

A STORY OF PRIVATE INITIATIVE AND LOCAL CAPITAL

Chapter X

"QUICK—CALL PUBLIC SERVICE!"

IN an emergency it is becoming a *first thought*. "Call a doctor . . . the police . . . the Public Service Company."

It happened again near Ottawa, Illinois, a few weeks ago.

The weather was sizzling hot and a group of happy families were splashing in the Fox River, enjoying the cool relief of a midsummer dip. Children and grownups were having a grand time.

Suddenly a cry of excited alarm. A child was missing. The frantic scream of a woman. The quick terror that strikes its blow with the realization of impending tragedy. It was twenty minutes before someone's foot in the water touched the little body. Was there a chance of saving her? No one knew quite how to try. And everyone was frightened.

"Quick—call Public Service!" Someone said it. John Scannell, a gas fitters' foreman, and two other Public Service Company employes arrived before the police. With an experience that comes from training, Scannell immediately applied the prone pressure method of resuscitation which the Company had taught him as a matter of routine for all employes. For five . . . ten minutes he worked. Nothing happened. It seemed certain that life had left the little body.

But Scannell worked on, smoothly, rhythmically, letting his own weight force air into the child's lungs. After fifteen minutes there was a stir of life. The police arrived but their pulmotor was discarded for the smooth, hopeful efficiency of the trained worker. It

wasn't long after that the child was breathing regularly. Today she is probably playing with her dolls.

Her name is Bernadine McConnaughey.

In a letter to the Company, Ottawa's Police Chief said: "We know that her life was saved through the efficient manner in which John Scannell and other members of his squad of your Company applied the Schaefer method. We thank you in behalf of the city, parents and friends of this little girl and also the Police Department."

It was chance that made a hero out of John Scannell, but it wasn't chance that made him an expert in the Schaefer method of resuscitation. The nature of the Company's business pointed out the value of that training years ago. It was made a part of the Company's regulations. Men, women, linemen, laborers, clerks, salesmen, managers—everyone is given the instruction.

The Company has no records of all the cases where people have been revived through the knowledge its employes have of life-saving and first aid. In 1926, the President of the Company established the Britton I. Budd Medal for the Saving of Human Life. Twenty employes have been given the award and eight more are expected to receive it this year. Most of the cases have been outside of business—employes on their vacations, on their way home from work, off duty.

Of course the Company is proud of John Scannell. And it is also proud of the hundreds of other employes who could have done the same thing.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS

This is the tenth of a series of stories chronicling the development of the Public Service Company of Northern Illinois and the service it is bringing to the area into which Chicago is growing. Copies of previous chapters will be mailed you if you will write to the Company, 72 West Adams Street, Chicago

TWO DECADES IN THE SERVICE OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS