

LAW PLUS COURTESY



Mischievous children are a major problem for railroads, and Erie police constantly are on the alert for them, aiming to protect the youngsters' lives as well as Erie property. Above, Patrolman William Law explains to several

children the dangers of playing with switches and cautions them to stay off the tracks to avoid injury. The inset shows F. B. Wildrick, superintendent of the Property Protection Department.

The outworn phrase of "railroad dick" is as dead as the do-do bird. Today railroad policemen like those employed by the Erie are more correctly described as efficient, courteous, cooperative, courageous and friendly guardians of life and property.

Almost every day the Erie railroad police officer's aid is sought scores of times by the puzzled, lost and forlorn at points from New York to Chicago.

A recent episode illustrates why this is so. One day not so long ago a highly perturbed old lady on her way to friends in New York City found herself in our Jersey City terminal, overwhelmed almost to tears by the furious pace and the magnitude of her unfamiliar surroundings.

She had never faced anything like it, didn't know what to do and looked like she hadn't a friend in the world. She finally went to an Erie policeman. She couldn't have made a wiser decision. The patrolman escorted her to an Erie ferry, accompanied her across the North River, showed her to her bus and asked the driver to let her off at her stop.

Varied Duties

This is just one of the many extra services performed daily by our police department—officially referred to as the Property Protection Department. Some other duties are traffic

... members of Erie's Police force are trained to help as well as apprehend.

control, policing of train wrecks, investigating claims for the Freight Claim Department, collecting payments for damage to property like flasher lights and crossing gates, searching for missing shipments, keeping undesirable persons out of stations and off company property, keeping trespassing to a minimum, prevention of pilferage and thievery, escorting special shipments and patrolling property.

During periods of war, their duties broaden. During World War II, Erie police were constantly alert for acts of sabotage and subversive activities. They also became uninformed



The Erie Railroad Property Protection Department often cooperates with police forces of cities all along the Erie route. Here in Youngstown members of the Youngstown force and Erie men discuss a case. Third from left, Patrolman L. F. Owens, and fourth from left, Capt. John A. Fenisy, both of the Erie.

were crudely organized. Brawn was almost the sole qualification.

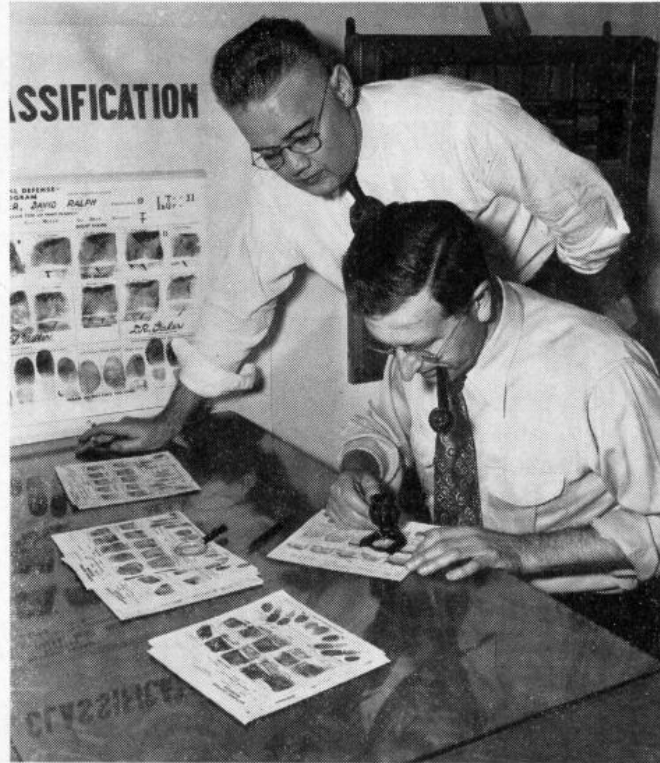
Qualifications today are strict and insure selecting the best personnel. Intelligence, experience and education rate prime consideration. Physical attributes, of course, still are important but are far from the only requirements.

Applicants must have a high school education, at least. Good character is essential and references and records are carefully checked. Physical re-

quirements are similar to those of the Army and Navy. Age limits are 23 to 35. Applicants also must be 5 feet 9 inches to 6 feet 3 inches tall and weigh between 160 and 210 pounds.

After an applicant is accepted, he must undergo a probationary period. Then, after about two years on the job he is considered a qualified railroad policeman.

Erie policemen always are learning—mostly by going to school. Periodi-



Examining fingerprints in the Cleveland General Office of the Property Protection Department are, standing, Chief Clerk H. B. Collier and, seated, Lt. C. S. Gilgen.

guards at our bridges, viaducts and tunnels. In many instances, employes were appointed as auxiliary police to watch for saboteurs and subversive acts on the job.

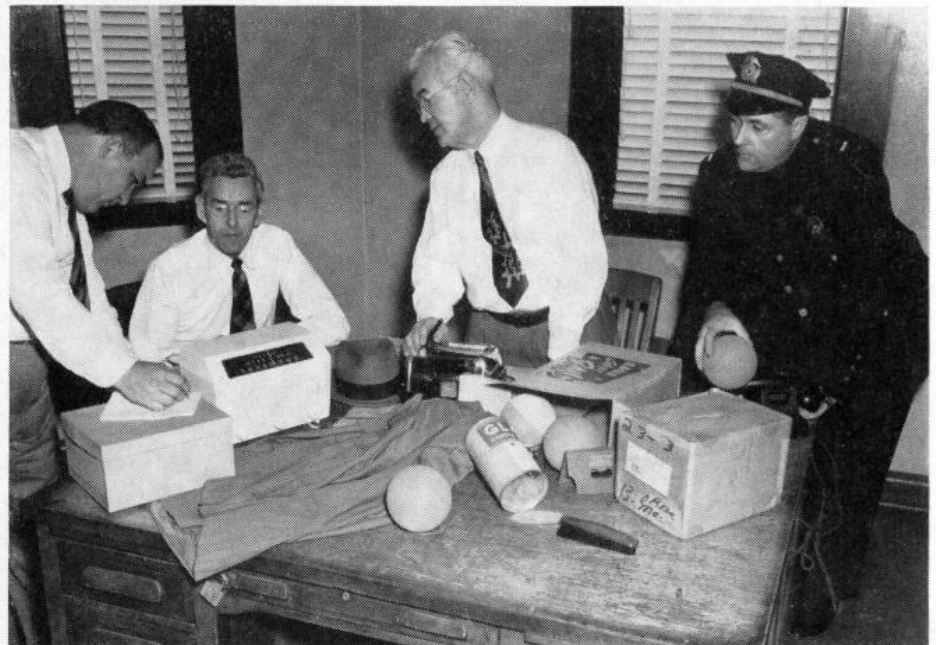
These are the routine duties. Actually members of Erie's Property Protection Department perform duties almost exactly the same as those of members of municipal police forces, except that their work is done on railroad property.

The authority of our police is derived from the states in which they work. Erie police are appointed by the state superintendent of police in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. They have the same authority as municipal police in these states.

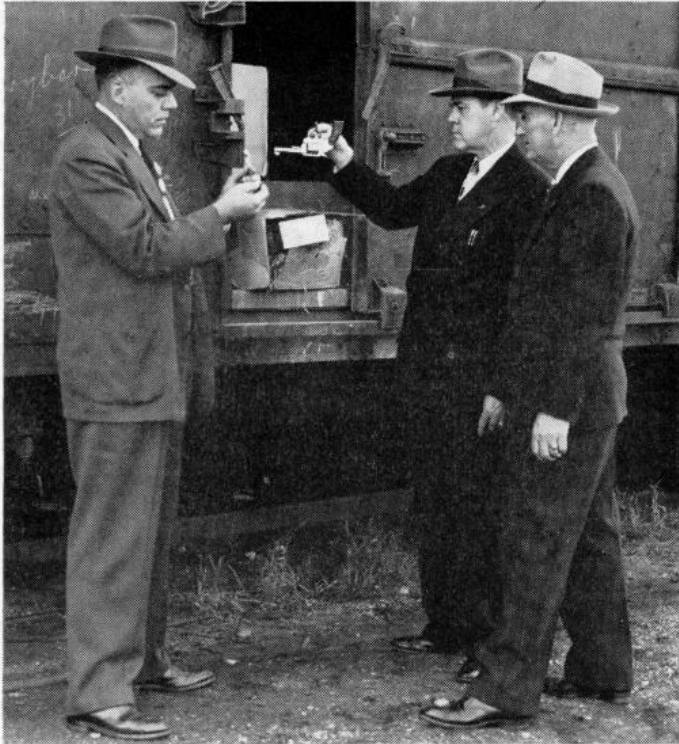
Actually railroad police are public law enforcement officers whose salaries are paid by the railroad.

Started in 1860

Erie police history dates back to 1860. The first police were quite different from the present highly competent organization. Back in 1860 the Erie Railroad operated in New York State, and the governor of the state deputized station agents as police officers. Around the turn of the century a modest force of patrolmen, roundsmen, sergeants and captains



Members of the Erie Property Protection Department examine some of the loot recovered and returned to our Jersey City headquarters. This picture was taken in the office of the Captain of police in Jersey City and shows, from the left, Lt. Arthur J. Myers, Patrolman J. C. Springer, Chief J. C. Stearns of the Eastern District and Lt. A. H. Hopler.



Demonstrating how they might proceed to examine available evidence at the scene of a theft are, from the left, Capt. C. H. Pageler, R. P. Steen, chief of police for the Western District, with headquarters at Youngstown, Ohio, and Capt. H. C. Smith. All are members of the Erie Property Protection Department. The picture was taken at Youngstown.

cally there are discussion meetings, lectures, reviews and interpretation of the Erie police manual. Municipal and state police and Federal Bureau of Investigation personnel conduct many of the meetings. Because of almost constant contact with the public, members of the department study public speaking and regularly speak to groups of school children and before civic clubs.

Gaining Stature

Over the years the work of the Erie Property Protection Department has been so efficient that it has gained both the respect and cooperation of the public and of other police organizations.

Because so many police cases require teamwork between Erie and other police organizations, there is constant cooperation.

As an illustration, some time ago both the Erie and New Jersey state police joined forces to stop what was known as the "rope ladder gang." This gang was using a rope ladder to raid moving freight trains.

The ladder had iron claws which hooked over the walk on top of a box-car of a moving freight. One thief would operate from the ladder, break the seal of a car, kick open the door and then shove out the contents of the car. It was always done at night and as near as possible to a highway. The thief's accomplices would follow in a car, spot the loot and mark it for a following pick-up

truck.

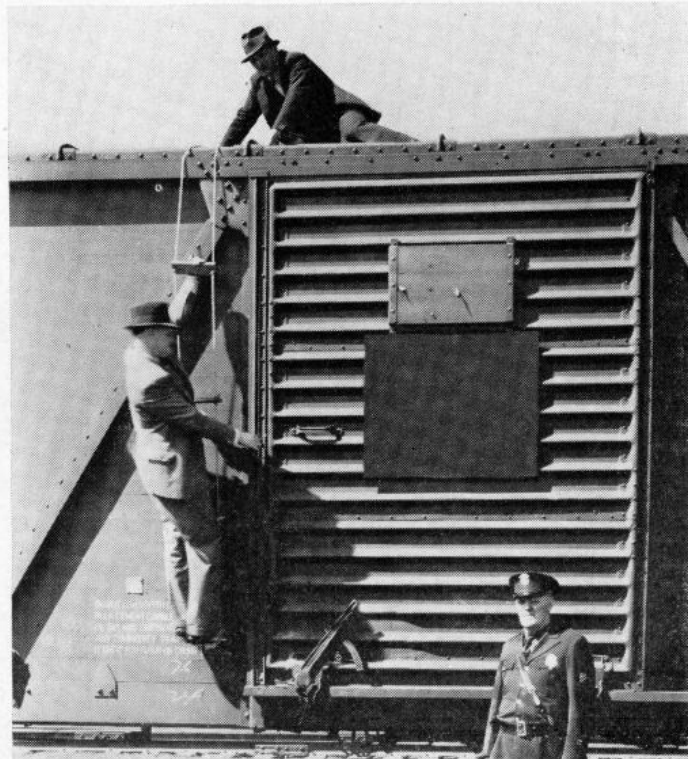
Inside men are necessary for this type of operation. One day, an Erieman was asked to join the gang. He reported to our police. State police were called into the case. For several nights the gang was followed by our men and state troopers. Then the law moved in on the gang. All were apprehended and paid for their misguided occupation with long jail terms.

Works With FBI

Our police often work with the FBI. Several years ago a finger-print department was started. Now fingerprints are taken of all suspects arrested on the Erie. One set of prints is kept in our files and one sent to the FBI. All prints are checked with the FBI for records of previous arrest. Posters of wanted criminals are filed by the Erie. On many occasions, Erie police have furnished leads which have resulted in the capture of wanted criminals and several times have apprehended these men.

One of the most important programs handled by the Property Protection Department is the child educational safety program.

The program was inaugurated to halt child delinquency on railroad property. Child delinquency cannot be over-emphasized. Recently a survey among only 33 railroads showed that
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Two Erie police members demonstrate in the picture above how the "rope ladder gang" discussed in the accompanying article operated in looting boxcars on moving Erie freights. Above is Lt. C. S. Gilgen and on the ladder is the late Lt. R. W. Steen. The man in uniform is a city policeman. The ill-conceived exploits of the thieves had their inevitable reward, and they will be serving their penitentiary sentences for some time yet.

POLICE continued

there were 834 obstructions placed on tracks in four months by wayward children.

There also were 1266 cases of stoning which could have resulted in eye or head injury, or facial disfigurement to passengers or crews. Death or injury often is the result of such dangerous misdemeanors.

Then, of course, there are signal lense breakage, safety device tampering, setting of fires in boxcars and other places, thrown switches, larceny and burglary.

Movies, Too

In recent years Erie police have visited almost every community in the Erie area to present lecture and visual safety programs at schools. Annually approximately 200,000 school children are reached with this program. These lectures and movies also are presented before civic groups and clubs. A safety-magic show was added to the program several years ago and has been extremely popular.

Such measures have helped cut child accidents on the Erie from 29 in 1939 to two in each of the years from 1947 to 1949.

In the pursuit of their duties, our police employ the most modern methods. Detection and apprehension is the result of the latest, scientific methods. Autos, radios, lie detectors, telephones and finger-printing are utilized.

Such methods helped American railroads cut losses by theft from \$13,000,000 in 1920 to \$2,973,998 in 1948 with a 28% decrease in 1949.

Just in case you may want to be a target for one of our policemen some time, you might consider their marksmanship record. The Erie Eastern District pistol team in 1947 won the championship in the 11-team Northern New Jersey Police League. Twice it beat the state champs and finished fifth among 140 teams in an international competition, two points out of second place. Two individual members finished third, two points below the winner.

Pistol target practice is held regularly, and both Eastern and Western district teams compete often with other organizations and in the annual International Pistol Meet.

Some Humor

Many times breaking railroad law has its humorous side. One veteran railroader's downfall proved to be such a case. He had an itching foot and loved to travel. However, his traveling was highly unorthodox, and eventually he met the fate of all law-breakers.

He was a passenger agent who knew everything there was to know about tickets, and he had a small printing press. Whenever he wanted to take a trip he merely printed a ticket. It took a while, but with municipal help, the Erie police "punched"

this petty criminal's ticket one day, and for a while his traveling was confined by a penitentiary's boundaries.

The next time you see an Erie policeman remove a hobo with what you might think is hasty action and maybe rough handling, you might remember that his wariness means he's guarding life and property.

Often these hoodlums are hardened killers, and if a policeman approaches

them with pistol drawn, he is not necessarily a coward. The thug might turn on him in an instant and take his life.

Keep in mind, too, that if the culprit is innocent, he could not be in better hands.

Railroad policemen aren't very often wrong. Annually they arrest about 60,000 persons. Records show that 98% of the arrests result in conviction, a remarkable record.