

Gradison Urges Firemen Radio Direct to Tower

Believes Change Will Stop Mix-ups; Sherrill Backs Present Plan

Direct communication by radio between fire marshals and Fire Tower was recommended by Willis D. Gradison, Council Finance Committee chairman, as an investigation of Central Communications System was launched.

Mr. Gradison expressed the opinion that two recent mixups in transmission of calls for extra fire equipment would not have occurred had the marshal talked directly to Fire Tower operator.

Under the present setup the marshal talks to a radio operator, who transmits the message to a fire operator. Mr. Gradison said he heard the failure of the police radio operator to understand fireman "language" was the mixup cause.

Sees End of Mixup

Col. Sherrill denied such was the case and said the fault was entirely with the marshals, who he said failed to warm up their radios and transmit the messages properly. He said that such a mixup will not occur again under new instructions.

The discussion came up at a meeting of Utilities Committee. The committee, Albert D. Cash, chairman; Wiley Craig and Mr. Gradison, asked Col. Sherrill to report on the cost of central operation of communications as compared to when Fire Tower and Station X were operated separately.

He also was asked to report on whether it would be advisable that Police Chief Weatherly and Fire Chief Houston have direct control over their communications, which now are under Charles S. Jones, director of communications.

Mr. Gradison and Mr. Craig questioned the wisdom of important cable centers still being in City Hall instead of at the building in Eden Park which houses the rest of the system. Col. Sherrill said that William F. Franklin, communications consultant, would visit Cincinnati soon and satisfactorily explain the whole system.

Legality Questioned

Mr. Craig wanted to know if Mr. Franklin was licensed as an engineer in Ohio and said that, if he was not, both Mr. Franklin and Col. Sherrill had acted illegally in Mr. Franklin's work here. Col. Sherrill declared that Mr. Franklin was highly qualified, though he did not know whether he was licensed.

A committee member asked the meaning of a story from Washington printed last week by the Times-Star concerning an alleged interference by the City Managers' Association in Cincinnati's fire communications system.

"I don't think anybody could understand that article," Col. Sherrill said. "But it looked like a deliberate attempt to sabotage the Central Communications System."