

## ABOUT CONSOLIDATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES —

Created during the last war and established on a permanent basis in 1919, the Michigan State Police has grown steadily in the last thirty-three years both in number of employees and in the scope of activities for which it is responsible. Since the outbreak of the present war additional duties of civilian defense and the protection of war industries have been assumed and the personnel of the Department has been increased by about 100 men.

The State Police now consists of 660 men with an annual payroll of over \$1 million. In addition to enforcement of traffic regulations on the major highways, the State Police has many other responsibilities. The Department maintains a police training school, radio and communications division, operators' license division, criminal identification division, criminal investigation division, oil inspection division, liquor enforcement division, and fire marshal's division. State Police officers have the powers of conservators of the peace and of deputy sheriffs and are authorized to cooperate with local police and peace officers in the discovery of crime and the protection of persons and property. In some rural areas the State Police also assists in the protection of war plants and in safeguarding the civilian population.

In view of this trend toward the development of a comprehensive law enforcement agency in the State government, consideration may be given to transferring to the State Police some law enforcement work now performed in other State Departments – notably the forest fire division and law enforcement division of the Department of Conservation. These divisions are responsible for administering and enforcing all conservation laws and for the prevention, detection, and control of forest fires.

Unquestionably, hunting and fishing will be curtailed very greatly during the war years. Many younger men will be in military service and others will be occupied with war production and civilian war activities. Tire and gasoline restrictions will make it much more difficult to reach the hunting and fishing areas. The shortage of guns, shells and other equipment will be felt increasingly as the present stocks are exhausted. This curtailment in hunting and fishing will make it difficult to justify the present staff of about 200 persons assigned to the enforcement of conservation laws.

Since the State Police is already responsible for protection of the public against a variety of fire hazards including arson, explosives, inflammable liquids, and for fire escapes and fire extinguishing apparatus, it would be entirely logical to include the protection against forest fires with this Department. Other states in which conservation enforcement, fire protection, and general police activities have been combined include New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. In Oregon it is reported that when the state police was organized:

“Beside general police duties, these policemen were entrusted with the enforcement activities formerly handled by the state highway commission, the secretary of state, the fist and game commission, and the state fire marshal. In combining these various enforcement activities, certain objectives sought in the law creating the state police were attained; that is, responsibility was centralized, increased efficiency in law enforcement was obtained by consolidation, and duplication of effort was eliminated. All this was made possible, and in addition, a more carefully chosen and trained force, using improved equipment, was provided.”

Consideration might also be given to transferring enforcement work of the Liquor Control Commission to the State Police. In fact, the State Police is now required by statute to maintain a liquor act enforcement division.

Merging these functions with the State Police should provide more adequate enforcement of conservation laws, liquor laws, and all other laws in all parts of the state.

This is one of several joint statements on the subject of State reorganization by the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research and the Michigan Public Expenditure Survey.