

# 1,000 to join detection drive

About 1,000 detectives will be added to the Criminal Investigation Department over the next 18 months to boost the detection and prevention of crime.

This means the strength of the CID will reach 4,000 by the end of next year - double the total strength at the beginning of 1974.

The additional manpower will be distributed between the divisions, district headquarters and specialised headquarters units.

The bad news for criminals was disclosed recently by the Director of Criminal Investigation, Mr Richard Quine, in his first press interview since he became Hongkong's top detective 10 months ago.

While acknowledging the crime problem has improved during the past two years, Mr Quine said police are by no means complacent about the present situation.

He said that the restructuring of the CID, begun some two years ago, has shown results and there will be continuing streamlining of police organisation and operations to cope with any future changes in the crime pattern.

Mr Quine listed three basic facets of the crime problem: triads, drugs and vice.

"The police's priority will be to combat these evils and neutralise other key criminal elements," he said.

"We are striving to seize the initiative from the criminals, and not without some success, but we must also stay on the offensive.

"This can only be achieved through effective criminal intelligence, and strengthening of our capability to investigate the more serious and complicated crimes, and by providing a maximum uniform branch presence.

"We will also need continuing research into new policing techniques and up-to-date supporting equipment. We must maximise expert assistance available from forensic pathologists, chemists, fingerprint technicians, ballistic officers and the like."

Maximum efficiency can also be achieved through better priority setting, he said.

"We aim to keep the CID on the offensive instead of merely waiting for crime reports and action squads have been formed for this at divisional and district levels.

"These are CID striking units, led by an officer usually of inspector rank or above, given duties on the basis of statistics and intelligence to counter crime in black spots.

"This has worked and at present divisional

action squads are clearing about 40 per cent of detected crime."

Besides a Criminal Intelligence Bureau, which will become operational in the next few weeks, there will also be expansions in other CID Headquarters units that deal with different types of crimes.

The new centralised Criminal Intelligence Bureau will be able to monitor, analyse and research crime trends and patterns on a Colony-wide basis so as to assign manpower with maximum effect.

"The concept is to investigate criminals and their activities instead of crime which has already been committed," Mr Quine said.

Other units earmarked for further expansion will include:

- **The Special Crimes Squad** - The unit investigates robberies and burglaries of large amounts of money or goods, as well as those with special patterns or the use of firearms. It also deals with bank and goldsmith shop robberies, special gangs and the disposal of stolen property. The strength of the unit will be increased from the present 40 men to about 100.

- **The Homicide Squad** - Has an establishment of about 50 at present, but its size will be increased to enable it to investigate virtually all murders which is likely to involve lengthy inquiries.

- **The Commercial Crimes Office** - The unit has recently been given two trained accountants as well as an additional 30 detectives to enable it to form a Company Fraud Section to deal with complicated offences involving public companies.

Other units due to be strengthened include the Prevention of Crime Office to give it field training and advisory capabilities at divisional, district and headquarters levels.

Divisions with heavy caseloads will also be assigned more manpower, along with vehicles, two-way radios and other sophisticated equipment.

Mr Quine pointed out that not only is the CID structure undergoing changes and expansion, the quality of detectives and their mentality is also changing.

"Many of the old 'stereotyped' detectives operated on the basis of instinct and a network of informants. They lacked team work and system and there tended to be little exchange of information with colleagues.

"Nowadays, the accent is on system, teamwork, intelligence and full exploitation of

cent; burglaries rose by 71 per cent and robberies, usually taken as the "thermometer" of crime trends, shot up by 73 per cent.

However in 1975 because of the improving economic situation and revised police tactics, as well as active citizen involvement in fighting crime and criminals, crime figures started a steady decline that is continuing.

The figures below illustrate how the situation has improved:

## Total Crime

1973 - 1974: Up 36.4 per cent compared with the previous year.

1974 - 1975: Down 1.8 per cent.

1975 - 1976: Up 1.5 per cent.\*

\* Including a significant increase of preventive crimes.

## Violent Crime

1973 - 1974: Up 4.7 per cent compared with the previous year.

1974 - 1975: Down 2.2 per cent.

1975 - 1976: Down 10.8 per cent.

## Preventive Crime

1973 - 1974: Up 53.1 per cent compared with the previous year.

1974 - 1975: Up 13.2 per cent.

1975 - 1976: Up 12.4 per cent.

As for the individual crimes, the trend in the past three years can be shown in the following charts:

## Robbery

1974: 12,787 cases

1975: 11,120 cases (down 13 per cent).

1976: 8,895 cases (down 20 per cent).

## Burglary

1974: 6,328 cases

1975: 6,368 cases (up 0.6 per cent).

1976: 5,665 cases (up 10.5 per cent).

More people have been arrested and charged with criminal offences in the three years. The figures are: 1974, 20,794; 1975, 21,258; 1976, 23,485.

However, the number of youths (under 21) arrested and charged has been declining, indicating that fewer young people are getting involved with crime. The figures are: 1974, 35.5 per cent; 1975, 31.8 per cent; 1976, 28.5 per cent.

Police detection rates, meanwhile, have shown a steady improvement.



Mr Quine... striving to seize the initiative... scientific and technical aids.

"The men have the ability to get along with people, they are taught that patience and tact pays a good dividend."

The Detective Training School, which provides an intensive three-month course, has almost doubled its intake this year.

Instead of the 100 officers per course last year, it is now turning out 195 detectives every three months, adding almost 800 sleuths to the force each year.

Mr Quine looked back to the period 1973-74, known as the "bad years," when crimes were at a record high.

The cause of this has been attributed to the economic situation when many people found themselves without jobs, or those with jobs found they could not earn enough to cope with the rising cost of living. A serious shortfall of police resources also for economic reasons and more crime reports made by victims as a result of the Fight Violent Crime Campaign are also often mentioned.

In the two years, total crime shot up 54 per cent; key crimes such as robberies, burglaries, murders, blackmail, and kidnapping went up 68 per cent; violent crime went up 67 per

## Detection Rate for Known Crime

For overall crime:

1974: 43 per cent.

1976: 53 per cent.

For key crimes:

1974: 29.5 per cent.

1976: 35.2 per cent.

For violent crimes:

1974: 26.6 per cent.

1976: 35.8 per cent.

Instead of waiting for crimes to take place, detectives are now going out to arrest criminals before they can commit a crime.

Last year, preventive arrests such as possession of an offensive weapon, often used in robberies or gang fights, or membership of a triad society, increased by 38 per cent (or 2,297 cases over 1974).

Extortion cases, often unearthed by police, totalled 4,600 last year and drug trafficking arrests increased by 1,183.

Mr Quine said the great majority of criminals are also triad members, but emphasised that they are members of "pseudo triad groups" or gangs - triads without a capital "T."

Between 70 and 80 per cent of those arrested and sent to prison have a triad background, he said.

"Triad elements are heavily involved with vice, extortion, prostitution and other rackets," he said. "To a large extent, the triad problem is synonymous with the crime problem."

Last year's police anti-triad drive resulted in the closing of some 275 vice establishments and the neutralisation of 10 mini-bus extortion syndicates.

Blackmail cases uncovered by the police increased from 2,112 in 1975 to 4,536 last year while gang fights fell from 451 in 1975 to 393 last year, showing that the force is making some impression on the problem.

Many triad elements have fled from Hongkong in the past few years.

The elimination of the narcotics problem is also high on the police priority list as many addicts are in crime in order to support their costly habits.

Excluding those jailed for narcotics and other offences, some 45 per cent of people imprisoned last year were drug addicts.

"Hongkong's crime problem is an urban policing problem, and because of the density of the population and the number of high-rise buildings, it is a three-dimensional policing problem," Mr Quine said.

And since the crime problem has improved beyond most people's expectations and makes Hongkong stand out when compared with the deteriorating crime situation in most major Western cities, where do we go from here?

Mr Quine answered, with determination: "We will strive very hard to make further improvements."