public information and education. Internal policies will use a sophisticated system of positive and negative reinforcement, with recognition of the street skills of moderation and mediation. The use of coercion and force will be carefully controlled and incidents differing from accepted non-violent tactics will receive detailed review and evaluation. New technological and psychological alternatives to the use of deadly force will be given high priority. Over time, under the influence of leadership and a reorientation of the initiation process, the police culture will become more humanistic and flexible.

In the field of internal management and labour relations, police leaders will increasingly seek internally negotiated solutions, based upon consensus whenever possible. There will be an appreciation that confrontation is counter productive and that improved communication and access to information can eliminate misunderstandings on both sides.

Technology has continuing potential to be a mighty ally. The police manager of the next twenty years will have a choice of a bewildering variety of scientific and technical aids. We would be well advised in Canada to prompt now loudly and effectively for more resources for applied scientific aid, for recent decisions affecting the National Research Council discloses how keen the competition has become for scarce dollars and that police assistance programs are vulnerable. As for technology, the challenge to police managers lies in applying imagination to existing products. Our objective should be innovation and effective adaptation rather than invention. The police manager of the future must be fully computer literate with direct access to the information system.

Fundamental to the management of police forces of the future will be dependence upon computer assisted education systems for both recruit and inservice training, for not only do these systems offer consistency of communication and promise higher retention levels, their constant availability is admirably suitable to the rhythms of police work schedules. As the technology develops, the Canadian Police College may be presented a brilliant opportunity to extend its services through electronic teaching systems, and through supporting technology for the networking of new ideas and research experience. A word of warning regarding technology. John Diebold, an eminent thinker on the impact of computers on society, observed that the greatest likelihood is not that machines will begin to think like men, but that men will begin to think like machines. Managers must not abrogate to technicians their responsibility to ensure that the values of the organization are designed into its computerized systems.

Let us now consider how the police managers of the next twenty years will position their organizations. About the time I began to despair of the future of punitive justice (not because of a failure of design but because of a failure of the will to apply it) I began to focus on prevention and methods of social control more subtle and less attenuated to coercion and force. It now seems to me that if we, as a society, were committed to concentrating on upstream problems rather than dealing with effects which are beyond correction, then we would be better positioned for impact. Quoting Machiavelli, "problems at their beginning are easy to cure but difficult to

recognize, but when they are allowed to increase, become easy to recognize and difficult to cure."

Policing, at its highest level, is a form of social engineering. The enlightened police leader communicates, nurtures and nudges his constituency of interest in positive directions leading towards a state of communal betterment. Consistent with this concept, and regardless of alternative futures, I conceive of a continuance and growth of police collaboration with social agencies, educational institutions and supportive citizens in areas of public education, crime prevention, race and class relations, mediation and victim assistance. The police manager will actively and publicly support all organizations and influences for good in the community and will back up that support with the resources of his agency. While the police will remain a regulating force in crime control, they will serve an even more influential role as moderator, helping to enhance the strengths of the community. A word of caution. The role of the moderator involves working outside the neat and familiar framework of legal authority and jurisdiction. It involves assembling a constituency of support; earning the tacit approval of the community and assuming the tenuous empowerment of that freely given (and removable) mandate. The role of the moderator is laden with risk and requires moral courage. But dare we avoid it? To their credit, the police have a record of accepting responsibility beyond their legal mandate simply because things needed doing and there was no one else to do it.

A final word on prospects for the future. Within that global village of conflicting interests on the horizon is the certainty that economic competition between nations will demand greater economy and efficiency from every sector of the national economy, public as well as private. The requirement for greater productivity will grow and policing will have to demonstrate its efficiency. The times will demand still higher levels of professional management.

CONCLUSION

We have now reviewed the past, established a basic premise for the future, and considered alternative futures. We looked at the functions of crime control and its broader aspect of social control, and prognosticated upon organizational change. In closing I want to return to the role of the individual police manager — the prime agent of change. Can we as individuals make any difference in determining the future? My prediction for the future is that the times will not call forth or require great leaders — those figures on the grand scale of a Churchill or Ghandi, but will require great citizens and the exercise of exemplary citizenship. We are entering an era of distributive leadership. In the words of Albert Schweitzer:

> "The renewal of civilization has nothing to do with movements which bear the character of experiences of the crowd, these are never anything but reactions to external happenings. But civilization can only revive when there shall come into being in a number of individuals a new tone of mind independent of the one prevalent among the crowd and in opposition to it, a tone of mind which will

gradually win influence over the collective one and in the end determine its character. It is only an ethical movement which can rescue us from the slough of barbarism, and the ethical comes into existence only in individuals."

You may think I am indicating a need for intellectual and moral paragons. Nothing could be further from reality. In order that the police service achieve its potential and truly ensure that the best of all possible futures is obtained for the people, it requires only that the following be done: first, that executive and senior police officers be selected on the basis of integrity, character, personal commitment, intelligence and knowledge. We must have the best; and second, that every member of the leadership group exemplify these qualities in their everyday performance of duties. We must aspire to excellence in all things.

The past twenty years were difficult times for police leaders. Much of the time was spent merely holding onto standards and what progress occurred was uneven. Still it was a period when strength and determination were forged out of adversity and when we were afforded tantalizing glimpses of what could be. It was a time of transition. The next twenty years will be a different paradigm yet. In the context of a global village of conflicting interests, propelled by an explosion in knowledge and great leaps in technology with potential to change mankind in ways upon which we can only speculate, the full-automatic on-line future all lies before us. Acceptance of the opportunity to influence the future may be daunting and will take courage, commitment and perseverance. But in any circumstance, determination, effort and the application of ethical values can make a difference. We must go forward as thinkers and as doers, prepared to set standards, act on principle, speak out and take risks. That is the challenge of the next twenty years.