

Special Radio Network Aided Police on Campus

By JUNE DIECKMANN
(Of the State Journal Staff)

Lawmen and National Guardsmen had a secret ally last week in coordinating forces to quell University of Wisconsin disturbances, they have revealed.

The helper was an \$18,000 private-band portable radio system, with 30 walkie-talkie units operated through a suitcase-sized "repeater" control outfit that automatically relayed any message from one unit to the other 29 stations.

GOV. WARREN P. Knowles was so impressed with the effectiveness of the equipment that he ordered it retained for use by the State Division of Emergency Police Services in floods, storms, riots, or other disasters throughout Wisconsin.

Merle (Mike) Spencer, Baraboo, former Sauk County sheriff now deputy director of emergency police services, said he hopes to obtain federal Safe Street Act funds to expand the new portable radio system to eight control units and 120 walkie-talkies. They would be used out of six headquarters in the state, including Madison.

The total cost would be about \$83,000, with possibly 75 per

cent covered by federal funds, Spencer said.

MADISON POLICE Chief Wilbur H. Emery said the new radio equipment "improved our operations 75 per cent" during duty on campus.

"We were really operating under extreme communication handicaps" with Madison, Dane County, and University police, Guardsmen, and mutual aid lawmen from other counties "trying to keep in contact with each other through separate radio dispatching centers," Emery explained.

Use of the "repeater" radio equipment could mean fewer enforcement men having to be called to the next emergency scene, Emery and Dane County Sheriff Vernon (Jack) Leslie agreed. "With more efficient communications, we can do a better job with less manpower," Emery said.

ABOUT 400 Madison, Dane County, University, and surrounding area lawmen, plus some 1,900 Guardsmen were ordered to campus duty at an extra expense expected to exceed \$300,000.

James Diener, Cambridge, a

Motorola police radio representative, rushed delivery of the new equipment to the campus Feb. 14 when the governor approved its use. Knowles had met with Spencer; Louis Versnick, head of State Patrol enforcement, and members of the Wisconsin Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police Assns., including Emery and Leslie.

THE PORTABLE equipment, operated on an emergency, private network band, freed city, county, University, and state police radio circuits from direction of the campus law crews. It left regular headquarters dispatchers' lines open to direct other authorities on local enforcement calls.

The new radios also prevented demonstrators from possibly using their local police-band radios to monitor orders about where troops were deployed, Emery and Leslie said.

Spencer said the new equipment will be assigned to localities from the state level "as part of civil defense and mutual aid to local law enforcement agencies in emergencies."