

Pay, benefit parity urged before police, fire merger

The prospect of a centralized one-city council for Metro Winnipeg has generated the theory throughout the suburbs that amalgamated police and fire services are the next step.

Local suburban officials say "parity with Winnipeg" looms high on the employees' priority list of demands. According to reports, the objective "parity" means more than just an increase in wages, it means holding down a better job in a unified force.

St. James-Assiniboia Alderman Peter Moss who is the city negotiator in employee contracts said: "The employees indicate they want to go into amalgamations on an equal basis. They feel if they don't get parity this year, it will reflect on their ability to hold their jobs in a centralized operation."

He doesn't blame the employees for wanting parity because there is a growing feeling that Winnipeg personnel will get all the "plum" jobs if the forces amalgamate.

Mr. Moss takes exception to anyone thinking that St. James-Assiniboia police force must take a back seat to Winnipeg's operation.

"Mayor Stephen Juba was making a big noise recently about riot training for police. Our men were trained one year ago. We were the first Metro Winnipeg force to be completely trained in riot and crowd control and have all the equipment," said Mr. Moss.

He pointed out that Winnipeg is talking about testing eight-cylinder cruiser cars. "We've had them for years."

A spokesman of one suburban police association said members of his department are relatively young and with the majority of Winnipeg staff in the above 30-year-old group, suburban police stand little chance for promotion in a consolidated department.

But few if any suburban police would quit rather than become part of the one police force. After all, any merger toward Winnipeg means more money. Also, some suburban officers believe the one-department operation would make work easier because their duties would become more specialized.



Suburban scene . . .

By BILL BURDEYNY
Tribune Suburban Editor

"In the suburbs, we do everything, including handling domestic calls, traffic controls and investigating crimes," said one suburban officer.

In addition to the pay increases, suburban police stand to gain in fringe benefits including better and higher pension plans.

Becoming a first class constable takes longer in Winnipeg than in the suburbs. The suburbs start paying the rate after two years service. Effective Jan. 1 of this year, Winnipeg extended the requirement by one more year.

Another suburban police officer liked the thought of more pay in becoming part of a merged police force, but believes the suburbs would suffer in service.

"My community would lose the personal contact which helps in investigations, the personalized service which is executed in short time because of low priorities. The suburban police stand to gain, money-wise but it would mean working in a different atmosphere," he said.

One suburban police official thinks an amalgamated operation would introduce the "job

evaluation" system. In other words, pay the employee according to the duties performed and not according to a flat rate salary schedule. For an example, he continued, a cashier clerk in a suburban municipal office could not expect to draw the same pay as a cashier clerk in the city of Winnipeg, mainly because of difference in responsibilities and duties involved.

Though the lower rank and file of police such as constables and sergeants stand to gain in pay, the same applies to the higher ranks right up to the suburban chiefs. But there would be a loss of authority and prestige. Some police chiefs feel they would have a "heavy load" off their shoulders by becoming part of a single police department in a lesser capacity, but with the same or more pay.

The following chart shows comparative police wages in the Metro Winnipeg area. Charleswood is policed by RCMP and therefore not shown on the chart. The Winnipeg scale is based on 1971 salary schedules whereas all suburban pay is on 1970 — except West Kildonan which has yet to resolve the 1970 contract.

	1st Class Constable	Patrol Sgt.	Uniform Sgt.	Detective	Uniform Inspector
Winnipeg	\$793	\$858	\$917	\$858	\$943
East Kildonan	\$670	\$714	\$758	\$714	\$800
Fort Garry	\$970		\$740	\$713	\$810
North-Kildonan	\$670		\$758		
Old Kildonan	\$690		\$664		
St. Boniface	\$685	\$752	\$803	\$752	\$897
St. James-Assiniboia	\$710	\$779	\$838	\$779	\$962
St. Vital	\$670	\$697	\$727	\$697	\$749
Transcona	\$670		\$742	\$706	\$829
Tuxedo	\$670		\$707		
Tuxedo	\$650		\$707		
West Kildonan	\$610		\$664	\$664	

*Minimum \$943 to maximum \$1,147.