

RIGHTS, CIVIC LEADERS HAIL CITIZEN BOARD

Al Raby, S. C. L. C.

Praise It Faintly

The formation of the mayor's citizen's committee was met with mixed reactions yesterday from both city officials and civil rights leaders. The 23-member committee will study ways of improving relations between the police department and the public.

Police Supt. O. W. Wilson welcomed the idea and called it "an excellent idea," he said, "I hope they come up with recommendations that will help our police department's commission on human relations and that the committee will serve as a blueprint for similar committees across the nation."

Thomas R. Mulroy, appointed chairman of the committee by Mayor Daley on Monday, said the committee will investigate police department operations and make recommendations on ways to improve police-community relations. An attorney and former president of the Chicago crime commission, Mulroy emphasized the committee is not a civilian review board such as that which was recommended by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

"Must Become Informed"

"Our committee must become informed fully with respect to community tensions in the context of police procedures, so that we may evaluate the causes of the tensions, and thereby be in a better position to recommend to Mayor Daley programs looking toward their amelioration," he said.

A spokesman for Dr. King's Southern Christian Leadership conference called the committee, "a step in the right direction." However, he said, "We don't find this committee to be a substitute for a citizen's review board. We don't know yet what official role such a committee will play, but we should hope it will begin to investigate the question of police harassment and brutality in the Negro community."

Judge James B. Parsons of federal District court, a member of the committee, said there is a "general need for upgrading the quality of policemen," but said he does not believe the study of "alleged police brutality" should be a function of the committee.

Can Improve Relations

"A great deal of good can come from this committee in terms of improved police-community relations," said Judge Parsons, a member of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, an 18-member group which deals with many of the same problems on the national level.

Judge Parsons called a citizen's review board a "fruitless undertaking" and said there was nothing to support the need for such a group. "The Chicago police department has a strong internal investigation division and is doing more in this regard than any other city in the nation," he said.

Must Recapture Contact

Judge Parsons said one of the jobs of the committee will be to find substitutes for the close police-community relations that existed when the foot patrolman walked the streets on his beat. "How do you find a substitute for the foot-patrolman—this will be one of our problems," he said.

Albert Raby, convener of the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations, called the committee "a necessary first step," but said he is not "terribly enthusiastic." He said he is sorry that none of the community groups that have "been victims of police brutality" are represented on the committee.