

Annual Report of Local Citizens Safety Committee

In the fall of 1935, the Highland Park Citizens Safety committee was organized under the direction of Harry B. Aiston, Americanism officer of the Dumaresq Spencer post of the American Legion. It was Mr. Aiston's idea that the Highland Park Citizens Safety committee should not be sponsored by any one organization but should be sponsored and supported by representatives of all of the church, civic and fraternal organizations in the City of Highland Park.

During the first two years, the funds supplied to the Highland Park Citizens Safety committee came from the Dumaresq Spencer post and also by passing the hat among the citizens of our community. Because of the excellent work done under Mr. Aiston and his officers, last fall the Highland Park Community Chest recognized that the Safety committee was doing a valuable work in our community and in order to help out on the financial end, donated \$245 of its funds. While that sum seemed adequate at the time of its donation, we have found that during the past year there were many things which we could have done had this donation been larger.

A brief resume of the activities of the Citizens Safety committee is in order. The office of the Safety committee has been established at the office of the Dumaresq Spencer post in Highland Park and our files are kept at that place.

In order that we may get cooperation from the best sources, the Citizens Safety committee decided at once to join the National Safety Council. The National Safety Council is supported by all of the leading insurance companies of the United States in order that all information on safety might be assembled and then made available to all members of the National Safety Council. The cost of joining the National Safety Council was \$25 and their advice and services are available at any time to the citizens of this community. On a recommendation of the National Safety Council, we immediately spent funds for the creation of a spot map for accidents in Highland Park. As the Police Department records the accidents in our community, this map is kept up to date in order that by the end of the year the citizens of this community can see which streets and corners need the most attention from the standpoint of safety matters. This map has been on display at the Highland Park Public library. The Citizens Safety committee is greatly indebted to Harry Pertz, vice chairman of the committee for the many hours that he has spent in constructing this map from the police records. It is our idea to create such a map each year so that the community will have a history of accidents upon which to judge accurately their actions on safety matters in the coming years.

In May of this year beginning with the week of the 16th the Citizens Safety committee held their annual Safety Week. We find that it is necessary each year to hold a Safety Week in order to dramatize the safety movement in the minds of the people of Highland Park and that they will become safety conscious as to our local problems. To this end, there were meetings in the schools, public meetings and notices sent to every church, fraternal and civic organization in Highland Park. Posters were drawn by students in the Elm Place school and the prizes were furnished by the Citizens Safety committee. A large parade was conducted from the high school, south to the business district of the city, made up of organizations such as the American Legion, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and the High school band and other civic groups. During this week every pupil in the public schools was given a "safety" pin and was pledged to support the safety movement in Highland Park during the coming year. We find that by reaching the child in

a family, we are able to have the story carried back to the household in a most effective manner. During this week, there was also distributed through every known channel in Highland Park 20,000 pieces of safety literature pertaining to all problems of safety. We are indebted for this excellent literature to the following people:

Edward R. Seese of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.
Wm. V. Briddle, representing the United States Fidelity and Guaranty Co.
Harry Frieberg of the Travelers Insurance Co.

The entire Safety Week was under the direction of one of our directors, Maj. Frank J. Ronan and we are greatly indebted to him for all of the enthusiasm that was displayed during that period.

Under the direction of another one of our directors, Edward Steele, a thorough-going study was made of the present traffic ordinance in Highland Park. Mr. Steele was equipped with a modern ordinance from the National Safety Council and recently passed ordinances from other North Shore towns. After a complete study, we found numerous changes that should be made in order to bring this traffic ordinance up to date and also to conform with standard Illinois laws. Modern cars have changed a great deal in the past ten years and therefore conditions are different today than they were ten years ago. Through Mr. Steele's recommendations have been made to the corporation council. Mr. Gale, of the City of Highland Park and the traffic ordinance should be rebuilt from the bottom up and a new ordinance passed by the City commission. It is also our recommendation that when this ordinance is drawn up that a copy be given to every owner of an automobile as he pays his Highland Park vehicle tax. In this manner, the citizens of our community will become acquainted with the traffic regulations in the community. It is our opinion that this ordinance should be drawn up and passed at once, but we are informed that the whole code for the City of Highland Park needs revision. If this is the case, then the Safety committee recommends that a traffic ordinance be drawn up at once and passed, and when the whole code is revised then the traffic ordinance can be passed again. We are also advised that it would take at least a year or more to revise the entire code of Highland Park, and the Citizens Safety committee feel that it would be a mistake to wait a year or two in order to bring its traffic ordinance up to date. Hence, we recommend the above action.

Mr. Steele has done a most excellent job in asking this study. Numerous similar activities have been performed by the Citizens Safety committee during the past year. The gate tower at Lincoln crossing has been lowered and has greatly aided the safety situation at that point where so many school children cross both tracks. At St. Johns and Central avenue additional lights were installed by the Chicago North

Shore & Milwaukee railroad to protect that crossing and station.

Discussions were held during the year as to the location and method of obtaining the stop and go lights for some of our busiest corners such as Green Bay and Central avenue. There are several hours throughout the day when this corner handles the traffic of over 1,000 cars per hour, and we believe that the citizens of this community must give serious thought as to the method of handling this traffic. The traffic situation involving the whole of Central avenue from Green Bay road east to Sheridan road comes under the same study. Harry Pertz, vice chairman of the committee, has done most excellent work in bringing up to date the surveys which he made about eighteen months ago involving this traffic. As Highland Park grows, it is only natural that the amount of traffic grows and each year this problem becomes more serious.

For the past two years the Citizens Safety committee has recognized that their Police department has needed additional men. Last summer the City of Highland Park added two more men to their present force. The Safety committee recognizes and recommends to the City of Highland Park that they equip the Police department with one more squad car and that all squad cars should be equipped with communities on the North Shore have their squad cars equipped with two-way radios. Other progressive work it has become a necessity.

We recognize that many of these safety measures require an outlay of funds by the City of Highland Park and we urge the citizens of this community to give thought to these problems if they wish to keep their community on a progressive basis from the standpoint of safety matters.

During the past year additional traffic signs have been placed throughout the city and particularly on roads which enter an arterial highway. This has done much to make driving safer and warn the citizens of dangerous spots.

A request was made by the grammar schools last year to provide

light rain coats and hats for the boys on the Safety patrol. Through the influence of the Highland Park Citizens Safety committee, these rain coats and hats were donated to the Elm Place and Lincoln avenue schools by the Dumaresq Spencer post of the American Legion.

In order that the Safety committee might be advised of all problems of safety in the community we have been in constant touch with the officials of the city administration throughout the year. The Safety committee has also encouraged amicable state relations and to that end invited state officials to Highland Park so that we might get their viewpoint on many of our local problems.

In order that the citizens of Highland Park might be fully informed of the work of the Citizens Safety committee, we have regularly given publicity to our local newspapers who have been most courteous in publishing our articles. We wish to thank our local newspapers for this cooperation.

Last summer the Highland Park Citizens Safety committee took a part in starting the movement for lake shore safety. The first meeting of the Lake Shore Safety committee was held at the home of one of our directors. Other members of our committee did an excellent job in raising funds which will make the lake shore safer in future years to come.

Another situation which has been the constant worry of our City commission during the past few years has been the growth of shrubbery on and over the city streets. As you know, the parkway of each street extends beyond the edge of the street. Many property owners in the community have become careless and have allowed their shrubbery to be planted and grown next to the edge of the street and in many cases over the street itself. With our fast moving automobiles, no child or even an adult coming out from behind a clump of bushes would have a chance of dodging any automobile that might be proceeding at the rate of even 25 miles an hour. The City of Highland Park under ordinance has a right to force the property owners to cut this

shrubbery, but it has been the opinion of the city that they wish to cooperate with the property owners because they realize that most of these citizens are entitled to enjoy the beauty of our suburb. On the other hand, many streets in Highland Park have become dangerous because the property owner has allowed his shrubbery to grow to the edge of the street. Last summer the Safety committee took thirty pictures of bad shrubbery situations. These are available to any individual or group of individuals who would like to see them. Without destroying the beauty of their property, the Citizens Safety committee feels that many of these property owners can move back their shrubbery and thereby take away one of the principal causes of our accidents in

Highland Park. In order to bring the shrubbery problem before the citizens a bulletin has been prepared by the Safety committee and is being sent out to every property owner in the City of Highland Park.

In conclusion, the Citizens Safety committee has had excellent cooperation from the Honorable Mayor William M. Dooley, and Chief of Police Edward Maroney on all safety matters in our community. They have been most helpful in giving us information on all subjects and have also given of their time and effort in helping us to study these problems.

E. L. GILROY, Chairman.

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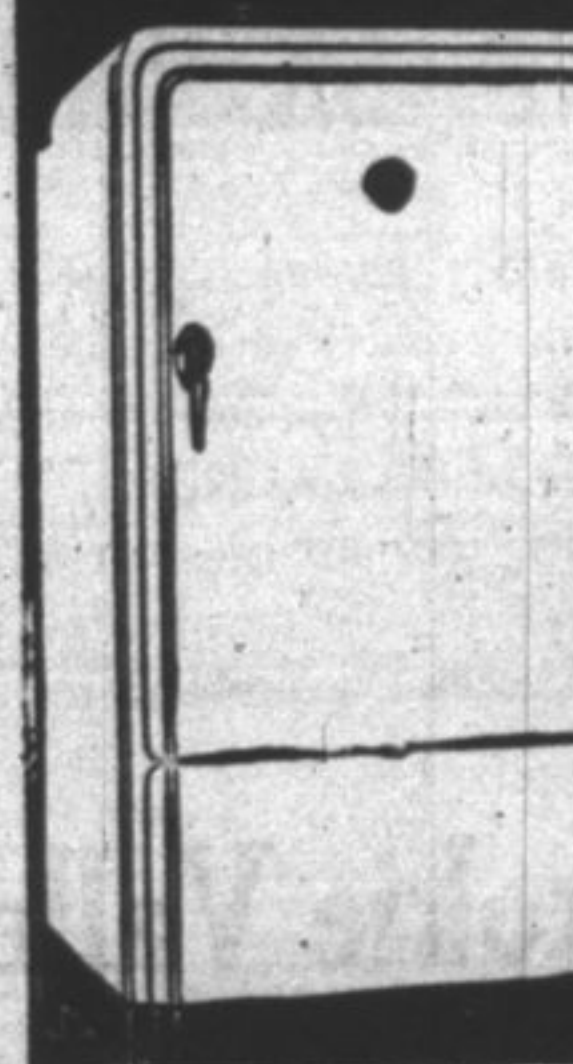
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