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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ON CRIME

INTERIM REPORT

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INTERIM REPORT
PUBLIC SAFETY

Within the North Slope Borough the occurance of Alcohol Abuse and incidents of crime are inseparable. The enclosed data from the "Preliminary Report" is an on-going project of analysing cause and effect. The single most significant cause of crime is alcohol abuse. There are of course other causes that effect crime rates. Among them are employment levels, seasonal activities, school seasons, weather seasons, etc. In addition there is a secondary cause and effect relationship between Department skill levels, attitude adjustments, and policy.

It is a supportable fact that at least 95% of all arrestees are intoxicated to some extent when they are arrested. Since that has been a "given" in terms of cause, a very reliable measure of the impact of alcohol on crime has been a policy developed on the principal that alcohol abuse causes most crime to occur.

That policy of attacking the principal cause has been the rigid enforcement of immediate detention for persons found intoxicated in public. The detention policy also requires a minimum amount of time for detention. It is sufficient, from experience, that intoxicated persons be held for no less than four (4) hours and no more than eight (8) hours. The net result is that virtually none of those persons detained for the minimum time are arrested during the twenty-fours hours following their release.

It seems clear from the data available and analyzed that arrests for the commission of any type of crime are those persons who are "missed" during the effort to detain publicly intoxicated persons.

A simple formula shown below establishes the cause and effect of crime rates:

Alcohol Abuse = Commission of Crime = Arrests

The results clearly show (for a nine month period of time) that crime measured by a single criteria of number of arrests has been reduced from between 40 and 50 percent. It should be mentioned in validating this conclusion that of all type crimes the rate of clearance (i.e., stolen property returned, persons charged, and crimes solved) is between 90 to 100%. The more serious the crime, the higher is the resolution of the crime. It also indicates that public support and individual attitudes towards the Department has changed significantly with a much higher level of reporting crimes and much greater aid in apprehension.

APPENDIX I

This chart indicates the number of requests for service received from the general public. Two causes for the increase may be cited. One, that the public is calling more frequently due to a higher trust and confidence level resulting in a doubling of calls from the previous year. Or two, that there is a greater need for public assistance for police services.

APPENDIX I (Con't)

A clear note of caution should be analyzed when comparing the data of 1976 to that of 1977. 1976 was a "dry" year with no public liquor store. 1977 was voted "wet" and a liquor store was immediately built. The effect might well be the explaination for the almost double rate of service requests at the beginning of 1977.

In spite of the opening of a community liquor store, the concerted effort of enforcing the policy of detention for persons intoxicated in public has forced not only a prevention of anticipated increases but has actually decreased crime from the previous "dry" year.

Community attitudes concerning the enforcement of the "detention policy" has been surprisingly positive. The majority of those detained are grateful and frequently thank department personnel for their assistance when being released. Other community members also express their attitude by supportive comments and notifications of persons that they see intoxicated, making requests themselves for the detentions.

The increases and decreases shown on the chart also follow a seasonal pattern. In 1976 the whaling season is generally for the full month of MAY. The whaling for 1976 was poor due to several factors and a side effect was the increase of arrests for that period. At the completion of whaling season service requests and arrests dropped off sharply. However the same period of time in 1977 showed a sudden increase of service requests and arrests. The 1977 figures show a "take-off" to the highest incidents of service requests and arrests for the year. That same period of time reflected a very good, if not the best whaling season in many years. While the seasons may very between 2 and 6 weeks it does show that critical occurances happen just prior to and just after the whaling season, keeping in mind that very little alcohol was available during 1976 and an unlimited supply was present during 1977. Is a season of celebration responsible? It may be that celebration and excitement coupled with availability of alcohol leads to massive alcohol abuse while the antithesis is that community celebration without the availability of alcohol is significantly calmer and less disruptive to social controls.

Hence, JUNE for both 1976 and 1977 show the greatest opposites of cause and effect in both arrests and service requests. It is the conclusion of this report that "Alcohol Abuse" stands alone as the "cause" of crime in the North Slope Region.

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APPENDIX II

This chart has been designed solely for the purpose of measuring the effect of the "detention" policy for intoxicated persons. It does, of course, also reflect a type of crime rate during the year. The first four months shows the struggle to develop and enforce the very new policy of detention for intoxicated people. During those first four months a social phenomena occurred that was easily predicatable from past experience. Alcohol related deaths sky-rocketed at an unbelievable rate. Seven directly alcohol related deaths occurred in the first seven weeks after the liquor store was reopened. Public announcements and radio programs developed purely for shock value aimed at reducing or stopping this death rate had no effect whatsoever. The only single thing that stopped alcohol related deaths was the expansion of the policy of detention and the publics sure knowledge that anyone in public who was intoxicated would immediately be picked up and detained. It worked, the deaths stopped.

As weeks and months wore on a greater and greater number of persons were detained for public intoxication. Consequently the rate of arrests, almost in direct proportions, went down. The most surprizing result is seen between SEPTEMBER of 1976 and SEPTEMBER of 1977. Detentions during September went off the chart while arrests dropped over 1976 by 300%. Essentially the program of detention for intoxicated people cut the top off of annual crime rates, reducing crime by a hugh percent.

While AUGUST and the first weeks of SEPTEMBER were the greatest shocks of serious crime known for decades in Barrow, with four homicides during that period alone, it also represented the greatest abuse of alcohol ever measured in Barrow. That measurement is shown by the chart reflecting detentions of intoxicated persons jumping off of the chart.

CONCLUSION

There is on file at the Department a record of Alcohol-Related deaths that would indicate the highest cause of death (in Barrow) without except are incidents caused by the side effects of alcohol abuse. The records show ages of death to be between 2 months of age and 22 years of age. Alcohol related deaths stay consistently within that age range and it is rare to have deaths related to alcohol above that maximum age. It is the conclusion of this report that alcohol abuse is the sole effect of 95% of the deaths of the young. For statistics the number of deaths between that age range number 17 for the year beginning in January of 1977. As a comparison to the former year wherein Barrow was "dry" there were no alcohol related deaths.

CONCLUSION (Con't)

Alcohol can then be shown to be the primary killer of the young.

Such deaths include the following cause and effect relationships:

A. Smowmachine accidents - Driver was intoxicated.
B. Asphyxiation - mothers smother their children while drunk.
C. Crime-related deaths - defendants are extremely drunk.
D. Fires - most deaths by fire are caused by intoxicated residents.
E. Auto Accidents - caused by drunk drivers.
F. Negligence resulting in death because persons are drunk.

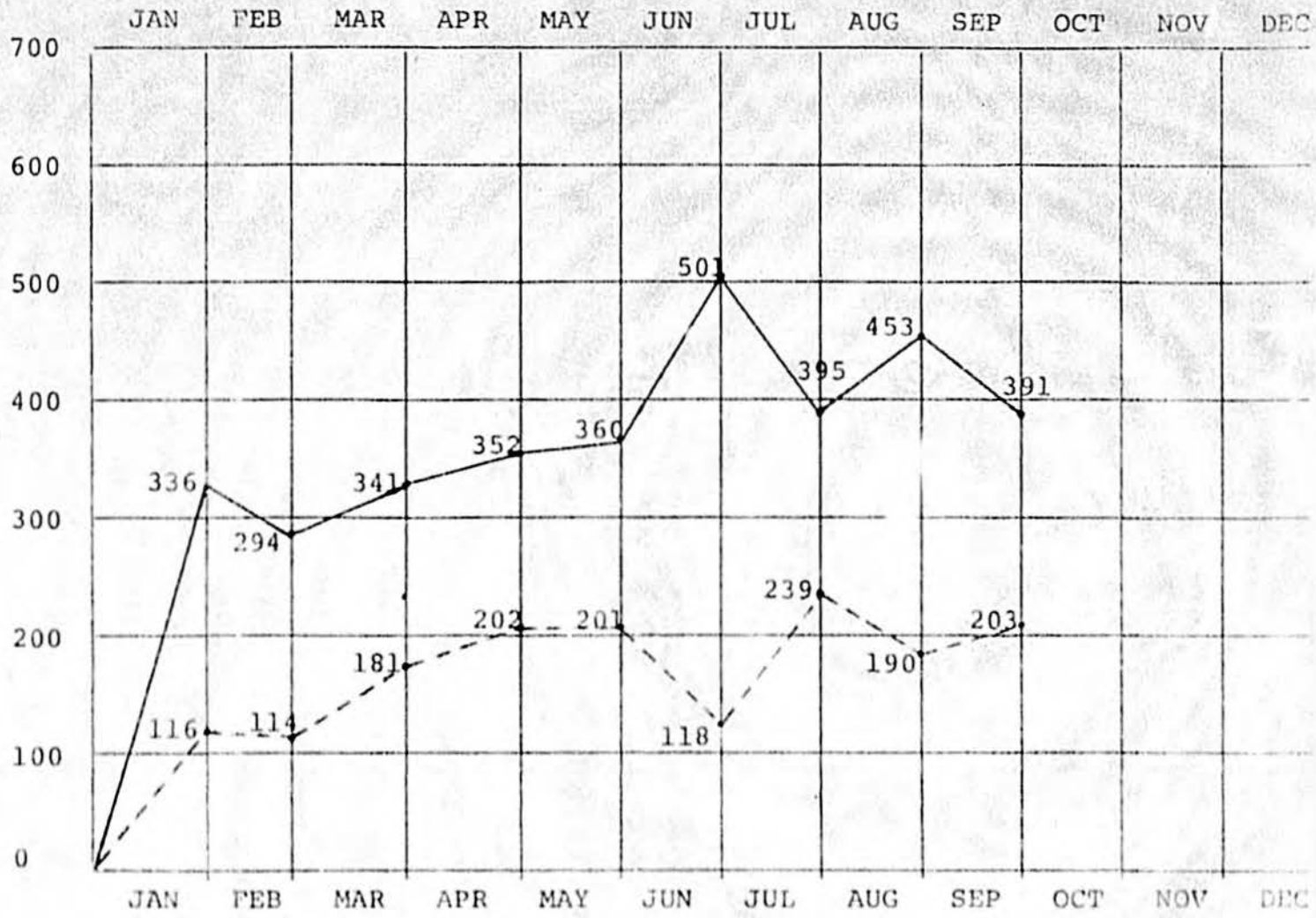
Whatever the cause of death the majority show intoxication as a single leading factor. It can be rightfully said that a person drinking does not only get drunk, a persons chances rise dramatically towards death at the same time. In the North Slope Region alcohol abuse all to frequently leads to an early death.

Alcohol Abuse is the major cause of both death and crime in the North Slope.

PRELIMINARY REPORT
PUBLIC SAFETY

APPENDIX I

SERVICE REQUESTS - 1977



*Service Requests indicate the number of calls received by Public Safety and responded to by Public Safety Officers.

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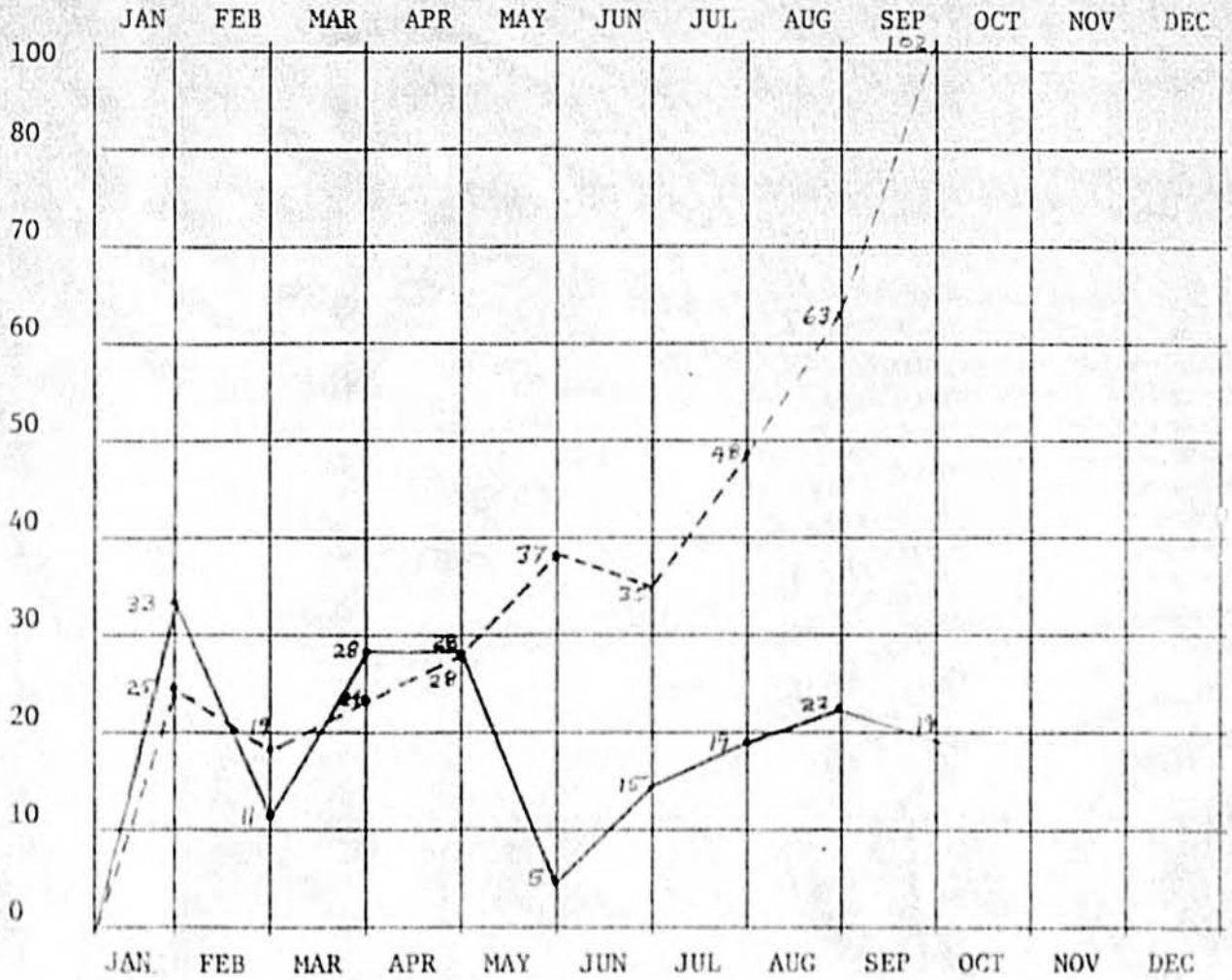
PRELIMINARY REPORT
PUBLIC SAFETY

APPENDIX II

PERSONS ARRESTED* 1977



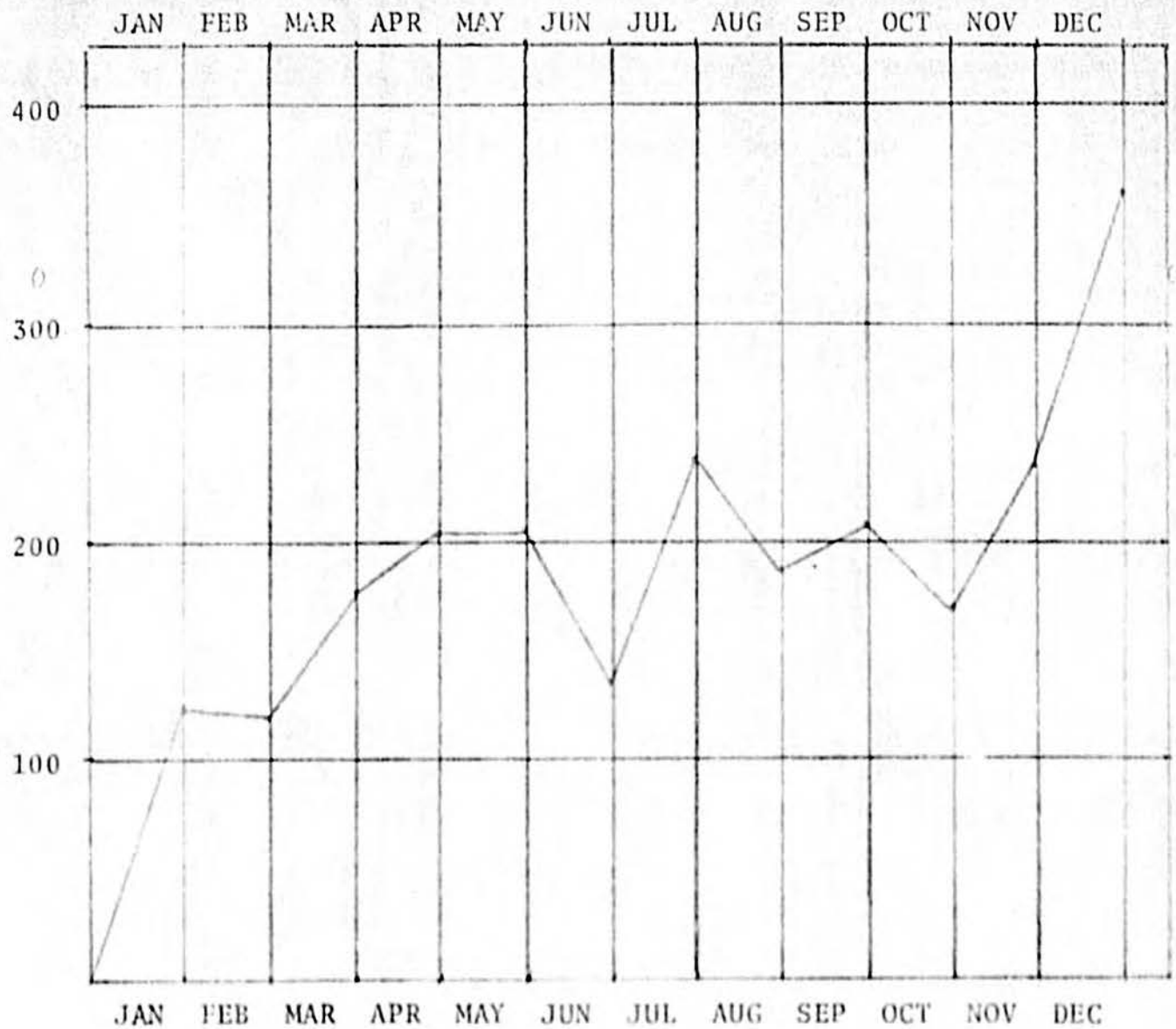
*Persons arrested represent the number of adults arrested for any type crimes in 1977.

SPECIAL NOTE: --------- Indicates "Detentions Only", not arrested.

APPENDIX I

SERVICE REQUESTS*

1976



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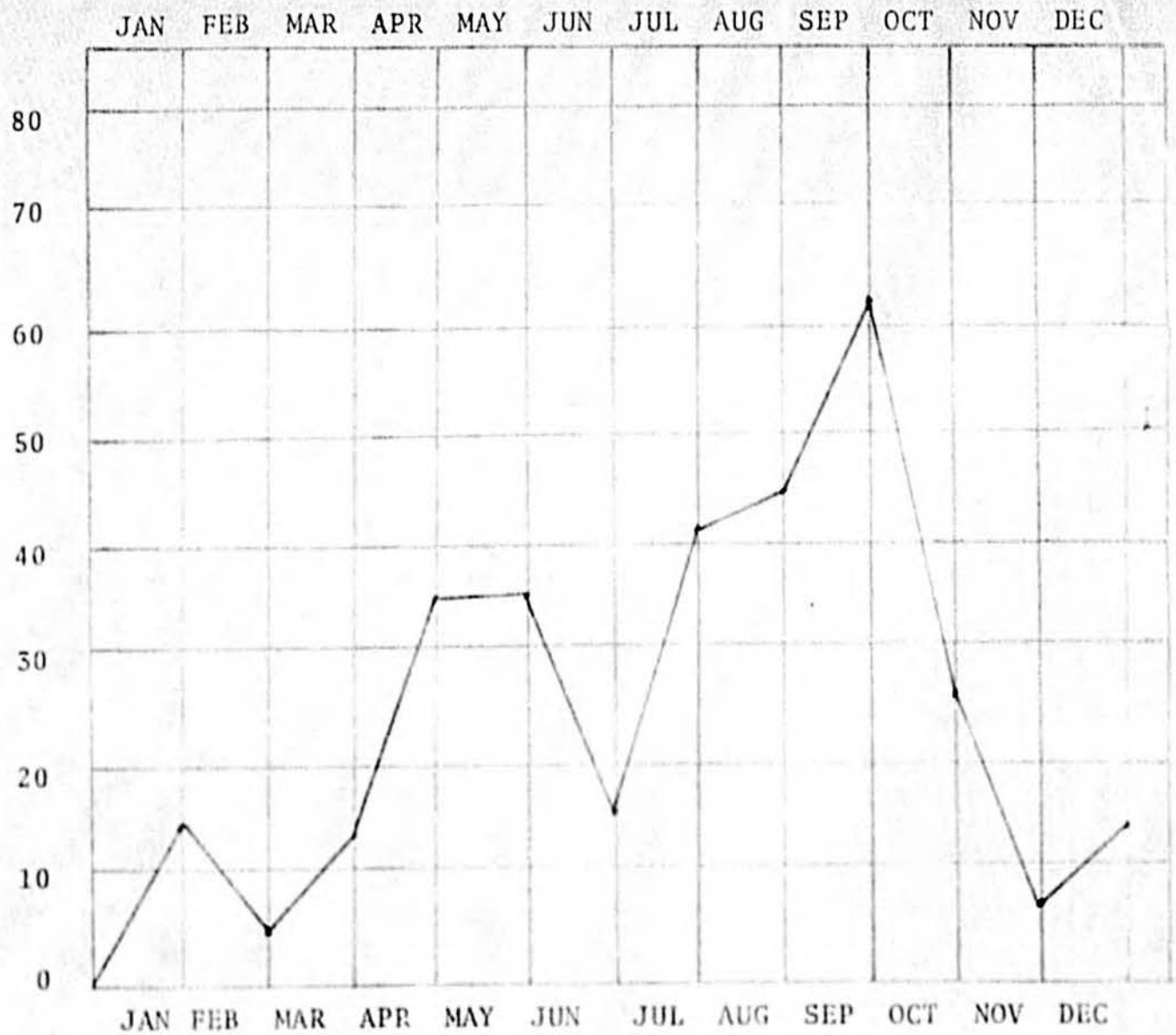
APPENDIX II

PERSONS ARRESTED*

1976



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