



MEMBERS of the Welland Police Commission, Judge Joseph M. Gardner, left and Mayor Allan Pietz, right, flanking retiring police Chief Fred J. Wilson and his wife, Olive. Chief Wilson was honored on his years of service to the community.



RECOGNITION was also paid to the advancement accorded Welland's current deputy chief

Martin "Bud" Walsh who will become superintendent of the St. Catharines division with the

advent of regional policing next month. From the left are Deputy Chief Walsh, Ald. Roland Hardy who made the presenta-

tions, Mrs. Walsh and J. D. Watt who has served as police commission secretary 43 years. — Tribune photos.

Chief Wilson And Deputy Honored At "Swan Song"

Fred J. Wilson, who joined an eight-man Welland Police Force in 1937 as a constable and rose through the ranks to become chief of the current 65-member force, was honored last night in one of the city police commission's last acts.

Chief Wilson enters retirement as of Dec. 31 and the local commission dissolves with the advent of regional policing, under one peninsula-wide commission Jan. 1.

As well as paying tribute to Chief Wilson's service to the city, the dinner at the Welland Club attended by civic officials and their wives also paid tribute to J. D. Watt's 43 years as secretary of the police commission and recognized the advancement of Welland's deputy chief, Martin "Bud" Walsh, to superintendent of the St. Catharines division in the new regional set-up.

It was an evening filled with nostalgia.

"This dinner is sort of a 'Last Supper' for the board of police commissioners for the city of Welland", said Mayor Allan Pietz in recalling that the first such commission was organized 53 years ago with Mayor Mark Vaughan as chairman. Members were Judge L. B. C. Livingstone and Magistrate John Goodwin.

The final regular police commission meeting was held this afternoon.

During those 53 years, the commission has been served by two judges — Judge Livingstone and the late Judge Harold Eller, seven magistrates (including current provincial court judge Joseph M. Gardner) and 19 mayors. Besides Mayor Pietz, another former mayor Ald. Harry Diffin, was in attendance last night. The commission had appointed eight chiefs.

SERVICE LAUDED

In paying tribute to Chief Wilson, Judge Gardner stressed the "immense pressures" and "burdensome" nature of the job but noted that "Fred Wilson has served with distinction".

He said he had always been

impressed with Chief Wilson's calm, cool manner, noting he had the patience and physical fortitude that the job required.

Chief Wilson, Judge Gardner continued, was deeply interested in the welfare and safety of the public as well as in the welfare and safety of his men. In discussing the characteristics of a good chief, he noted that one who has the confidence of his men also has the confidence of the general public and this certainly applied to Welland's chief.

In addition to praising the chief's ability to cope with the strain the position imposed, he noted he had to be knowledgeable in all facets of the law and develop good public relations.

Saying that the city owes a lot to Chief Wilson, the judge noted he would be leaving behind a trail of officers of exceptional capability.

Mayor Pietz told the chief that when he hands his force of 61 men and four civilians over to the regional commission, "I think you can feel justifiably proud of them as a good force, well equipped and disciplined which as a unit will be a credit to the new commission".

The mayor said that in light of events of the past few days (recapturing jail escapees) and the comments that have been received on the work of the department that opinion is shared by a great cross section of Welland citizens.

Chief Wilson reminisced about the force and its working conditions when he joined it in 1937 and closed by declaring that he was proud to have been a member of the Welland police department which he believed to be second to none.

He expressed appreciation to the members of the police commissions and city councils, the news media and concluded with a special tribute to his wife, Olive.

Chief Wilson joined the force as a constable and was promoted to detective, was made deputy chief in 1967 and succeeded the late D. M. McArter as chief in 1969.

He served overseas in the Sec-

ond World War with the Canadian Corps of Firefighters.

In recognizing the advancement of deputy chief "Bud" Walsh, Judge Gardner voiced high praise for his knowledge of criminal law and his proficiency as a detective. He lauded the deputy chief's dedication, diligence, unbiased application of law and the manner in which he conducted himself in carrying out his duties.

He regretted the deputy chief moving from this locale but noted the region would be able to look to him for leadership. "Welland's loss is St. Catharines gain", said Chief Wilson.

Deputy chief Walsh, like Chief Wilson a local boy, joined the Crowland Township police department in 1949 and in 1957 became a member of the Welland city police detective division. In 1961 he was named sergeant of detectives and in 1969, deputy chief.

He said to be a good policeman, one must like people. In this regard, he said, he was fortunate in starting his career in Crowland, "A cosmopolitan community where the people had heart, of gold".

"I love people", he continued, saying a police officer only thinks of the times he helps people. "The ones he puts in jail, well, that's their fault".

Judge Gardner presented Chief Wilson with an attractive, engraved silver tray and Deputy Chief Walsh with a handsome silver plaque on which was mounted his deputy chief's badge.

With the regional policing set-up coming into being, it was noted Chief Wilson retires with the distinction of being Welland's last police chief.

As well as the presentations to the two officers, Ald. Roland Hardy, chairman of city council's recognition committee, also made presentations to Mayor Pietz and Judge Gardner, the last members of the city police commission, as well as to Mr. Watt who contributed some memories in a lighter vein.

Judge Gardner also accepted

a presentation which will be given to Mrs. Fuller, wife of the late judge who served on the commission for some 25 years. He died last month.

Judge Gardner declared Judge Fuller was "a judge all other judges pattern themselves after". Stating he contributed much to the administration of justice not only in Welland County but the province as a whole, he noted Judge Fuller had been a guiding influence on the Welland police department.

Chief Wilson also paid tribute to the late judge, noting he had played a leading role during the 1940s in securing such advancements as the county radio system and radio equipped cars.

There were also expressions of high praise by the various speakers for the late Welland Police Chief Donald McArter who died in 1969 while still serving. "He brought us out of the doldrums and welded us into the type of department we are today," praised deputy chief Walsh.

In what he stressed were his own personal views, Judge Gardner said he was sorry to see this era ending. While the principles of this coming centralization were good, he was concerned over the manner it was being implemented.

He especially regretted the loss of close contact that has existed between the various local commissions and their communities.

"But you always have to give up something to get something better," he said, in stating he was impressed with the regional commission headed by Judge D. H. Scott.