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Backs Extended Police Authority

A plan that would give Cleveland police authority in suburban crime cases was endorsed yesterday by Assistant County Prosecutor John J. Mahon after another round of interviews in his office failed to uncover new information in the Marilyn Sheppard murder investigation.

Mahon backed a proposal which was advanced earlier by Cleveland Police Chief Frank W. Story and which is up for consideration by the city board of

control.

Under its terms the suburbs would first contract for the services of the Cleveland Police Department and then reimburse the city for its expenses as the occasion arose.

Mahon conferred again with Bay Village Mayor J. Spencer Houk, the suburb's police chief, John P. Eaton, and Patrolman Fred Drenkhan. Called in for the first time were Mrs. Esther Houk, the mayor's wife, and Lieut. Clifford M. Mercer.

The prosecutor said he was more interested in what these persons might have known of the personal life of Dr. and Mrs. Samuel H. Sheppard than in their official activities in connection with the case.

The answers he received were largely a relash of what he and other investigators had been told before, Mahon added.

"All the principals in this affair should have been questioned the day of the murder, and written statements should have been taken immediately," the prosecutor added. "By this time the trail is cold."

He observed that with Cleveland police it was a matter of routine to place all suspects under guard or take them into custody and to question other principals at Central Station within a few hours.

First 24 Hours Count

"It's that first 24 hours that counts," Mahon said. "I am confident, if Cleveland police had been able to exercise authority, that the prosecutor, the coroner and the sheriff would have no more reason being in the case at this time than if the homicide had been committed in Cleveland."

Commenting on a suggestion made by Coroner Samuel R. Gerber that a county detective bureau be established, Mahon pointed out that Chief Story's plan would involve less expense.

"Cleveland police have all the laboratory facilities and plenty of professional experience," Mahon said. "They ought to be relied on in serious felony cases."