

ASSOCIATED POLICE COMMUNICATION OFFICERS

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DETROIT, MICHIGAN

April 22, 1937

Lieut. E. Denstaedt.

Capt. R. L. Batts.

Glenn West.

✓ Everett Fisher.

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of a letter signed by Mr. John Reynolds, in answer to my inquiry as to the proper methods of approach to the Commission with reference to raising the radio license standards of State and Municipal police radio stations. The following are excerpts taken at random throughout his letter:

"The present rules and regulations of the Commission governing all classes of operators are now being studied with a view to revision sometime this year. Although we believe that the police rules will be changed in some respects, there has been no complaint as to the adequacy of the present classes of licenses for the particular stations involved. As you know, the requirements in certain cities and states differ from those in other locations and it is very difficult to provide rules which will satisfy the needs of individual stations.

The Commission's responsibility is to determine the qualifications of station operators according to the duties to be performed and to issue licenses to such persons as may be found qualified. In formulating rules governing individual classes of stations, such as municipal and state police stations, the Commission is partly guided by the recommendations of police officials generally. As you know, we rely upon the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Associated Police Communication Officers for an expression of opinion concerning the adequacy of rules for these classes of stations. In considering such recommendations we have in mind the requirements of the Communications Act, which must be considered in relation to the particular type of service performed by operators of police transmitting equipment."

My comments upon the above with regards to the Commission's responsibility to determine the qualifications of station operators according to the duties to be performed, is one point that they have not as I see it been doing in the past. In other words, for example, in the State of Ohio our radio operators are responsible for operation and maintenance of all radio equipment. However, under the Commission rules, it is perfectly possible that if for one reason or another the head of our Patrol System could, if he insisted, place third class men, who had no radio experience at all in these positions. Of course, it would be foolish to do this inasmuch as if equipment does break down it would be rather hard to have it

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repaired immediately, but this very thought is being considered by not only the head of my own department, but of two other states. I believe that the Commission should definitely establish set rules and regulations for those stations over fifty to one hundred watts to raise the standards to a minimum of a second class radiotelephone license.

The following is another excerpt from the letter from the Federal Communications Commission:

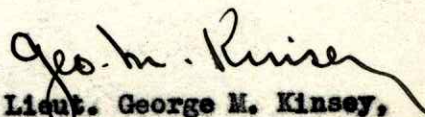
"While the present rules permit the employment of third class radiotelephone operators at municipal and state police stations using high power, the fact must be recognized that the rules require the employment of at least one operator who holds a second class license or higher. There is nothing to prevent any department from employing only first class operators if they so desire, and it would appear in your case that if the lower class operators are not qualified for the particular duties to be performed, operators holding higher class licenses should be employed. Should, however, you possess information which might indicate that because of the employment of lower class operators the police radio service is not being operated in accordance with good engineering practice, and for this reason you believe it would be to the advantage of all concerned if only higher class operators were employed, we would be glad to give your request further consideration upon the submission of additional facts in this regard."

In the above excerpt, we know that the Commission does specify and state that an operator hold^{ing} a second class or higher must be in charge of a station, this does not in any way, shape or form state that the service can operate efficiently with only one man with that class of ticket. It is obvious that this man cannot be subject to call twenty-four hours a day, three hundred and sixty five days a year.

I believe that if we were, within the next few weeks, to have expressions from each of you men, together with expressions from other departments that you know of, stating your recommendations as to why the employment of lower class operators the police service is not or could not be operated in accordance with good engineering practice, and that if each and every one of us can point out examples as to why it is not good practice, the Commission might consider an increase of qualifications for police radio systems. If you so desire I would be pleased to take this up further with the Commission, but can only do so with the continued help of each of you men

Trusting that you will be able to furnish me with such information as may be necessary relative the above, I remain

Yours very truly,


Lieut. George M. Kinsey,
First Vice-President, APCO

GMK/FP

April 26, 1937

Lieut. Edwin C. Denstaedt
Captain Robert L. Batts
Mr. Glenn E. West
Lieut. George M. Kinsey

Gentlemen:

With reference to Lieutenant Kinsey's letter dated April 22, 1937, I wish to make it plain that while my attitude toward the employment of radio operators is certainly in favor of the best operators obtainable, this must not be considered as the viewpoint of the officials of this department who are not connected directly with the Radio Division, but whose viewpoints if expressed would definitely control my actual policy in the selection of operators.

So far, I have been extremely fortunate with regard to the selection of capable men. Our operators all hold first class radiotelephone licenses with at least second radiotelegraph endorsement, and there has been only one instance in our seven years of operation when an attempt has been made to employ an operator who either by lack of experience or lack of what I considered to be the proper license was unqualified to hold the position, and in this case he was not employed. It was necessary, of course, to make it plain that where two men applied for the same position, in order to maintain efficiency, the better qualified of the two should be given the job. This stand would admit no controversy, but I hasten to acknowledge that supervisors of communications are frequently not even given this consideration.

As I pointed out in a letter to Mr. West some time ago, any move toward increasing the requirements for radio operator licenses would be bound to meet with some opposition from police officials who like to disregard qualifications in favor of giving jobs to persons who are friendly toward them or toward their administration. I do not mean this to be derogatory unless police officials fully recognize the need for men of experience and training.

(next)

They picture a radio operator as one whose duties are simply to watch a lot of meters and push buttons when necessary. It does mean, however, that unless the officials themselves are sold with the idea that something besides a third class telephone operator's license or its equivalent is demanded, the entire structure of their respective communication systems are placed in jeopardy, they will naturally be in favor of employing operators with operating experience and technical qualifications secondary consideration.

I firmly believe that should APCO directly contact the Federal Communications Commission with an official request that requirements for operator licenses be increased, we would be subject to severest criticism from the International Association of Chiefs of Police, even though such recommendation, as we know, would be for the betterment of the various departments. Even if we first contacted the Radio Committee of the International Association of Chiefs and if they endorsed our recommendations without actual referendum of IACP members, we stand a chance to lose through our honest efforts.

I do not mean in mentioning the above that no action should be taken regarding the matter. I do think, however, that the best procedure would be to place the matter before the Radio Committee of the International Association of Chiefs with recommendation that both sides of any argument toward increasing operator requirements be given fullest consideration, and that a poll of IACP members be taken and that we proceed along the lines as indicated by the result of the poll. We could not appear presumptuous in asking that the poll be taken and in many cases the officials of the various departments would contact their communication supervisors for a satisfactory answer. If the outcome of such a poll would be reversed to our desires, the very reversal would indicate that we would have proceeded in the wrong manner if we had made our recommendations in any other way. One thing must always be borne in mind; and that is, that regardless of what we want to do in the interests of our service, our efforts must be sanctioned by the International Association of Chiefs, if it assumes national proportion, and recognizing that we must depend upon the IACP for our very existence, we had best not lose sight of this even for an instant.

I am sure that you will understand what I am driving at, and that you will treat this communication with the utmost confidence. It is my own personal viewpoint and as such it is forwarded for your consideration. Kind personal regards.

(next)

Yours very truly,

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EVERETT E.H. FISHER,
Radio Supervisor KGPC
Secretary-Treas. AFCC