

Wilson says. Young policemen, particularly, feel a role conflict in confronting street marchers although there are others who seem to enjoy it.

The response of many police drives the wedge deeper, writes Dr. Clark. They believe that the less they mix with the people to be policed the freer they feel to detect, harass and apprehend their fellow citizens.

"The subsequent lack of a spirit of free co-operation decreases police morale and cripples their service. The policeman regards the public as his enemy, feels his occupation to be in conflict with the community and regards himself as a pariah."

It might be added that when a policeman's wife and children, by association, are subjected to similar pressures and hostilities his alienation is complete.

Rules and regulations handcuff a policeman's discretion. Does he jail a harmless drunk or help him the last few steps home?

If in kindness he departs from departmental regulations he can find himself before a disciplinary board hearing.

An acute cause of stress in Queensland, it will be argued, is the transfer to isolated country areas — moves which often cause families hardship or break them up.

The outback has pressures of its own. The cop can be ordered to raid community or sporting club keg parties or gambling nights.

What does this do to the youngster who knows that this often is the only way such groups can raise funds for community amenities, facilities which his own children and friends might enjoy? He has to begin to hate himself a bit.

There is always the unexpected: What is a policeman's gut reaction to a destroyed child — a horror made more stark by the knowledge that his own youngsters are safely tucked up in bed? Does he then begin to hate society?

A policeman's life is ordered by an authoritarian command structure, his future often is in the hands of inflexible and insensitive administrators.

In Queensland the bright rookie can look forward to promotion largely by seniority. At the same time he is being taught much the same things that were taught several generations ago while in hundreds of ways community thinking is outpacing the laws by which he must operate.

Cops, particularly the older ones, are conservative and monumentally clubbish, in part to combat levels of anger, hostility and abuse from outside.

This breeds in them what is called the "John Wayne" syndrome.

Martin Reiser, Los Angeles police department psychologist, says that in self defence a cop becomes "cynical, overly serious, emotionally withdrawn (especially from his family), cold and authoritarian.

"He has an enormous need to identify with his brother officers. With other people he tends to be overly aggressive. He sees 'good guys' and 'bad guys.'

'SUPERCOP'

"He has a macho, 'supercop' image that he feels he has to live up to, which means that he can't confide in anyone, especially his wife."

So it is not a pretty picture — although a very human one. The telling of the story of stress in a cop's life — which is what will happen before the State Industrial Commission — should be more than a little damaging to the force's self image.

Perhaps a pay rise will be worth it. But what of the stress itself, and its underlying causes?

Dr Wilson: "Trends for the future suggest that the levels of stress in police work must increase."

Already, he said, there were big increases in the incidence of domestic disputes, violent crimes like rape and armed robbery.

Crime by the unemployed would rise as the young, particularly, became more angry at their inability to share in Australia's wealth.

*Since this article first appeared the Queensland Police industrial pay/stress case resulted in the awarding of an eight per cent increase.

EAGLE'S EYE

Constable Wayne Eagles looks at the prospect of an AFP mounted troop.

