

Science Plays Important Role In Today's Crime Detection

By JOSEPH McHENRY

Few people today realize the tremendous influence which science has exerted during the past half century in the field of criminology. In the person of two post-graduate students in chemistry, Canisius has two experts engaged in this growing field. These two men, Robert E. Quirk, '35, and Paul R. Corcoran, '43, during their comparatively brief association with the Scientific Crime Detection Department of the Buffalo Police Department, have rendered highly valuable service to Buffalo and surrounding territories.

Mr. Quirk and Mr. Corcoran recently appeared on a special radio program over WEBR, "Know Your Police Department," in which they explained the principal types of work which their respective departments entail.

Mr. Quirk, who was formerly with the United States Immigration Service's Mexican Border Patrol, is connected with the Chemistry Laboratory, and, in addition to the work which he has done for the Buffalo Police Department, has repeatedly been requested to work on cases for neighboring communities. The work which he has done in chemical analysis has figured prominently in court testimony. During the past year, he has spent a total of 163 hours in court, testifying to the evidence which is accumulated through research in his department.

Paul Corcoran, a ballistics expert for the department, has rendered equally invaluable assistance. His chief contribution, besides that of the identification of criminal weapons and bullets, has been a

collection of military weapons brought to this country by souvenir-hunting servicemen during the past war. This collection will be highly valuable for the purpose of comparison, should these types become involved in criminal cases. Already, it has aided materially in the decrease in accidental deaths in the home due to the improper use and care of such weapons.

It is their combined task to make field investigations of all cases of homicide and fatal hit-and-run accidents. Considerable research is often entailed in many of these cases, and frequently it is found that approved methods have never been devised for making certain tests. In such cases, it is necessary to evolve a procedure and determine its reliability before the tests can be completed.

Their attention at the present time has been focused primarily around the materials which are connected with the Lindeman case.

"Due to the large amount of speculation in regard to this case," Mr. Quirk stated, "the only positive contribution which our work has made has been to narrow down certain aspects of the case."

Questioned as to whether this physical evidence would figure in a trial, Mr. Quirk answered: "It will most probably figure importantly."