

'NIGHT OWLS' WATCH POLICE MOVE STATION

Consolidate Facilities of Two Districts

How do you move a police station?

If you live near 10120 S Ewing st. and recently stayed up late one night, you might have had a lesson on how it is done. The former district 9 East Side station, was consolidated with district 8, South Chicago, station at 2938 E. 89th st.

Takes Eight Hours

"Actual moving operations took about eight hours," said R. E. McDonell, director of the police planning division. "And we didn't move the insides—lock, stock, and barrel—to the new site."

Most of the items taken along to the South Chicago station by police department building maintenance crews included typewriters, men's lockers, file cabinets, and papers. Trucks of a private moving firm were used.

If neighbors were unaware of the switch, it probably was because of the time. McDonell said all moving was done between midnight and 8 a. m. Among "objects" to be moved were the 30 members of the midnight shift of the old East Side station. They ended their night's work in the South Chicago station, which now has a total force of 225 men, including 90 from East Side.

"The biggest problem in moving a police station in with another is convincing the public that their police protection won't be lessened," McDonell said. Six stations already have been consolidated, and plans call for the eventual merger of 12 more stations.

"Raft of Protests"

"The first announcement of consolidating stations brought a raft of angry protests. But we haven't heard a word about it the past few months," McDonell said.

He emphasized that the merger will not lessen protection in the area because modern improvements in transportation, communications, and techniques have ended the need for a number of small police districts.

"Altho the districts are merged, the people will receive the same protection as before. The same number of policemen will patrol the same beats."

He explained the move cuts down on administrative costs. Thirty desk men do the work formerly done by 48, McDonell said.

Patrolmen will be much better off working out of the South Chicago station, McDonell said. The other building he described as "unfit for human beings." It was once a blacksmith's shop.

The old East Side station house has reverted to the city real estate office, which will ask other departments if they want the property.

McDonell said it was "highly doubtful" anyone would.