

### **Police Board**

*To the Editor:*

Sir—Newark needs a police advisory board. Thirty communities are investigating creation of these officially powerless, nonjudicial boards. Philadelphia's crime rate dropped to the lowest of the five major cities after founding its board five years ago with no affect on police morale.

Many people believe police mistreatment exists, few that "police brutality" does. When it occurs, however, the belief persists that policemen are always vindicated. Gov Hughes states he never saw a "provable case of police brutality." A Newark police captain made similar claims. Records notwithstanding, it greatly strains credulity to think it never happens.

The old chestnut "there are enough safeguards" doesn't hold water, either. Talk to the man who, after two years and \$800 poorer, finally won an illegal search and seizure case. What about countless complainants dropping charges after futilely seeking help or being dissuaded? Most organizations are notorious for their timidity in accepting complaints against police.

Wasn't the treatment accorded Dan Anthony, Howard Devaney, Alexander Mark and Assemblyman George Richardson verbal brutalization? Our Southern-born population with a painfully personal history of police power used to sustain their deprivation, view policemen with trepidation. To them, denial of human dignity and public abuse is worse than physical brutality.

The biggest reason for a police advisory board is its deterrent value and service it affords both citizen and policeman to lodge complaints. Com-

posed of citizens representing every segment, it can't help but improve deteriorated community relations.

Newark. WILLIAM A. MERCER.