

POLICE NEED OF LOOP SKYSCRAPER IS SHOWN ANEW

Build on Jones School Site, Chief Urges.

BY ARTHUR EVANS.

On the heels of the establishment of a night court, the kickoff set for next Monday, the movement for a modern downtown police station to rid Chicago of its dismal, disease infested basement dungeons yesterday took on a new lease of life. Chief of Police Fitzmorris, seizing a "psychological moment," renewed the agitation for a centralized headquarters on the site of the Jones school at Harrison and Dearborn streets.

The proposal is for the board of education to swap the Jones school site for the property owned by the city at Madison street and the river. If the exchange can be effected, the city plans to erect a fourteen story building which would house all police activities now at Central detail, the detective bureau, Harrison street, and Des Plaines street stations. On the top floor would be a spacious, airy cellroom for male prisoners and on the floor just below would be cell rooms for women.

These Would Be Replaced.

This modern police jail on top of a skyscraper would take the place of the reeking subterranean dens which are the disgrace of Chicago's loop district. The present detective headquarters, with its underground black hole; Harrison street station, with its overcrowded, filthy, unventilated ground floor cage room; Central station, with its two iron caves minus daylight and air; Des Plaines street, with its foul cellar that reproduces the dungeons of the old Bastille—all are to be abandoned, if the deal goes through.

In the centralized headquarters would be courtrooms for the municipal bench, offices for the chief clerk and bailiff, and a fireproof chamber for the identification bureau. What is regarded as the largest collection of data on criminals in the entire country is now housed at Harrison street, exposed to the elements. The new Central station thus would bring under one roof the municipal courts and the police activities in the great central area, where the bulk of the arrests are made.

Could Be Easily Financed.

Apparently the new building can be financed with far less drain upon the taxpayers than any other public improvement of recent years. The cost would run between \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000. Chief Fitzmorris points out that \$500,000 is left unused from a bond issue authorized some years ago for such purposes, and another \$500,000 represents "salvage" by cutting down police department expenses last year.

This million dollars would suffice to put up the structure. The rest of the cost would be amortized in fifteen years, and it is pointed out by the chief that by charging rent against the department for the new building during this period the cost would pay itself out in that time. In other words, it would pay for itself in fifteen years in rentals saved.

This project was all set to go last year. The city council had approved the plan and the board of education had agreed to trade the Jones school property for the Madison and the river site. But when the administration changed at the school board it tipped the plans over.

Mortenson Not Enthusiastic.

Chief Fitzmorris is to see Superintendent of Schools Mortenson today to open the negotiations if possible. Mr. Mortenson yesterday did not seem to warm up to the proposal. He said the Jones site has had a school on it since Chicago was a village and that 2,000 children now attend it. But the Jones school, it is pointed out, is only a continuation school. There are practically no families with children in the loop north of Harrison street. Over at 15th street is a school.

As to a continuation school, Ald. John Richert, head of the finance committee, and Ald. Tom Byrne, head of the council police committee, maintain that a new educational building for that purpose at Madison street and the river would be far more convenient and desirable than the Jones school. The trade between the board of education and the city would not hurt the school system in the least, they say, while it could enable the city to get rid of four

police stations with the most disgraceful cagerooms in the state.

"Conditions are damnable, just as THE TRIBUNE has been pointing out," said Ald. Richert. "And this is the chance to wipe out Chicago's disgrace, its fearsome loop jails."

Last night a bulletin was sent out to the police by Chief Fitzmorris officially informing them of the establishment of a night court next Monday. The indications are that this time there will be cooperation between the police and the bench. It was the lack of this under other police administrations that was one cause for closing the old night court.