

# YEAR OLD POLICE RADIO IS HUSKY CRIME BATTLER

## System, Born of W-G-N Tests, Is a Success.

Chicago's city-owned police radio system on June 17 will be one year old and, judging from its results as explained yesterday by police and radio authorities, its first birthday will find it a permanent and virtually indispensable crime fighting weapon.

Inaugurated as an experiment without cost to the taxpayers by W-G-N, THE TRIBUNE'S broadcasting station on the Drake hotel, the broadcasting of police bulletins proved so successful that the city council made appropriations for three short wave municipal stations which now are in operation. The first of these plants, located at the Warren avenue police station, was opened June 17, 1930.



E. F. McDONALD JR.

tending to Arlington Heights on the north, Wheaton on the west, and Harvey on the south, are now using the police radio service. Recently the three fire department fireboats were equipped with sets which keep them constantly in touch with the fire alarm office through the police service.

Capt. John Anderson of the coast guard recently has suggested to his superiors in Washington that he be permitted to install radio apparatus on life saving boats.

One of the most important recent improvements in the police radio system, according to William P. Hilliard, radio supervisor, will be the synchronization of the north, west, and south side broadcasting stations so that one bulletin can be flashed

simultaneously from all three. This will prevent duplication and speed up the sending of the messages, he explained.

Mr. Hilliard's reports for the last few months show that an average of 34 arrests a day are made as a direct result of the radio flashes. The averaged elapsed time of squad car runs to scene of reported crimes have been reduced substantially. In many instances, the reports show, it is only necessary for the driver of a police car to put on his brakes in order to stop at a place where the radio reports a crime to be in progress.

Although June 17 officially is regarded as the first birthday of the Chicago police radio, it actually had its beginning on March 16, 1929, when W-G-N broadcast the first test bulletins to five police cars which were equipped with sets. A week later sets were placed in 40 more cars.

In these early days of the system the flashes were audible to ordinary radio users. Programs were halted temporarily and often crowds quickly assembled in the neighborhoods where crimes were reported. This disadvantage was overcome with the installation of the municipal stations with their short wave length which does not register on ordinary sets.

**Test Proves Effectiveness.**

THE TRIBUNE'S station discontinued its free service to the city July 23, 1929. By that time the then police commissioner, William F. Russell, who had cooperated in the experiment, was thoroughly convinced of its effectiveness. He went before the city council with a request for an appropriation of \$150,000 for city-owned equipment. The appropriation was made and the first station was opened a year ago.

**BOSS NIGHT CLERK IN HOTEL.**

Omer Butler, night clerk of the Lawrence hotel, 4727 Malden avenue, was robbed of \$1.15 yesterday morning by a bandit who threatened him with a revolver.

### Report Tells of Success.

Acting Police Commissioner Alcock, in his annual report for last year, described the installation of the radio division as "the most important improvement made in the police department during the last year." Yesterday E. F. McDonald Jr., president of the Zenith Radio corporation, who organized the technical committee which devised the police system, went further.

"I don't like to disagree with the commissioner," said Mr. McDonald, "but I think it is the most important improvement that has been made in the police department in the last twenty-five years. The police have developed an arm of the law as swift as the gun and the automobile. Within the very near future every city of more than 100,000 population in the United States will be equipped with radios, but so far Chicago is far in the lead."

Each of the entire fleet of 110 police squad cars now carries receiving sets bringing to them an average of 245 flashes a day from the broadcasting stations.

Thirty-five surrounding towns, ex-