

Communications System Nerve Centre Of Police Force

Dept. Handles Average Of 8000 Calls A Month

With out communication, nothing would function properly.

There would be no order, no procedure, no progress. It figures then, why Sgt. William Harris of the Niagara Regional Police Force's Communications department calls his unit the probable nerve centre of the force.

The department, located at headquarters in St. Catharines, averages some 8,000 calls a month. About one-third are 'action' calls; calls requiring the attendance of a police officer for disposition. It is a self-contained unit, somewhat autonomous. From other departments, yet linked to all police operations through the tentacles of radio and telephone communications.

STRESS ALERTNESS

If the unit has a slogan it is "An emergency is going to happen 10 seconds from now". The saying is posted on a wall, clearly in view of personnel who work in the centre. "Any police officer couldn't do this job," Sgt. Harris said. "A dispatcher has to be a certain kind of person. I couldn't even begin to describe him but some of the things he has to be are serious and light-hearted, concerned and dedicated. If he sends a man on a call to an isolated farm area and he doesn't hear from him, say, in a few minutes after he arrives at the scene, he has one or two bankrupt units heading out there to check, because that's his job. He just doesn't send the man."

The unit has been in operation almost a year. "We've got most of the kinks ironed out now," said Sgt. Harris. "My main concern and I think we've passed through it by this time has been that we didn't make the same mistake more than once. The men have jelled into a good working unit."

Three dispatchers are on duty

Vibrant French Community Here

The presence of a vibrant French community in Welland has long been one of this city's assets.

That community has many of its own organizations but its members have not allowed it to become isolated from the city-at-large. Virtually every civic body, from city council, has representation by at least one or more persons whose first language is French. In fact, one of the city's three regional government representatives comes from that community, Lola LeMelin.

Sacred Heart parish is one of the largest Roman Catholic churches in the peninsula and the parish hall is the largest hall in the city which is often used by the public at large.

There is a French-Canadian businessmen's association, service club, caisse populaire (credit union) and women's groups. A French Cultural week is held in February and ranged from fun events such as a winter carnival to concerts, featuring both local and national talent and addresses by prominent speakers. Wellanders have been leaders in a long struggle to have French television coverage extended to Southern Ontario.

EDUCATION SCENE

About 20 per cent of the city's population is French-speaking and this is reflected in the fine system of bilingual and French language schools here. One Wellander, Gerard Raymond, served on the provincial Symons commission studying the status of French language secondary education as a director of re-

each shift, and there are three shifts daily.

IMPRESSIVE EQUIPMENT

Perhaps the most impressive pieces of equipment in the centre are the status board and Instant Recall Projection System.

The status board, said Sgt. Harris, "lets my men know, at a glance, where they stand." Every vehicle owned by the force is on that board — represented either by a red, green or amber light.

Green indicates cars that are in service and available for call, explained Sgt. Harris. Red indicates cars that are out of service, — one that is at the scene of an investigation, for example.

And amber is for cars that have been dispatched to a particular scene but have not arrived there yet.

Priority is important, said Sgt. Harris. Should a vehicle be on its way to something like two neighbors, arguing over a fence one of them is putting up, and an occurrence like a break-in is reported, the dispatcher probably would not hesitate to re-assess the vehicle to look into the crime occurrence first.

STOREHOUSE OF DATA

The recall projection system gives dispatchers, literally, a storehouse of information at their fingertips.

It blows up slide charts on a particular area, business complex, business section — providing information, on say, the location of a back door of a store in a huge shopping plaza, where a break-in may be taking place. Its uses are virtually unlimited. "You hear the old cliché every so often, that a certain unit is the pulse of an operation. Well, this area probably is the pulse of police activity," Sgt. Harris said.



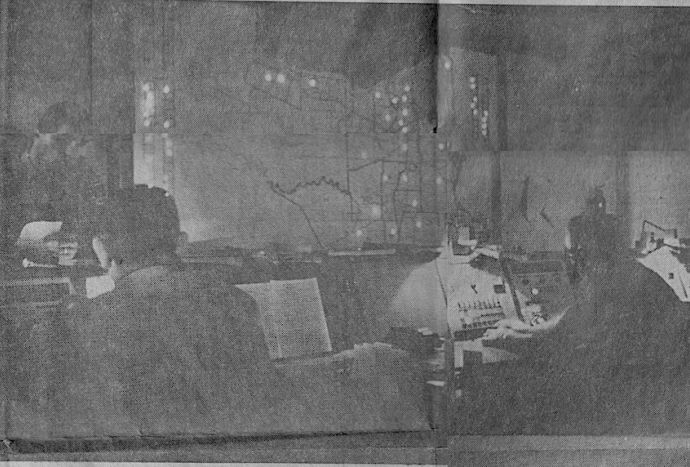
INCOMING calls are taken by switchboard operators, like Mrs. Jean Flurry. After determining the nature of the call, the operator transfers it to the proper party — dispatcher, detachment office, police chief, etc., for disposition. All calls, whether from Welland, St. Catharines, Niagara-on-the-Lake, or anywhere in the region, go to headquarters in St. Catharines.



ABOUT ONE-THIRD of the calls that come in are 'action' calls and are transferred to a dispatcher for disposition. Whether a citizen is calling to



report, for example, an accident or a robbery the dispatcher handles the call. One dispatcher is on duty for each of the force's three divisions, but they are not restricted to handling calls from their respective areas. Constable Larry Jewell is one of the dispatchers for Welland division.



LIGHTS ARE KEPT purposeful in communications headquarters, so it is easier for personnel to look at the all-important status board, seen in the background of this

photo. The man at the far left is the St. Catharines' division dispatcher. To his right is the Niagara Falls division dispatcher and to his right, but not

seen in this photo is the Welland division dispatcher. Each division operates in its own radio frequency, but the dispatchers are not restricted to

working with the men in their own division sand can, when the need arises, broadcast and receive on the other frequencies as well.



EVERY WORD spoken between dispatcher and police officer, for example, or dispatcher and telephone caller, is officially recorded on this tape recorder which runs 24-hours a

day, seven days a week. It is an important piece of equipment too, as Sgt. Harris, head of communications pointed out. He explained, it gives the dispatcher a recourse to fall back

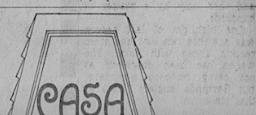
on, should information being phoned in be unclear, as sometimes occurs in the case of a person with poor command of the English language. "Can you imagine what it would be like if you only had the opportunity of getting a message once?" Sgt. Harris asked. Everything that transpires between dispatcher and officers in the field too, is recorded. Even when a man is calling in to report he is going off the air for lunch, the conversation is recorded, for record purposes.

Italians Car-Crazy

ROME (AP) — Massimo Asoltoli earns \$90 a week as a bank clerk. He drives a \$30,000 Alfa Romeo, spending more on the car than for his rent. He has no regrets. Nor do many others. This is a nation of enthusiasts about wheels.

"I love that car," says Asoltoli. "It's a part of me." He

All aerial photos appearing in this special edition were taken by Tribune photographer Cecil Mitchell from a Provincial Gas Co. pipeline patrol aircraft.



.22 Rifle Deadliest Of Weapons

WINNIPEG (CP) — The .22-calibre rifle is the deadliest of all weapons, says a report prepared by two Manitoba safety training officers. Of a total 44 accidents with firearms during 1971—including six fatalities—29, involved the .22-calibre rifle and two of these accidents were fatal.

Paul Hale and Al Cambell