

police actions in labor and other disputes and may create valid doubts concerning the impartiality of the Force in the minds of the public.

Labor unions could impose a measure of outside control and influence upon police activities that is contrary to the public interest. A police commissioner or other official must not surrender or relinquish his constitutional responsibility to a private self-serving organization. The State cannot enter a collective bargaining agreement and cannot allow a closed shop that would interfere with the selection of the most qualified public employees. Unions use the strike as a primary weapon against management despite no strike agreements and statutes. Union members with and without official union sanction have participated in walk-outs and strikes affecting the health, safety and welfare of the public. To establish a machinery for a police strike or even a work slow-down, with a possibility of looting, disorder and loss of life, is unwise and unthinkable. I have been advised that of the 37,000 police agencies in the United States, fewer than 60 are unionized, and only one city force of any size is affiliated with organized labor.

I sincerely believe that police employees should be allowed to form local fraternal, benefit and social organizations operated by the policemen themselves. Such groups may properly be concerned with employment conditions and may be authorized to speak for police personnel in such matters.

The Police Department is not an ordinary branch of the government such as the Water Department, the Comptroller's Department, the Post Office, or even the Fire Department. First, there is a need for discipline in a police department which is similar to that required in a military organization. Second, officers by the very nature of their responsibilities are required to forego certain personal privileges that are enjoyed by private employees. Members of a police department are not mere workers, but are officers of the government and are charged with specific duties in maintaining public order and administering justice. An industrial employee's actions for the most part concern only himself and his employer; the actions of a member of the police department concern the public as a whole. This distinction is vital.

The State of Maryland has reacted quickly to studies which indicate deficiencies in the management and personnel practices in the Baltimore Police Department. Legislation has been enacted to provide improved management, grievance, disciplinary and promotional procedures. The attention of executive and legislative officials has been directed to the selection, training, salary and fringe benefits of the Department members, and improvement in these matters is forthcoming. For the above enumerated reasons, I feel compelled to veto House Bill 283.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

(s) J. MILLARD TAWES,

Governor.