

Omaha Leads the Nation in Safety Plan

Below are a group of the School Safety Patrol officers, wearing their official belts, receiving instructions at police headquarters from Commissioner Hopkins, Captain Payne and Chief Pszanowski.



While the safety patrol officer holds back the cars, these children are crossing in safety at a busy intersection.



department fully. She is still a staunch supporter of the patrol. Not one of the tots sent to her schools has received an injury while going to and from school.

Teaches Patriotism.

It was Miss Wetzel who chose the first six boys assigned to patrol duty. These same six boys are said by Captain Payne to be driving automobiles today and up to the present time not one has ever been arrested for a violation of a traffic rule.

"These boys of the safety patrol are our future citizens," points out Commissioner Hopkins. "They will make good citizens too. They sympathize with the traffic laws. The boys are friends of the police department—and only that which is patriotic and good is being taught them."

In appreciation of their work, Commissioner Hopkins has arranged that the members of the patrol be admitted free to all football games in the city. He is attempting now to arrange for them a whole day's outing at Lincoln, a visit to the governor, the state capitol, the state institutions, and a Nebraska university football game.

Medals are given by the police department for unusual devotion to duty and bravery. Such honor was bestowed by Chief of Police Pszanowski on Jack Knutson, a student in West Benson school in 1929 and to Edwin Riggs, colored, a student of Howard Kennedy school this year.

Two Lives Saved.

Jack Knutson was awarded a medal for unusual attention to a crippled boy of the Hattie B. Munroe Home for Convalescent Children. Each day Jack would go to the home and carry the crippled lad to school. One day Jack slipped on the stairway. As he fell backward, he dropped the boy on a safe landing, but he himself fell back, receiving a broken arm.

Edwin Riggs dashed into the street

and snatched a child from the path of an oncoming truck.

Ten schools had patrols the year following the experiment at Farnam school. These also proved successful. The third year every school in the city was organized.

But it was not a simple matter to start the patrol. Many times boys ran into the Farnam school, tears streaming down their cheeks, to weep upon the shoulders of Miss Wetzel.

"A man called me a dirty copper," one lad told the principal, "just because I warned him not to speed passed the schoolhouse."

Sacrifice Playtime.

"The scoffers did not realize that these boys were protecting little children," says Chief Pszanowski. "They did not know that those boys were giving up their play time to stand in the street and escort little tots safely from one side of the street to another. Those boys had to be at school earlier and remain longer than the rest. They liked to play with the rest of the boys, but a patriotic devotion kept them on duty. The mothers and fathers of children who go each day to and from school owe the safety patrol boys a permanent debt of gratitude."

The first work of organization was assigned to Captain Payne. With the aid of Carey, Payne drilled the six boys into the routine of their duties. Each year as the work demanded more men, other members of the department were assigned to the task of forming patrols until even Assistant Chief of Police George Allen, Inspector of Police Bert Thorpe, and Inspector of Detectives Ben F. Danbaum were enlisted in the work.

Each school's patrol has a captain, lieutenant, sergeant, and corporal. Each school principal selects a teacher to supervise the patrol and it is entirely up to the heads of the individual schools to make promotions and demotions.

By ALLAN KOHAN

"The safety of the Omaha school children depends entirely upon our school boys' safety patrol, and without it, the police department would be confronted with a grave traffic problem." JOHN HOPKINS, Commissioner of Police.

OMAHA was the first city in the United States to have a school-boys' safety patrol. Today, 825 cities, many of them much larger than Omaha, have organizations patterned after the original here.

Yet it was only nine years ago that the experiment was started, with six boys at the old Farnam school at Park avenue and Farnam street. The Omaha school boys' safety patrol has grown in those years to an organization of more than two thousand boys. It no longer is an experiment. Police Commissioner John Hopkins declares it "is an institution, tried and true; to live forever with the city." And adds: "It is as important as the other various bureaus of the police department."



Marie C. Wetzel.

From a Squad of Six Boys Nine Years Ago, the School Safety Patrol Has Grown to an Organization of 825 Young Officers and Has Been Copied by Many Other Cities

lice records disclose that accidents to school children while on their way to and from school, in the vicinity of school buildings, have been diminished to a point where in some years there has not been a single accident.

Motorists Co-operate.

It was difficult at first to get the public to obey the signals of the boys. "They were laughed at and scorned then," relates Chief of Police Pszanowski, "but today, the motorists are co-operating 100 per cent."

"I remember the many accidents to school children prior to 1923," the chief goes on. "One in particular, I will always remember. I was on my way to the police station. There was a large crowd gathered in front of Farnam school. I brushed through the crowd. On the street lying in a pool of blood was the lifeless body of a golden-haired

girl of 6. Her grief stricken mother, a young woman, driven to hysteria by the sight in front of her, was madly attempting to tear away from several men who held her, to fall to the pavement by the side of her daughter.

"It was an unavoidable accident, too. There were many such grief stricken parents as the one I saw that day in front of the Farnam school. The police department was confronted with a problem which called for immediate solution."

Henry W. Dunn, then commissioner of police, called a special conference to devise ways and means of protecting the school children.

Success from First.

Present at the conference held in Dunn's offices, were the late George M. Carey, head of the safety council of the Omaha Chamber of Commerce; the late Chief of Police Michael F. Dempsey, Chief of Police Pszanowski, then inspector of police; Captain Charles Payne, head of the police traffic bureau, and the police reporters of the Omaha newspapers.

It was Carey who suggested the school boys' safety patrol. Farnam school was selected to be organized first due to the fact that motor traffic was the heaviest near it. This was before Dodge street had been made an arterial highway and many automobile drivers chose Farnam street because of its width.

From the time the safety patrol boys took charge until the building was closed a few years ago, there was not a single accident!

Marie C. Wetzel, then principal of Farnam school and now head of Jackson school, co-operated with the police

Looking the Papers Over . . . with Erick

The political weather prophets are predicting a heavy frost for somebody on November 8.

You don't hear much about the prohibition presidential candidate. Maybe he's that forgotten man.

HOOVER ASKS CHILD LABOR BE ELIMINATED

—Headline.

Having already eliminated the other kind, as one might add.

The boss of the Washington baseball team fired Walter Johnson as manager because of his "frigid manner." Evidently he didn't consider old Walt so

Reversing the Usual Role.

GEESE AND DUCK SHOOT SUNDAY

—Cumming County (Neb.) Democrat.

There are two sides to everything except a world's series ball game in which the Chicago Cubs are contenders.

Four years ago Charley Curtis found the voters "dumb." Now they seem to be deaf as well.

Toupe manufacturers seem to be mixed up in a good deal of skullduggery.