

## CHAPTER XIX

# THE RULE OF THE UNDERWORLD

## TENNES AS A VICE CHIEF

1. *Syndicated Gambling.* The complete life history of one man, were it known in every detail, would disclose practically all there is to know about syndicated gambling as a phase of organized crime in Chicago in the last quarter century. That man is Mont Tennes.

He was avowedly a real estate man, for a period the owner of a cash register company, and for more than a score of years the proprietor of the General News Bureau, controlling the wires for the gathering and dispensing of race-track news in Chicago and principal parts of the United States. Repeated exposés have always found him in control of strings of handbooks and gambling houses in Chicago and other urban centers.

The ramifications of his deals to form gambling rings or to complete the monopoly of gambling, his alliances with and wars of violence against competitors, would involve the name of every gambler of any consequence in Chicago for this period. His control over politicians and officials for purposes of protection for himself, his associates and subsidiaries, or control over the police to gain immunity or even to use police raids for the destruction of competitors and enemies; his experiences as defendant prosecuted in state and federal courts and in civil suits brought by crushed or disgruntled gamblers, exhibit a marked continuity despite changing policies of destruction, connivance or regulation with changing governmental administrations and changing officials—state's attorneys, mayors and police chiefs; a persistence in the face of spasmodic reform agitations, newspaper exposés and investigations of grand juries and courts, federal and state, and of municipal authorities. All of these phases of the continuity of organized gambling unfold in the life of this powerful overlord and disclose the reaches of organized crime as well.

The professional gambler is less despised than the vice boss. Gambling as a pastime is less opprobrious than commercialized vice. The newspaper eulogies on the death of William Tennes, the brother of Mont and his partner in gambling, as well as the large number of friends of all classes who mourned his death, would bear this out.

Within organized gambling, however, many of the characters and all of the patterns of violence and anarchic warfare have been developed. Since gambling is illegal, it cannot exist except by defeating the law, which is accomplished partly by influencing elections through contributions to campaign funds or by the bribery of officials. As it is an illegitimate business, gamblers cannot come into court with clean hands in order to settle disputes with regard to their property rights; therefore, within the last quarter century, disputes have been resolved by bombing, killing and arson. Gambling factions retain and support bombers and gunmen, whom they mobilize for action in times of gang war.

## *Illinois Crime Survey*

### 2. *Gambling in Chicago Twenty-five Years Ago.*

Three rings or syndicates controlled the gambling business in Chicago in the early years of this century. Mont Tennes, known as the king of the north side, maintained his headquarters in a saloon at Center Street and Sheffield Avenue and owned several other saloons and a string of race-horses.

James O'Leary, the chief gambler of the south side, was located at 4183 South Halsted Street, still a gambling center today though its founder has been dead two years. He conducted and controlled several gambling houses and handbooks, some of which were located in the "Loop." The principal personages in his south side syndicate were said to be Frederick T. "Bud" White, Harry Perry, Charles Smith and "Blind John" Condon, also supposed to be associated with Tennes.

In the "Loop" the control of games and handbooks was reported to be largely in the hands of Aldermen Kenna and Coughlin, Tom McGinnis, Pat O'Malley and John F. O'Malley. On the west side Alderman Johnnie Rogers was reported to be king.

The north, south, and west factions, although supreme in their own territory, cast envious eyes upon the "Loop" district as the most fertile field in which to reap a golden harvest from gambling enterprise. The attempts to encroach upon the downtown district led to a war between the various factions, which included bombing, slugging and other forms of destruction and intimidation.

During the earlier Harrison administrations gambling suffered little disturbance; but an epidemic of retirements of gambling chiefs occurred in July, 1904. Assistant Chief of Police Schuettler, who for twenty years diligently raided Tennes' establishments, stated that Mont Tennes would be put out of business in a few days and that all gamblers were quitting as a series of indictments were impending. James O'Leary had announced his retirement two weeks before, after a raid by the police at 4183-89 South Halsted Street. Even then these retirements were characterized by the newspapers as "repeated swan songs which have been sung for the benefit of the police authorities."

Following the announcement of Tennes' retirement to go exclusively into booking at the race track, there was a raid at 123 North Clark Street, one of his chief places. Within a month a newspaper exposé disclosed Tennes at all his old stands, and one raid followed.

During the Dunne administration, 1905-07, there was little activity in suppressing gambling. But in the first months of the Busse administration, 1907-11, the Tennes gambling house at 123 North Clark Street was raided. The raid was typical; twenty-one men were arrested; others escaped. Joseph Moore and John Newton were booked as keepers; never was Mont Tennes booked as keeper. The syndicate bondsman, George Murray, immediately furnished two hundred dollar bonds for each prisoner. The case never came to trial, but Chief of Police Shippy expressed satisfaction at the raid. How familiar his words sound:

"I will stop gambling in Chicago or I will run all of the gamblers out of the city. Show me or my men where there is gambling and it will

## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

be immediately stopped. My men report that everything is quiet now.

"I have tried to discover evidence against certain well known gamblers who, I suspect, are operating policy shops, but thus far I have not succeeded."

Tennes' four north side saloons and his cigar store at 123 North Clark Street were raided on the average of once a week. As soon as the police went away with a wagonload of men he would open up again.

At this time Tennes, with the exception of Jim O'Leary, was the most extensive gambling operator in Chicago. He established hundreds of small handbook agencies. In the main, he was strong enough to work as an independent, outside of political connections. He was reported to be forming a combination with McGinnis of the "Loop" syndicate to work against the O'Leary-White-Smith-Perry crowd that was operating a floating poolroom ship on Lake Michigan, called the City of Traverse.

With a wide-open town and profits of millions of dollars in sight, the gambling magnates of Chicago began waging war for supremacy. The richness of the prizes overturned the habitual caution and furtiveness of the trust gamblers who were reaching for them. Open bookmaking under the supervision of the rings could be found in every section of the city. Faro and roulette, which had been stamped out by the elder Carter H. Harrison and for fourteen years barred from Chicago, returned with the Busse administration.

With the election promise by the victors of a practically open town, the big gamblers were unable to restrain the haste and avarice of the smaller set, and warfare resulted.

The warfare centered on Tom McGinnis of the First Ward, of the "Loop" ring. He was denounced by Tennes and O'Leary as tricky and untrustworthy and they asserted their henchmen did not do business through him. McGinnis attempted to extend his dominion into the territory allotted to O'Leary and Tennes after the last election, and their subordinates retaliated.

Tony Brockman was recognized as the only independent gambler in the "Loop" section. The friendship of Brockman with city officials and his political strength caused the guardians of the "trust" to hesitate at the raids which were the lot of Kennedy and Karr, 290 North Clark Street, and others who refused to come in or quit. The instigation of raids by gambling syndicates and the making of raids by a friendly and corrupt police organization upon gambling houses and places maintained without the permission of the syndicate have always been a successful means of crushing the competitors of the syndicate.

On the west side, Tennes had a subordinate ring composed of John A. Rogers, John Gazzola and Patsy King. There were some independents there, too, for instance, Gintler and Fisher, who were backed by William Soeffler. O'Leary and Tennes never interfered with Gintler and Fisher. Rogers and Gazzola were at 344 and 523 West Madison Street. Open handbooks were numerous along the street as far west as Paulina and Madison. Adolph Stein had his betting saloon, where the orders would be called by a megaphone so that they could be heard out on the street. O'Leary at 4183 South Halsted

## Illinois Crime Survey

Street, who had operated furtively during the Dunne administration, upon the election of Busse again put up the big decorated blackboard.

Andy Craig, former pickpocket and ex-convict, prominently mentioned in vice operations, was the downtown clearing house of the McGinnis books at 383 South State Street.

The boss gamblers were quarreling over territories and the division of spoils, and an uproar, such as Chicago had never experienced before, was anticipated by patrons and promoters of the games of chance. The opening event in the gambling war occurred when Mont Tennes was waylaid by a slugger while walking with his wife and was badly beaten. There were people around at the moment, but no witness could be procured in gang sluggings then, as today. It was reported that the slugger called Tennes a welcher and that the motive was revenge.

After the attack Tennes pictured his real and fancied danger in an interview with a reporter of the *Chicago Evening American* on June 18, 1907.

"I am a marked man. A price has been set upon my life and I am more liable to be assassinated than Alfonso, the Spanish King.

"This man was merely an underling of others. The attack was a careful plan to injure me more or less seriously. The published accounts of the affair convince me that someone was interested in spreading false information concerning the assault.

"In the first place, my assailant did not call me a welcher or make any remark before striking me. I know from my business in the last year that no one could have any such motive for revenge. The closing of the Dearborn Park poolroom is the real motive of the attack, which is concealed under the explanation that the assailant was a disgruntled customer.

"The other quotations: 'You will get more than that some day' and 'He'll be going to his own funeral if he isn't careful,' are in perfect harmony with the wishes of the Dearborn Park combination, who ascribed their suppression in Indiana to me.

"No such threats were made at the time and probably the men in this combination are the only ones who wish me such fatal luck."

The Dearborn Park poolroom in Indiana had been conducted by the O'Leary-Smith-White-Perry group during the winter months, while the City of Traverse could not operate on the lake.

3. *The Bombing War of 1907.* Mont Tennes had secured control of the wires carrying racing news from the race tracks, thus laying the basis for the monopoly of gambling. It is significant that three out of six bombs were directed at Tennes:

Bomb No. 1, in July, 1907, was exploded at 2623 South Michigan Avenue, the home of Blind John Condon, an associate of Tennes. The front was damaged; there was no loss of life because the occupants were at the rear of the house at the time.

Bomb No. 2 was exploded in the basement of the saloon on Clark and Kinzie Streets belonging to John F. O'Malley, of the "Loop" ring.

Bomb No. 3 was planted at the door of the Tennes garage in the rear of his home at 404 Belden Avenue. Tennes, true to the code of silence, shielded his enemies. "It was the practice of some mischievous boys who set off a cannon cracker." Like Reid and Mr. Fitzmorris of today, he

## Tennes as a Vice Chief

said, "I know of no one who would wish to murder me or wreck my property." The police had various theories about it. It was a war of extermination between big gamblers in Chicago. The probable alignment was Tennes, O'Malley, Condon and McGinnis on one side; and O'Leary, White, Smith and Perry on the other.

Bomb No. 4—The resort of James O'Leary (August 14), at 4183 South Halsted Street, was bombed.

Bomb No. 5—(August 19) The second attempt was made upon Tennes' home at 404 Belden Avenue. It was a dynamite bomb, thrown into Tennes' yard after ten o'clock at night. It tore away a hole a foot deep in the sod, shattered the windows and screens in the Tennes house and the houses around. His wife and four children were just retiring and the explosion brought them rushing downstairs. Groups of neighbors, huddled in front of the Tennes' home, suggested that Mr. Tennes hire special police. With his usual affability Tennes said, "I have no anxiety for myself and family, my one concern is for my neighbors."

Bomb No. 6—The third bomb aimed at Tennes (September 26) exploded at the rear of the Western Cash Register Company store, which he used as a blind for his gambling enterprise at 123 North Clark Street. No one was injured. The detectives took no notice of the gambling room at the rear of the cash register company as they walked in and out of it looking for evidence, but a reporter for the *Record Herald* collected racing sheets for that day which showed the results of Gravesend, Latonia and Hamilton.

Mont Tennes was found at his home but did not seem to be at all alarmed over the latest night attack. "Too bad, too bad," he said musingly; "so they have attacked me again, have they?"

"Do you suspect who the guilty persons are?" he was asked.

"Yes, of course I do," he answered, "but I'm not going to tell anyone about it, am I? That would be poor business."

"Is there any poolroom in or near the premises?"

"Oh no," he said. "What do you think, that I am running a big cash register store as a blind? I say now there's nothing to it. No more of that business for Tennes."

"You know nothing about a poolroom on the premises?"

"I do not," he said emphatically.

The state's attorney and the chief of police were not stirred into activity by the bombing outrages; it was a deep mystery to them that only gamblers were being bombed. Nothing was done by way of curbing gambling. If the police had been protecting gambling it might be an inconvenience to harass the gamblers and have them tell about the protection. Acting Chief of Police Schuettler admitted the failure of police to capture bombers. Chief of Police Shippy said, "It looks as if there was a big gamblers' war on in Chicago. I still maintain, however, that there is no gambling worthy of the name in existence here at the present time."

The police theory was that an outside blackmail gang was trying to intimidate the gamblers in Chicago into paying tribute. This is similar to the recent killings in the beer war, when a theory of out-of-town gunmen was frequently introduced.

The home of former Sheriff James Pease was bombed—the comment

## *Illinois Crime Survey*

was that the handbook kings desired to draw the attention of the public to the activities of the sheriff and constables in protecting race track handbooks and to intimate that the sheriff was involved in corrupt practices, a similar comment to that made after the bombing of the home of the former Chief of Police Fitzmorris in 1928.

On the evening of September 24, the Forest Park distributing office of racing news for the Mont Tennes system in Chicago was bombed.

On September 28, 1907, as a result of the public sentiment aroused against the bombing outrages, subpoenas were issued to compel the appearance of the gambling kings before the grand jury, which was making an investigation into the bombing war. A glance at the list of names of those subpoenaed on the first day would suggest that the prosecutor, John J. Healy, had the City of Traverse quarrel in mind.

John F. O'Malley, who with Tennes was purported to be in command of the gambling system of the city;

Harry Perry, who formerly was one of the owners of the gambling ship, the City of Traverse;

Social Smith, who was also one of the owners of the City of Traverse;

James O'Leary, the stockyards gambling promoter;

John R. Condon, the racetrack owner and silent partner in handbook projects.

After hearing the testimony of only one witness, a detective, the state's attorney made the following declaration:

"The investigation will continue for several days. We will make a clean sweep, and from the evidence that we already have obtained, it is safe to say that the inquiry will be productive of results."

Independent gamblers, Bud White, Ed Brennan and John Rogers, were questioned as to whether or not political influence had forced them out of the gambling business. Evidence in the possession of the state's attorney indicated:

That Mont Tennes was king of the gambling ring, which State's Attorney Healy, it was alleged, expected to show was operating with enormous profit in violation of the law and with the knowledge of Mayor Busse and Chief of Police Shippy;

That Mont Tennes was dictator over hundreds of Chicago book-makers, who were permitted to run poolrooms without interference from the police;

That the police knew of the existence of many poolrooms and had daily evidence of operations;

That Mont Tennes bought from what was known as the Payne Telegraph Service of Cincinnati the daily returns on races from the tracks throughout the country;

That these returns were sent by telegraph to an office in Forest Park, near Harlem, where a switchboard was installed by the Chicago Telephone Company;

That the returns from the Payne Service were relayed by telegraph to this telephone switchboard, which was a trunk line containing from forty to forty-five wires;

That racing information was distributed through this trunk line to

## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

bookmakers who paid Tennes for the service at rates from fifty to one hundred dollars daily, the rate varying in accordance with the extent of the daily report. Some bookmakers got running reports of races, which were called off by an announcer in the poolrooms through a megaphone. Others got only "flash" returns of results, telling what horses ran first, second and third;

That Mont Tennes paid the Payne System three hundred dollars a day for exclusive control of this service in Chicago;

That the Payne System was run by John Payne, formerly a telegraph operator who organized the company after the Western Union Telegraph Company had been compelled by Miss Helen Gould, one of its principal stockholders, to cease carrying race results;

That there was protection from the city administration over favored gamblers, and the gamblers to be protected were designated by Mont Tennes, who had among his aids and advisors Jim O'Leary, John Condon and others;

That no gambler or gambling promoter could secure race returns by telephone or telegraph unless he paid Tennes for the service and that the income from such receipts was split up among the members of the ring controlled by Tennes;

That all poolroom owners or operators turned in to the Tennes combine fifty per cent of their business; that is, fifty per cent of the total transactions daily. The Tennes syndicate paid half the money lost to betters who won from the bookmakers and received fifty per cent of the net receipts after the racing sheets were balanced each day;

That Tennes had agents who made the rounds of the subscribers frequently, checking up the sheets, distributing the syndicate's share of the money due and collecting. For the purpose of looking after these poolrooms, Tennes had half a dozen automobiles equipped with calliope whistles. The calliope whistle is distinct in character, and whenever a collector neared a poolroom he signalled his approach with the whistle. Lookouts were waiting and if any reason existed why the collector should not enter the poolroom he was side-tracked until the danger passed;

That blind telephones were installed in poolrooms by the Chicago Telephone Company and charged for at rates in excess of the rates provided for in the ordinance. That such telephones were listed only in the offices of the Chicago Telephone Company and were never used except for the transmission of race news which came from the Forest Park switchboard;

That certain detectives were grafting by placing bets on horses with handbook-makers without actually putting up the money. If the horse won, the detective collected the amount of the bet; if the horse lost, the detective said nothing and neither did the handbook-maker;

That a man of the name of Horace Argo was Tennes' agent and that all of the business of Tennes was conducted by Argo, who was the go-between of Tennes and other gamblers;

That it was an understood thing among the gamblers that when they took the syndicate's system of racing information they would receive protection.

The hopes of the citizens of Chicago were high, that, with all this information, something was to be done at last to stop the bombing outrages and to drive organized gambling out of the city by the conviction of the kings of gambling.

## Illinois Crime Survey

On the same night after his appearance as a witness before the grand jury the saloon of John Rogers at 345 West Madison Street was bombed. The bomb was intended to intimidate Rogers, an independent gambler, outside of the Tennes' combination. The police never cleared up this bombing and Rogers advanced the usual "joker" theory. No convictions followed.

4. *The Contempt  
Action Against  
Horace Argo.* Horace Argo became known as the financial manager of Mont Tennes when the latter succeeded in perfecting his gambling combine during the Busse administration. In a grand jury investigation, Prosecutor John J. Healy directed a series of questions at Argo. Argo stood on his constitutional rights and refused to answer the questions put to him by the prosecutor.

"You understand what you are doing, Mr. Argo, when you refuse to answer questions put to you before this body?" After a moment's reflection, Mr. Healy asked again: "Have you ever paid to politicians, policemen or other persons, sums of money for immunity from raids or other interference with Mont Tennes' handbook business?" Argo answered: "I maintain my original position. I will have to refuse to answer that question, Mr. Healy."

In 1908 John E. W. Wayman succeeded John J. Healy as state's attorney. Of the same political faction as Mayor Busse, Wayman was inactive as to the gambling and vice.

But, the gambling war continued, the gambling house of Brennan, a witness before the grand jury, was bombed, as well as the headquarters of Smith and Perry on State Street. Later, the same year (in October), Brennan's place was bombed again. Other bombings were ascribed to the efforts of independents to break into the "Loop" gambling, Tom McGinnis' territory, during the Republican Convention period.

5. *The Rise of  
Tennes to a  
National Position.* January 1909 found Tennes in absolute control of race track gambling and handbooks in Chicago. Then a bomb at O'Malley's, at Polk and Clark streets, excited public interest in gambling. It was observed Tennes was flourishing in spite of the Wayman crusade, and the booming business in his gambling house at 125 Clark Street was exposed. Tennes bought a residence in his wife's name in the exclusive Edgewater district.

Mayor Busse called Assistant Chief Schuettler into his private office and ordered him to "get" Tennes. Immediately, Schuettler raided the Tennes handbook at 40 Dearborn Street and later Manning and Bowes at 321 South State Street. An obscure man was booked as keeper. Then the *Chicago Daily News* charged that certain officials of the Chicago Police Department knew with certainty the men conducting the dynamite bomb gamblers' war, that the chief officials did not want to arrest these men for fear the inside story of police protection of racing gambling would become public.

After this exposé Mayor Busse said that he did not know of the existence of protected gambling and that he was very anxious to have the facts. Unlike the usual "it is rumored" or "it is claimed" or "it is said," the *Herald Examiner* on June 30, 1909, printed the following news item as the inside facts:



## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

"Mont Tennes' determination to monopolize the gambling privileges of Chicago is responsible for the reign of terror the bomb-throwers inaugurated in this city two years ago.

"Exclusion of every other gambler from the field had been Tennes' plan of campaign since he became the dominating figure in the hand-book and dice and card games that thrive under the very eyes of the police, and the bombs have been the answers of his antagonists to his attempts to force them out of business."

When a bomb was exploded at the Southern Whist Club on May 31, 1910, it was recalled that there had been no bombing since December, 1909, when the Frontenac Club was bombed. This was the period of the truce in which Tennes had completed his monopoly of the hand-book business in Chicago. A misunderstanding about the division of the winnings, when a business man dropped twelve thousand dollars in one night in a high stakes game at an exclusive gambling house owned jointly by Tennes and McGinnis, resulted in the placing and the finding of a bomb big enough to wreck the building. Then, on May 31, the Southern Whist Club was blown up; the truce was over and the war was on again.

6. *The Chain Store System Applied to Gambling.* Within two weeks prior to the Whist Club bombing, Tennes had managed to regain all his old strength in the hand-book field. He monopolized the race returns telegraphed to Chicago by the Payne Racing Service of Cincinnati, and established in various parts of the city a line of thirty poolrooms, including the following:

Poolroom at 119 South La Salle Street, room 33, telephone Main 3495;  
Poolroom, second floor, rear, over saloon at 110 Fifty-first Street;  
Handbook in saloon conducted by Dick Wells, Wabash Avenue and Monroe Street;

Poolroom, second floor, hotel building at Forty-seventh and State streets;  
Poolroom, at 263 West Chicago Avenue (opposite Chicago Avenue Police Station);

Poolroom, 121 North Clark Street, second floor, over Tennes' saloon; telephone Randolph 906;  
Handbook in saloon of O'Connor and Righeimer, at Clark Street near Randolph;

Poolroom at 135 Center Street;  
Poolroom for women at Lang's Saloon, at 4522 State Street;  
Poolroom at 95 East Washington Street, Room 25, telephone Central 7096;

Poolroom in partnership with Barney Zacharis, in the Open Board of Trade, La Salle Street near Van Buren;

Poolroom, frequented chiefly by boys and young men, at 1820 Wabash Avenue;

Poolroom at Twenty-third Street and Cottage Grove Avenue;  
Poolroom for women at Toney and Singleton's saloon, on Twenty-eighth Street next to alley "L";

Handbook in Daley's saloon at Twenty-sixth Street and Cottage Grove Avenue;

Poolroom for women, at Arlington saloon, Indiana Avenue and Thirty-first Street;

## *Illinois Crime Survey*

Poolroom and string of handbooks scattered through the west side in partnership with John Gazzolo, at Ada and Madison streets;  
Poolroom near old Somerset Hotel, Twelfth Street and Wabash Avenue.

Many raids followed, seemingly aimed at the smash-up of the city-wide syndicate; raids even on central stations where the race returns were distributed by telephone. Tennes merely put in new telephones and restored the service the next day. His workmen were busy making additional connections and enlarging the premises at 121 North Clark Street.

Then rumors circulated that Tennes intended to retaliate on his enemies by police raids. Within a day or two a bomb was placed that rocked the block roundabout Tennes' Clark Street poolroom. Incidentally, the explosion destroyed the wires of the Central Telephone Exchange and worked havoc to many of the telephones over which Tennes conducted his racetrack betting. That bomb was the answer of the opposition, the McGinnis crowd, to Tennes who had threatened counter raids.

The Tennes ring at this time established systematic exclusion. Anyone wishing to enter the gambling business had to apply to this ring. The man and the location would be investigated, the leading gamblers in the city would be asked to approve the applicant, and if disapproved he would be placed upon the "dead list."

It was suggested that the names of perpetrators of the latest bombings could possibly be found on the "dead list," which was locked in Tennes' safe. With newspaper pressure, Schuettler raided what was reputed to be Tennes' main clearing-house, on the third floor of the building at 125 North Clark Street. Tennes' agents were arrested, telephones, furniture and gambling paraphernalia destroyed. Records of bets found in the room showed the names and locations of Tennes' alleged agents.

Tennes' own chain of gambling agencies was distributed in the "Loop" and in the south side territory according to this list. The other gamblers, who were subscribers to his service and who had to pay him weekly for it, would very likely object to Tennes' "direct to the consumer" business.

"Strauss," said to be an agent at Van Buren Street and Wabash Avenue;

"Fisher," said to be William Fisher, a Blue Island Avenue handbook agent;

"Stahl," said to be Fred Stahl, agent at Twenty-second Street and Indiana Avenue;

"Maple," said to be an agent at Maple and North Clark Streets;

"D. Foley," saloonkeeper and alleged agent, 14 South Halsted Street;

"Sim," said to be Simon Tuckhorn, Wabash Avenue and Harmon Place;

"Meyer," said to be an agent at Milwaukee and West North Avenue;

"Wurster," said to be an agent on Washington Street between Dearborn and Clark Streets;

"I," said to be Tennes' own private record;

"Phil," said to be either Phil Green, Thirty-first Street and Indiana Avenue, or Phil Wexler, Harrison Street and Wabash Avenue;

"Shep," said to be an agent at Fifty-first Street and State Street.

The chief of police extolled the cleverness of the police in ferreting out this central clearing-house.

## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

"The men who conducted the raid are my best men. They have kept right after the place and finally found it."

Assistant Chief Schuettler, directing a charge on gambling, again promised to drive Tennes out of Chicago:

"Some people look upon Tennes as a king, but he will have to cease operations. It is true that we have been after him for some time and have never been able to get the 'goods' on him personally, but it is also true that if we keep arresting his agents he cannot afford to do business. That is just what we intend to do. Tennes must quit Chicago. It may take some time to accomplish his downfall, but it will come in the long run."

Two days later Judge Fake of the Harrison Street Police Station held that the evidence secured by the police in the clearing-house raid was faulty, and the chief of police apologized to the public by saying that the men who conducted the raid were *green* men. In the height of the raid they had been his *best* men. The newspapers then characterized the raid as the "purest poppycock;" the police had raided a dummy clearing-house set up for the purpose of the raid.

With this and other adverse publicity, the police again warbled the swan song for Tennes as they had done in 1904. The chief of police announced that Tennes had experienced such great losses within a year as would cause his retirement in the near future; race-tracks had been abolished in many parts of the United States and his business had therefore decreased from sixty to seventy thousand to five or six thousand dollars a day, but his expenses were practically the same; he was refusing large bets and chose to play "pikers" (small betters) only, because they are consistent losers. The chief threatened constantly to harass him with raids and to continue arresting his agents, though he admitted Tennes was hard to catch. "We don't care how we put the gamblers out of business, just so long as they get out and stay out."

But business as usual was found in the Tennes' gambling houses on November 30, 1909, and Judge Fake of the Harrison Street Police Station called attention to the ability of the police to get evidence on little gamblers, but only faulty evidence on the big ones. It was discovered, too, that Tennes was now a partner in the Dearborn Park Pavilion in Indiana, with Tom McGinnis and Bud White, former enemies. The bets were taken on the north side and the "pay-off" took place on the Indiana side, which Governor Marshall soon stopped.

Several other raids occurred in February of 1910. That Schuettler's raids upon Tennes' establishments within the city were probably effective and actually disturbed Tennes is indicated by the fact of his removal to suburban locations like Forest Park and Dearborn Park. A third location was at South Chicago Avenue and East Seventy-first Street, where Tennes had actually to "horn" his way in by purchasing the consent of the neighboring owners at prices ranging from one hundred to fifteen hundred dollars. About sixty property owners, with seventy-two hundred feet of frontage, gave the necessary consent for Tennes to secure a saloon license.

## Illinois Crime Survey

### 7. *Police Reorganization, 1910 and 1927.*

The reorganization of the police department led to Schuettler's elimination from the command of the gambling supervision. Responsibility for conditions in their districts was transferred to police inspectors and captains. As this new plan was later abolished and then reinstated in 1927 by the Thompson administration, it is of great interest to note what effect this inspector and captain system had in 1910, as expressed in a *Tribune* article of June 12, 1910:

"An order promulgated through the police department is indirectly responsible for the 'wide-open' gambling now prevalent in Chicago.

"Under shelter of the order making police inspectors and captains responsible for conditions in their districts, bookmaking revived immediately and notoriously.

"The control of gambling has been taken from Assistant Chief Schuettler, and the divisional officers of the department are reveling in professions of ignorance of gambling which, in some instances, is being carried on under the noses of policemen in uniform.

"Recently Mont Tennes was bold enough to taunt a police official about his success in nullifying the honest efforts of the police.

"'Hello there, what's become of your raiding brigade?' chuckled Tennes over a telephone wire one afternoon."

It seems that this shifting of responsibility to the captains in each district from the shoulders of the chief of police, his cabinet, the police department as a whole, the mayor and his cabinet, is a phenomenon which takes place whenever the crime situation in Chicago reaches a point where it becomes very distasteful to the heads of the administration to assume responsibility for it.

It is significant to compare this police order of 1910 with the new commissioner system of police administration inaugurated in 1927 by Chief of Police Michael Hughes. Under this system—

". . . . deputy commissioners will serve as intermediary officers between Hughes and his captains, each having supervision over a district. Instead of transmitting orders directly to the captains, the orders will go through the deputy commissioners, acting as staff officers.

"The effect of this new system is to shift responsibility for crime from the chief of police to his deputy commissioners, and will probably result in the same state of affairs that existed after the police order of 1910."<sup>1</sup>

Stimulated by publicity which had been occasioned by three civil suits brought by losers in various Tennes' gambling houses in 1910, the police made several raids, but in these raids they would overlook an entire floor of a building and leave expensive paraphernalia untouched while tearing up some playing cards. In the following months printed cards announcing faro games within the "Loop" were being freely distributed on the streets, the solicitors assuring the customers that these were Tennes' places. Investigators found these places crowded with men. Dice and faro games were

<sup>1</sup> *Tribune*, December 23, 1927.

## Tennes as a Vice Chief

going on. The police reorganization seemed to loosen the restraint upon Tennes.

8. *The National Wires.* Of greater interest than futile raids was the struggle between the Payne Service and the Tennes service for national control of racing news service. The Payne Service protested that Tennes was trying to get a monopoly:

"If he succeeds," it was said, "he will charge every handbook and poolroom of the country an exorbitant price for information from the tracks of America and Mexico. Every-day places which get information through our offices are visited by police 'tipped off' by agents of Tennes. We are fighting Tennes fairly but he insists on having the whole thing and seems to want a renewal of the gambling war."<sup>1</sup>

In 1911, the struggle between the Payne News Service in Cincinnati and the Tennes General News Bureau had attracted such nation-wide attention that a national investigation was conducted to determine the legality of the service. Although the Interstate Commerce Commission finally decided the transmission of race results was legal, many interesting facts concerning betting in Chicago were brought to light.

Harry Brolaski, a former gambler who had turned investigator, submitted to Congressman Mann, who was then chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission, a list of fourteen persons said to be associated with Mont Tennes and operating the handbook establishments. Mr. Brolaski's list of persons who operated the Tennes gambling headquarters follows:

Mont Tennes, who controlled the wire service at Chicago for race gambling news;  
Horace Argo, interested with Tennes;  
Tennes and Wagner, pool-room at 260 State Street;  
Tennes and Wagner, pool-room at 170 Madison Street;  
Dave McGowan, pool-room at 464 State Street;  
Clifford's Hotel, handbook, Englewood Avenue and Halsted Street;  
Bud White, pool-room at 116 Monroe Street;  
Swan's Hotel, handbook, Sixty-third and Cottage Grove Avenue;  
Tooney and Singleton, handbook, Twenty-eighth and Wabash Avenue;  
George Snyder, handbook, 5900 State Street;  
Sam Tuckhorn, handbook, 23 Quincy Street;  
Julius Canfield, handbook, Adams Express Building;  
McGinty and O'Brien, handbook, 84 Adams Street;  
Pat O'Malley, handbook, State Street, opposite Masonic Temple;

---

<sup>1</sup> The *Herald and Examiner* for February 9, 1910, contained the following description of the operations of Tennes' race news service:

"The service is to supply handbooks and poolrooms throughout the country with racing information, such as entries, odds, jockeys, scratches and results. He now controls the service from the Juarez, Mexico, and Jacksonville, Florida, tracks, while the Payne News Service, affiliated with Martin and Company of Denver, Colorado, has a monopoly on the racing information from the Oakland track. Tennes and his partner, Horace Argo, who was indicted about two years ago with other gamblers, are said to be affiliated with Timothy, James, and Joseph Murphy of St. Louis, Missouri.

"The Murphy brothers are said to be backed by Tennes, who is said to have a corps of 'secret service' men who follow employees of the Payne News Service about Chicago to learn where they are operating, then notify the police.

"John Hasket, employed by the Payne News Service, is fighting Tennes, who is said to have more than fifty agents in Chicago."

## Illinois Crime Survey

Finnegan Brothers, saloon, handbook, Halsted and Sixty-first Street;  
Barney Coffey, handbook, Halsted and Sixty-third Streets;  
Elite Buffet, handbook, 3030 State Street;  
Wagner and Company, handbook, 2318 Indiana Avenue;  
Pat O'Malley, pool-room, Clark and Polk Streets;  
Ike Bloom, handbook, 30 East Twenty-second Street;  
Grogan's pool-room, 118½ Eighteenth Street;  
Riley and Rohn, handbook, 154 Dearborn Street;  
Barbershop, handbook, 636 North Clark Street.

Chairman Mann doubted the veracity of Brolaski's information because Chief of Police Steward had characterized Brolaski as a "four-flusher." The accusation proved later to be false. Three days later the captain of police raided Tennes' saloon on Clark and Ontario Streets and again arrested an underling as keeper.

In April, 1911, Carter H. Harrison, Jr., Democrat, was elected to succeed Fred A. Busse, Republican, as mayor. Under the spoils system, John McWeeney became chief of police.

### 9. *Rebellion and Submission of Tennes' Lieutenants.*

After the election of Harrison in 1911, there was a general understanding among the sporting element that the police were not going to interfere with handbooks or poker games.

Gamblers from other parts of the country came to Chicago for easy money. Mont Tennes was in control of the wire service. At Seventy-first Street and Cottage Grove Avenue the central clearing-house was in operation; many pool-rooms were being turned into full-fledged gambling houses with dice, cards and roulette. A new syndicate was scouting for possible and probable locations. Among its promoters were Tom McGinnis, Ed Wagner, Doc Rafael, John Gazonna and Sig Cohen. The gamblers promised to open several houses where the patron could name his own game and his own limit. In the "Loop" there was a game in practically every block. Games had been started in some "Loop" hotels, with solicitors ("cappers," "ropers" and "touts").

Superintendent of Police McWeeney had placed the gambling responsibility upon inspector Nicholas Hunt, head of the Detective Bureau.<sup>1</sup>

Mont Tennes put out his scale of protection prices. Here are the prices for which gamblers could get the service of the syndicate headed by Tennes:

Pool-rooms—40-50 per cent of the win.  
Roulette—40 per cent of the win.  
Faro—50 per cent of the win.  
Craps—60 per cent of the win.

Twenty-five gambling houses were running wide open in the "Loop" seven days a week, in June, 1911. By August these had increased one hundred per cent.

### 10. *The National Trust.*

The dispute growing out of the competition between the Payne News Agency and the Tennes syndicate (General News Bureau) stirred up an investigation by the attorney-generals of three states, who were learning about the ramifications

<sup>1</sup> *Herald and Examiner*, June 19, 1911.

## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

of the gambling syndicates of which Mont Tennes of Chicago was the leading genius. Details of a combine which had its grip on the police of twenty American cities, enforced its dictations with dynamite and reaped a harvest of over a half million dollars annually were coming to light. Eighteen telephone and telegraph companies were involved.

Mont Tennes had risen from king of the Chicago Gamblers to czar of all the race track gambling in the United States and Canada. He then had ninety pool-rooms in Chicago, paying \$3,600 weekly. In New York he furnished service and received payment from seventy pool-rooms, averaging a total of \$4,000 a week. The following cities were reported to have Tennes' service at the approximate amounts paid for the service each month:

Detroit .....	\$ 400	Muncie .....	\$ 193
Louisville .....	750	San Francisco .....	1,800
West Baden .....	400	St. Louis .....	1,000
Salt Lake .....	125	New Orleans .....	100
Baltimore .....	125	New York .....	3,000
San Antonio .....	62	Albany .....	1,000
Toledo .....	100	Cincinnati .....	415
Buffalo .....	963	Pittsburgh .....	700
Terre Haute .....	25	Oklahoma City .....	105
Norfolk .....	80	Indianapolis .....	400 <sup>1</sup>
Cleveland .....	300		

<sup>1</sup> *Chicago Examiner*, August 9, 1911.

Tennes had by this time developed an organization which operated avowedly only as a racing news distributing service and less openly as a handbook syndicate. At this time Tennes was assisted in his work of managing his organization by Horace Argo, Henry C. Eckebrecht, Timothy Murphy, who had become his partner, and William Kennedy who for ten years intermittently had been an organizer for Tennes and placed his handbooks.

### *11. The Civil Suits of Gambler vs. Gambler.*

On August 27, 1911, Timothy Murphy brought suit against Mont Tennes for an accounting and a dissolution of the General News Bureau. He charged that he was a partner with Tennes in the Bureau and that Tennes wrongfully withheld about thirty-five thousand dollars. In brief, Murphy charged:

"That there were three hundred gambling rooms, from pool-rooms to faro and roulette layouts, operating in Chicago; that the income amounted to more than half a million a day; that Mont Tennes was the operator of gambling news service with Chicago as its center and radiating all over the United States; that Tennes secured power through a system of persecution; that the Payne race-track system and others were put out of business by dynamite bombs and the torch; race-tracks and even private residences being fired or dynamited in the war of extermination; and that pool-rooms in Chicago which failed to subscribe to the service were closed down by the police."<sup>1</sup>

"That pool-rooms which subscribed to another service were raided

<sup>1</sup> Note how this method works through the years. For example, on July 16, 1927, about sixteen years after this charge made by Murphy, the Empire News Company asked a federal injunction to restrain the police from illegally raiding and wrecking its offices. The concern charged that the raids were inspired by Mont Tennes.

## Illinois Crime Survey

by the police; that Tennes had told him that he had spent twenty thousand dollars in the past mayoralty election; and that Tennes' men stole news from the race-tracks in Canada in violation of the Miller Bill, and sent news into the United States."<sup>1</sup>

Murphy submitted the financial accounts of the News Bureau as furnished him by Tennes, showing that all collections in Chicago were paid to a man named Caldwell. Caldwell, according to Murphy, was the name Tennes used to cover up his system of levying tribute on the gamblers. According to Murphy:—

"Tennes has two clearing-houses for his handbooks and pool-rooms in Chicago. One is in Room 21, 21 North La Salle Street. Here, every morning, the book-makers report to get the day's entries and settle the previous day's business.

"When the police are going to raid any of Tennes' branches, a telephone message comes to these headquarters. Immediately the operators send out word to the pool-room men all over the city to get under cover.

"By the time the police arrive, either the place is empty or, if it is so arranged, one or two men may be there to be taken in. Under these conditions George Murray, the former constable, is sent to bail them out. That is his regular business and the purpose of his employment.

"In the afternoon, Room 411, Imperial Building, becomes the clearing-house where John Morelock and H. L. Argo send race news to the pool-rooms and handbooks and where all bets are received and registered. There are ten telephones, both Bell and Automatic, used to send out this news, and leased wires which connect with cities in other parts of the country."<sup>2</sup>

The statement just given sufficiently indicates the coercive and predatory methods by which Tennes had gained his ascendancy in the news distributing business.

On August 29, 1911, Harry Brolaski filed suit against Tennes in the Circuit Court for twenty-five thousand dollars, and Timothy Murphy, Tennes' partner, filed a second suit on August 30 (in addition to the dissolution suit) for damages based on statements by Tennes concerning Murphy. It was expected that scores of gamblers, forced into court as witnesses in the suits of Murphy vs. Tennes and the damage suit by Harry Brolaski, would complete the exposure of Chicago's gambling syndicate.

"When these suits are tried," said Murphy, "I will force Tennes to show his own connection with the following evils: organized gambling, the pool-room and handbook monopoly, wholesale police bribery, systematic dynamiting of rivals' property, double-crossing his associates in the gambling business."

One of the witnesses gave an interview to the *Chicago American*:

"Tennes is only a small part of a big system," said the witness. "Tennes is reputed to be the head of a big pool-room and handbook trust. A trust like that is only one section of a larger monopoly which

---

<sup>1</sup> Facts which the United States Government had tried to secure in the investigation previously mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> *Tribune*, August 27, 1911.



## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

controls all kinds of organized evil in Chicago, looks after the police protection and keeps its members from being convicted if they happen to be arrested. In fact, there are two or three separate book-making trusts in Chicago and each one has equal rights under the 'system.' This 'system' also takes in vice resorts and certain varieties of thieving."

Chief of Police McWeeney then issued a statement in which he declared that police protected gambling did not exist in Chicago. To this statement Harry Brolaski replied: "I've got evidence to go before the grand jury and secure the indictment of police officials for collecting eighty-five dollars weekly graft from three protected gambling houses."

Pool-rooms at this moment were operating wide open in spite of the publicity given them by the litigation.

One of the few statements regarding gambling made by Tennes himself appeared at this time in the Chicago *Herald and Examiner*. He made it in justification of his own position and in answer to previous adverse publicity which he credited to his former partners with whom he was in litigation. He said:

"Tim Murphy, who was eliminated from my race news service because his methods were dishonest, is the man behind the charges published in the *Examiner* today. He can't hide his identity and he can't hurt my race news service by any attack he makes on me.

"Tim Murphy came to me a year ago last December and told me he had connections all over the country that would make possible the use of the Payne Service out of Cincinnati. Payne had been furnishing the race track news in 1907, when the famous blunder on the race won by the horse Grenesque at Fort Erie was put over, costing pool-room men a fortune through a mistake in the announced closing odds. I was anxious to get away from the Payne Service and believed there was a profitable field for me to start an opposition bureau.

"So I took Murphy at his word and put in five thousand dollars for a half interest. By the time the money was spent I discovered Murphy had very little to offer. We reached a new agreement whereby I was to further back the business with additional funds and he would relinquish his interest in the enterprise and go on a salary if he failed to make good in a specified time.

"I put him in charge of our business outside of Chicago. You need go no further than his handling of the New York service to judge the situation. He reported to me that he had let that end of the business to a man named Chapman for a price of nine hundred dollars a week. Later his own brother, James Murphy, who was connected with our service in New York, voluntarily told me that Tim Murphy actually was 'Chapman' and that he was 'taking down,' really stealing, the difference between the nine hundred dollars paid in and what he was collecting.

"In the West he held out seven hundred dollars. This, with the twelve hundred dollars that I had actually established he had held out on me on the New York proceeds, I deducted in our final settlement from what was coming to him. Much more of the same thing came to my attention and a year ago I told him that in the future he would hold a ten per cent interest in the business, draw a ten dollar a day salary, and if profits showed in the business he could have the five thousand dollars he claimed to have sunk originally in the business, but that he could no longer be the manager.

## Illinois Crime Survey

"This proposition he rejected. He undertook an opposition business and fell down in three days. Then, at a conference in Saratoga, after he had tried to shoot his brother, James Murphy, he agreed to my terms.

"It was after this he began circulating stories that I was responsible for the gambling bomb outrages in Chicago and elsewhere and various race-track fires. The whole gambling world knows that every bomb and every fire has had some disgruntled outsider back of it, anxious to get on a pay roll somewhere. Maybe Murphy knows more about it than I do. I never had knowledge of such a crime in my life.

"For the last three months he has been trying to undermine my service. He figured on getting the service on the Butte races, but I got it too and he found himself with no one to serve and with a costly service on his hands. Since then he has been romping around the country interviewing governors and attorney-generals of various states, trying futilely to begin proceedings against me.

"He started business within the last two weeks and fell down. The latter part of last month he sent out a statement to the pool-rooms in Chicago and throughout the country. This is what he said: 'Guess you heard the bulletin Tennes sent out about my not getting Butte, which was a big lie, as I had the privilege and only pay two hundred dollars and fifty dollars a day expense for reporter and messages. I am going to give some wrong winners if he steals my service. So beware, as I would not like to see you get hurt.'

"I didn't have to steal his service and Murphy was the only one hurt by this attack. It is just one of a dozen yelps he has let out."<sup>1</sup>

Contrary to the explanation of Murphy, Tennes ascribes the bomb outrages to a gang of blackmailers or to disgruntled excluded gamblers.

### 12. *The Civil Service Investigation.*

By the time the three suits were brought against Mont Tennes by Murphy and Brolaski, the Civil Service Commission made an important investigation into bribery charges against certain police officials. It is remarkable that the name of Tennes is rarely mentioned in this inquiry, which ended in the discharge of several police officials, yielded some valuable information, but hampered gambling operations very little. This investigation, begun in September, 1911, was aimed at Chief McWeeny and at least five police inspectors, and was based on charges of political graft arising from gambling on Labor Day at Comiskey Park where the Gotch-Hackenschmidt wrestling match was held.

Evidence brought before the Commission involved members of the department in all sorts of graft, ranging from "shaking down" lawless saloon-keepers to levying tribute upon owners and keepers of resorts and gambling houses.

Information given to the Commission disclosed a vice trust of three big politicians and three lesser ones. Three well defined districts were alleged to exist, each in charge of one of the three overlords:

First: Hinky Dink Kenna, Alderman of the First Ward and ruler of every resort from Madison Street south to Sixty-third Street;

Second: James A. Quinn (Hot Stove Jimmy), reputed to be the dispenser-in-chief of all privileges from the river to Wilson Avenue;

<sup>1</sup> *Examiner*, August 30, 1911.

## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

Third: B. J. Grogan (Barney), known everywhere in the underworld as the distributor of concessions on the west side.

The three lesser men were: Thomas Carey, Stockyards district; Frank W. Solon, Second Ward; Emanuel Abrahams, west side saloonkeeper, ruler of the Nineteenth Ward gambling.

A slush fund was raised among the gambling and vice chiefs of Chicago to forestall the civil service investigation and to buy off the prosecutors, according to William Wheelock, one of the prosecutors.

Various means of stopping the prosecution of the first policemen to be tried were employed. Bombs were thrown, witnesses were offered bribes, and the characters of witnesses were defamed. An attempt was made to embarrass the Commission by preventing the passage of a ten thousand dollar appropriation ordinance for the investigation. More bombs were exploded and then Prosecutor Wheelock of the Civil Service Commission received a warning on September 23.

Next came Chief McWeeney's move. He issued new gambling orders, but queerly enough, these were against slot machines in which "children wager pennies for candy," and a second order forbidding gambling with dice for drinks and cigars. These orders are of the same sort as the action taken by Commissioner Michael Hughes<sup>1</sup> in 1927, after the bombing of the Fitzmorris and Reid homes.<sup>2</sup>

A sophisticated critic made the following remark immediately after these two orders were issued:

"If the chief is endeavoring by his order to 'get back' at the bomb-throwers, he has made a mistake. It is not the saloon and cigar store keepers who have been throwing bombs in this town. It is the handbook operators and regular gamblers who, in spite of the chief's order, were just as busy yesterday as they were at the time roulette was being played at the White Sox Ball Park."

Harry Brolaski, plaintiff against Tennes in one of the suits, received a bomb warning with the demand that he leave Chicago lest he be killed. There were some raids on minor pool-rooms, but the ring-controlled handbooks ran without interference. Mr. Wheelock, the prosecutor in the civil service hearing, ventured the supposition that "police grafters get too much tribute from the ring to order a complete cessation of gambling." An old-time gambler philosophizes thus: "You can't scare these old-timers with a police investigation. They've never seen one yet which was on the square, and it will be the surprise of their lives if this one proves to be."

McClelland, the first policeman tried, was adjudged guilty by the commission and was ordered discharged. His superior, Lieutenant William Walsh, was the next to be tried. Numerous policemen came to the aid of Walsh with testimony that no gambling had been going on at the ball park though the Commission had evidence that four games were in active operation only 150 feet from some forty or fifty bluecoats at the ticket window.

---

<sup>1</sup> Hughes resigned in 1928, apparently forced out by insistent demands for his removal by the public.

<sup>2</sup> See Section 21.

## Illinois Crime Survey

Only the central station detectives said they had seen any gambling. As a result of their testimony, thirty *blind* policemen were also tried.

Most impressive in this civil service trial were the contradictions between Chief of Police McWeeney and Assistant Chief Schuettler. The chief testified before the commission on August 16, 1911: "There is no gambling in Chicago and the police do not 'tip off' raids." A day later Schuettler on the stand declared there was gambling in Chicago and raids were "tipped off." He believed that if the police department exerted an honest effort it could put the gamblers out of business.

Ben R. Hyman, member of the White-Smith-Perry syndicate, testified before the commission: First, that all raids made by the police are done under instructions from the protected ring for the purpose of driving competitors out of business; second, that the raids on places "in on" the combination were merely pretended; third, that some of Schuettler's raids were made on dummy switchboards set up for the purpose of helping the police make a search, while the actual switchboards were unmolested.

Then Harry Brolaski, a man of many roles, gambler, confidence man and reformer, appeared before the Civil Service Commission. He involved the highest officials of the police department, and prominent politicians were smeared with suspicion in his testimony. Brolaski charged that he had entered into a conspiracy with Chief McWeeney, Inspector Nicholas Hunt, Ben Hyman and Tom Costello to prey upon gamblers and other underworld *entrepreneurs*. The conspiracy was hatched prior to Chief McWeeney's appointment as chief. Hyman was to coach McWeeney and Tom Costello was to do the same for Hunt, who was brought downtown and placed in charge of the first division, which controlled the "Loop." Brolaski himself was to go out on the lecture platform as a reformer. He proceeded to read the lists of opposition gambling houses and resorts before church societies and to give them as wide publicity as possible. The conspirators rented an office in the Fort Dearborn Building and compiled a complete card index of the underworld. The City of Chicago, he claimed, paid the office rent and the expenses of the investigation. The following politicians, police officials, and levee characters were mentioned in Brolaski's recital: Alderman Hinky Dink Kenna; Alderman Bathhouse John Coughlin; Tom Carey, south side politician and gambler; Chief McWeeney; Inspector John Revere; Inspector Hunt; Lieutenant Ben Reed; Ben Hyman; Tom Costello; Mont Tennes; Mike de Pike Heitler; Tom McGinnis, lieutenant of Kenna, and Assistant Chief Schuettler.

He testified that a scale of prices was standardized by this outfit with monthly assessments as follows: saloons open all night, \$50; all night saloons with music, \$75; crap games, \$50; poker, \$25; resorts selling liquor, \$100.

The big gamblers, including Tennes, came through the civil service investigation unscathed. A few small-fry policemen were made "the goat" for the higher police officials—a public sacrifice to righteous indignation.

Meanwhile, more bombing had been going on. Two bombs were aimed at Kennedy's home. Kennedy was both organizer for Mont Tennes and secretary to John Broderick and the legislators under fire in the Lorimer election scandal. He had also conducted a gambling house at 729 West

## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

Randolph Street for Mont Tennes, and later had quarreled with Tennes about a fifty dollar race bet. A week later Kennedy went to State's Attorney Wayman to give information concerning gambling, whereupon two of Tennes' lieutenants visited Kennedy. "The boss says if you cough up you will get into trouble." About a week later Kennedy received a telephone call warning him, and the two bombs followed. Kennedy then went to work for Murphy.

In the early part of December Timothy Murphy, John Murphy and Harry Brolaski, the plaintiffs in the three suits brought against Tennes in an interstate fight against him and his General News Bureau, reached an understanding with King Tennes. Tennes is said to have given John Murphy a job at a good salary for "laying down" on further reform movements. Before closing the treaty of peace with his rivals, who were trying to establish a rival news bureau, Timothy Murphy signed and mailed a letter to Governor Marshall of Indiana and other governors and prosecuting officers of the states where he had lodged gambling complaints against Tennes. The statement ran: "I made the charges against Tennes through a spirit of revenge and for the purpose of building up a business of my own." The letters were said to bear the date of Saturday, December 16, 1911, when the final terms of the agreement with Tennes were made by the Murphy brothers. According to an interview given out by Governor Marshall, Murphy followed up his letter with a telegram: "Have discovered principal charges false." The governor announced that the cases against the Telephone Company supplying service to the General News Bureau would be dropped because the company had voluntarily cancelled its contract for this service.

### *13. The Quiet Years— 1912 to 1916.*

On January 31, 1912, the police department undertook a three months' investigation of itself.

A plot was unearthed in which Mont Tennes and the gambling trust had tried to bribe Assistant Chief Schuettler and his gambling squad. Charles Barrett, then assistant state's attorney, was prepared to go before the grand jury and seek indictments against four men, all prominent gamblers and associates of Mont Tennes. In fact, it was asserted that a systematic plan had been followed by these men within the last six months to subsidize every member of the squad, twenty in number, and tie their hands in such a way as to make war on the gambling powers of Chicago an impossible task.

Warrants, charging two alleged lieutenants of Mont Tennes with attempted bribery of Jeremiah Laughlin of the gambling squad, were issued by Judge Walker. The amounts of the bribe offers were picayune, five dollars in return for police immunity. The names were fictitious, but soon thereafter Ephraim Harding and George Murray, bondsmen of the Tennes' syndicate, were arrested, charged with bribing Detective Laughlin. The latter reported the affair to Assistant Chief Schuettler and to W. W. Wheelock, Prosecutor for the Civil Service Commission. On April 19, 1912, evidence was presented to the grand jury in the bribery case of George Murray and Ephraim Harding for an attempt to bribe Detective Jeremiah Laughlin.

When the case was called Detective Laughlin, Major James Miles of the Civil Service Commission, and Howard Williams, an investigator, were

## *Illinois Crime Survey*

summoned, but their evidence was not prepared so the case was postponed and later died.

Tennes continued to prosper and the newspapers carried accounts of some large real estate ventures he had launched on the far north side.

In June, detectives raided one of Tennes' clearing-houses, arresting four men taking bets over the telephone and booking one of them as keeper. In July it appeared that Tennes had reorganized his handbook centers so that a raid would only yield a small number of men and not expose the main establishment. There were other small raids of this kind. In September Tennes, again in complete control of the news service from race tracks, was able to shut down all handbook gambling in Chicago long enough to make the bookmakers come to certain terms in regard to his fees. Meanwhile the sports of Chicago crowded his large poolroom in Lake County, Indiana, near the state line.

The year 1912 ended in peace for the gamblers. Maclay Hoyne, Democrat, was elected to succeed Wayman as state's attorney, and with the mayor and the state's attorney on the same side of the political fence, the friction between the two offices was removed and gamblers were not molested.

In 1913 one of the famous "crime waves" occurred and Chief of Police McWeeney was finally forced to resign on October 24, 1913. On November 3, James Gleason was appointed chief of police. The year 1913 was one of quiet for Tennes and the gambling fraternity.

In February of 1914, detectives from the chief's office wrecked a dozen or more offices of Tennes' agents and men were arrested for taking bets. There were five other raids later, each of them netting a number of men and gambling paraphernalia, as well as money placed as bets. Ephraim Harding always appeared as bondsman and no one seems to have suffered from these raids except the telephone company, whose telephones were always torn out.

On October 13, 1914, Edward W. Altz, investigator for the City Council's Crime Commission, revealed that gambling flourished in Chicago. He further stated that one man controlled seventy-one handbooks and was known as "king of handbook operators." It could have been no other than Mont Tennes. Others who tried to enter the business as "bookies" could not survive. Altz stated that a police sergeant was "tipping off" raids from the central office. As a result of this testimony all the handbook gambling in Chicago was shut down by a telephone order to "lock up."

Altz made public a list of thirty out of some three hundred places where he said bets could be placed. His assistant had not succeeded in discovering the main clearing-house but had listened in on a tapped wire running to the Madison Street branch. This subsidiary clearing-house was in charge of a deputy bailiff of the Municipal Court at Harrison Street police station. Mr. Altz then described a numeral code used in transmitting the winners.

Altz testified that Mont Tennes controlled the handbook business in Chicago. "Some of the gambling is on the square and some of it is not. One of the difficulties of the business is that the telephone operators employed tip off races to outsiders before the information reaches the

## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

central clearing-house. In this way more than one handbook has been ruined (wire tap). The profits are generally known among the gambling fraternity to run into millions. It is said more than one million dollars are paid for wire service in a year."

"Have you discovered any evidence that the police are connected with handbook operations?" asked Alderman C. E. Merriam, Chairman of the Crime Commission.

"I have received information," said Altz, "but have not verified it, that the police receive fifty dollars a week for each handbook operated and that in return officers at police headquarters 'tip off' contemplated raids and other valuable information."

Following is a list of places at which bets could be placed, according to Altz:

Blackstone Cafe, Lake Avenue and East Fifty-fifth Street;  
John Broderick's saloon, 732 West Madison Street;  
Joe Burke's saloon, 78 West Harrison Street;  
Kerwin's saloon (Drexel Cafe), Thirty-ninth and Cottage Grove Avenue;  
Room 509 Nicoll Building, South Clark and West Adams Street;  
Saloon on south side of Fifty-eighth Street, just west of the elevated tracks;  
Flanagan's saloon, East Twenty-second Street and South Wabash Avenue;  
Dennis Foley's saloon, Thirty-first and State streets;  
Fountain Inn, West Madison and Dearborn streets;  
2032 West Madison Street—Charles Fry and Ed Ford operate handbook and clearing-house;  
Frill Brothers, 552 South Fifth Avenue;  
W. & W. Cigar Store, 50 East Twenty-second Street, handbook operated in rear room;  
George Graham's saloon, 5514 South State Street;  
Thomas McKoon, 4009 West Twelfth Street;  
Moffett's Barber shop, 636 North Clark Street;  
Monroe Athletic Club, 76 West Monroe Street;  
Newman's Cigar Store, 28 East Twenty-second Street;  
Oakwood Hotel, Seventy-first Street and Cottage Grove Avenue;  
Perfecto Bar, West Washington Street and North Fifth Avenue.

Despite Tennes' repeated claim that he was only a newspaper man distributing sporting news, Altz named him as the "brains" of a huge handbook syndicate.

In a statement by Hoyne, Schuettler, who was now first deputy superintendent of police, was mentioned in connection with the failure of police to suppress the gambling activities of Mont Tennes. Schuettler's defense was that his gambling squad had been taken away from him and that he had tenaciously raided Tennes' places, "raided his clearing-house and arrested his men." He claimed that if ever a human being persecuted Tennes it was he, and that if Tennes succeeded in escaping, the judges and the state's attorney's office were to be blamed. It may have been true that Schuettler's men repeatedly raided Tennes' places, but in the most important raids evidence seems always to have been insufficient.

Tennes was advised of Schuettler's statement. Entirely unperturbed,

## Illinois Crime Survey

he said: "For the life of me, I cannot see why Schuettler or anyone else could get into a controversy over me. Why, I haven't been in the gambling game for years. I'm not a handbook maker. I'm a newspaper man." This was Tennes' story and he consistently stuck to it.

In an interview that evening, Hoyne said:

"I do not care to make any charges against any police officials that I cannot back up, and I have no quarrel with Mr. Schuettler. He and I have been friends for more than fifteen years."

During the mayoralty campaign, prior to the election of April, 1915, gambling ran wide open and Mont Tennes' business flourished unmolested. William Hale Thompson, Republican, was elected mayor in 1915 and Charles C. Healey was appointed chief of police. Thus, as was the case during the first part of the Harrison administration, the mayor and the state's attorney were on opposite sides of the political fence, except that now the mayor was the Republican and the state's attorney was the Democrat.

Despite this fact, 1915 was a very quiet year, a state of conditions desired by all law violators. Public opinion was not aroused. Tennes, in addition to his metropolitan gambling business, was conducting a large pool-room, together with Charles J. Moertel at Bellewood, Illinois. The place was immune because the "boss was in right."

For a few days Tennes' business was stopped because the secret code had been discovered and published. Anxious betters were turned away because the wires were closed down. The police then admitted they had known for two years that Tennes' information was being transmitted in code. They regretted that the code had been published because the police *might* have used this knowledge to locate the central clearing-house. The telephone company could not give the police the desired information because it was against the federal law. Then Schuettler stated: "One hundred thirty-eight arrests were made for gambling in the "Loop" and the Harrison police district; 129 of these arrests had been fined one dollar and costs." Schuettler suggested that one hundred or two hundred dollars for attaches would be sufficient to make the handbook men quit. The police again predicted that the reign of Tennes as gambling king was coming to a close; that powerful old gamblers were coming back to wage war against him during the winter; the old "swan song" to console the public. Tennes' reign had been reported waning or ended often before when the police had to face the facts of open gambling. A little later, the same four large handbooks were raided in the "Loop" and fifty men arrested. Tennes was reported to be a partner in interest, but was not among those arrested.

15. *The Graft Exposés of 1916, 1917 and 1918.*

In August of 1916, during the campaign period preceding the elections for the state's attorney's office, the Thompson administration was threatened when the civil service commission began to investigate charges that slot machines were being operated unmolested in certain districts.

The slot machines were manufactured by the Mills Manufacturing Company, but the profits, it seemed, were being divided between politicians. The Sportsmen's Club also was uncovered as a medium for accepting graft



## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

for gambling as well as vice. It was charged that the club had been used by City Hall politicians as a weapon to drive into its membership lists all persons doing business with the City Hall, including handbook makers, saloonkeepers, gamblers and owners of vice resorts. It was also charged that only a small portion of the twenty-five thousand dollars collected for life memberships during 1916, at one hundred dollars each, had gone into the club treasury. Charges were made by Hoyne that life memberships were nothing more than "protection money paid to the city administration by the *polite* outlaw." The mayor's name appeared on letterheads of the club and was the bait used in selling these life memberships. The following were a few of the names on the membership list:

### *Handbook Men:*

Mont Tennes;  
Raymond Tennes, Mont Tennes' son;  
James V. Mondt, 738 S. Dearborn Street;  
John J. Lynch, 732 W. Madison Street;  
Tony Brockman, 36 W. Randolph Street;  
John A. Karr (Karr & Kennedy), 837 N. Clark Street;

### *Slot Machine Manufacturers:*

Herbert S. Mills, head of Mills Novelty Company;  
Robert Jackman, Grant Hotel;  
O. D. Jennings, 2901 Indiana Avenue;  
Frank B. Buzzin, former chief investigator in the city attorney's office;

### *Saloonkeepers:*

David Lewisohn, Congress Cafe;  
James Colosimo, 2126 S. Wabash Avenue;  
George Silver, 20 N. Dearborn Street;

### *Miscellaneous:*

Henry Seligman, attorney for the club and also for Tennes' book-makers;  
Chief of Police Healey;  
Captain Morgan Collins.

Much evidence of bribery and corruption was disclosed by the Civil Service Commission and the grand jury which was convened to investigate the charges against the public officials involved, and the Sportsmen's Club itself was soon forgotten. Joseph Smith and William O'Brien, police captains, were suspended for failure to suppress vice and gambling in their districts. Mont Tennes figured in the testimony of an investigator for the Law and Order League, as the owner of places where he could easily place bets. The Civil Service Commission's action in suspending the police was generally considered a scheme for drawing attention away from Hoyne's investigation of the political graft ring, but he proceeded with vigor to expose rotten conditions existing and permitted to exist. Hoyne was not after the small fry in the police department. On October 13, 1916, he secured warrants for the arrest of Chief of Police Charles C. Healey, whom he charged with malfeasance of office.

Maclay Hoyne was reelected as state's attorney in 1916 despite the fact

## Illinois Crime Survey

that only a year before a Republican mayor had been elected. He pressed his charges after the election. On January 16, 1917, indictments were voted against eight men, the chief of police, captain of police and two sergeants of the Lake Street station, chiefs in vice, gambling and crime, politicians and crooked bondsmen:

Charles C. Healey, chief of police;  
Tom Costello, alleged graft collector for Healey;  
Mike de Pike Heitler, confederate of Costello;  
Billy Skidmore, third member of graft ring, saloonkeeper and gambler;  
Tom Newbold, proprietor of the Normandie Hotel and one of the men who admitted paying graft;  
John Walsh, patrol sergeant at West Lake Street Police Station;  
Willie Weinstein, former partner of Newbold;  
Steve Barry, detective sergeant at West Lake Street Police Station.

The indictments accused the men of bribery and graft. At the trial evidence was introduced to indicate that a gigantic graft ring, composed of high public officials, existed. The "big three" of the graft ring were said to be Chief of Police Charles C. Healey, Captain Tom Costello, and William Skidmore. Tennes' name at no time during the grand jury or during the civil service investigation appeared among gamblers in the bribery ring. As a result of his indictments, Chief of Police Healey was suspended from his office and later retired. He was not convicted. Herman F. Schuettler was appointed by Mayor Thompson to succeed him.

16. *The Landis Inquiry of 1916.* The Chicago Law and Order League, on July 21, 1916, furnished the information that gambling was virtually licensed at the Hawthorne Race Tracks and that Mone Tennes, concessionaire-in-chief, had obtained his rights by payment of ten thousand dollars to the Jockey Club. Captain Collins of the Central Station raided supposed headquarters and found little evidence. Sheriff Traeger took personal charge of his deputies at the track and found and published the names of the agents who were operating for Tennes. On July 21, 1916, the sheriff's deputies found no "bookies," but newspaper reporters had no trouble finding them. The Illinois Jockey Club denied that Mont Tennes or any other "bookies" had any agreement with them and called the charge a lie. The Club said that it had hired sixty Pinkerton detectives to help suppress gambling and was most willing to accept any further suggestions to get results.

A month later the Chicago *Daily News*, August 30, 1916, published an exposé of handbooks operated without police interference and asked two questions: "Does Tennes control the police department?" and "Who is being paid, and how much?" Mont Tennes again appeared as king of the book-makers, and the *Daily News* asserted that he was personally interested in twenty handbooks, eight of which were in the "Loop." Some of the firm names under which Tennes' handbooks operated were given:

Murphy, Skinner and Tennes;  
Collins and Tennes;  
Wagner, Devine and Tennes;  
Sam Cohn and Tennes;

## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

Grace and Tennes;  
Cleary and Tennes;  
Sullivan and Tennes.

The occasional handbook raids, it was asserted, took place only where someone had been trying to run a book without subscribing to Tennes' race track service. A "high police official" was quoted as follows:

"It is just as necessary for a handbook or a gambling house to pay for protection as it is for a saloon or restaurant to pay for a city license. Any 'joint' which is not paying for protection is promptly raided and closed. If a place is running, everybody is satisfied that it is paying."

The payment of protection, it was stated, was made either in political service or in cash.

Of all previous exposés, investigations and prosecutions by all the state and local agencies, public and private, none had ever succeeded in bringing into court Mont Tennes and his immediate associates or revealing the complete internal organization and operations of the ring as did Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis of the United States District Court. F. W. Sells and Fred Stall, partners in a saloon at Twenty-third Street and Indiana Avenue, had been called for examination in connection with the bonds of some alleged blackmailers. They finally admitted that they received bets on horses and that they got the results of the races by calling Main 1858 and speaking to Ephraim Harding or Charles Felteys. During the next few days evidence was unearthed by Judge Landis that professional gamblers, well organized and strongly financed, were operating in Chicago with apparent immunity. The following names were disclosed: General News Bureau; Mont Tennes; John Morelock, manager of the News Bureau; Ephraim Harding, a Tennes' lieutenant; Henry C. Eckebrecht, Tennes' business secretary; Horace Argo, who figured in the contempt suit previously given; William Tennes, Mont's brother.

This investigation began at the head; the principals were subpoenaed to appear before Judge Landis. On October 2, 1916, Tennes, himself, appeared without subpoena, and was surrendered by his special counsel, Clarence Darrow, on whose advice he refused to answer incriminating questions. But the other witnesses, battered and driven out of their cover of bad memory and ignorance, divulged startling information. From the lips of Tennes' "inside" bookkeeper came the admission that Tennes owned twelve or fifteen handbooks in various parts of Chicago; that they and dozens of others were supplied with information from a secret central bureau in the Germania Hotel on Wabash Avenue, managed by William Tennes; that their receipts were collected daily by Ephraim Harding and turned in to Tennes' office; that this money was banked in the name of the bookkeeper, and all transactions were in currency; that a ten thousand dollar sinking fund was kept in a leading bank as a "bank roll" behind these handbooks. The General News Bureau, the racing information agency of which Tennes owned sixty-five per cent, made from twenty thousand to twenty-five thousand dollars a month profit and kept no books or written memoranda of any kind, as determined from several witnesses' reluctant admissions. A twenty-five thousand dollar defense fund had been raised for George Irwin,

## *Illinois Crime Survey*

the fugitive alleged blackmailer, before he decamped, and men associated with gambling enterprises contributed most of this "pot," as stated by A. C. Jones, one of Irwin's bondsmen, himself a former race horse owner.

From many directions streams of information came flowing in to Judge Landis. The Citizens' Association sent the court a list of more than forty handbooks, operating more or less openly throughout the city. The list was extended by "tips" from disgruntled and excluded gamesters from sorrowing wives and mothers of losers. It was evident that the "books" nearly always won.

Thousands were deposited weekly to Tennes' swelling balances in several banks under several names. Along with race betting it appeared there were several side lines—baseball, poolrooms and craps. Judge Landis pledged himself to "go through" for the purpose of driving the malodorous "straw bond" business out of the federal courts. The courtroom was crowded with familiar figures of every phase of the city's sporting and crime life. Surveying this crowd, Judge Landis observed: "I wonder what manner of people those are who can spend a whole day here listening to a case." He became curious as to the character of patrons of handbooks. He was informed that lawyers, doctors, writers, waiters, chauffeurs, and business men were among the customers. The judge added:

"And sometimes a person from the underworld?"

"Yes," said the witness, "some might drop in."

"Pimps and thieves and thugs?" queried the judge.

"Possibly so," replied the gambler.

Ephraim Harding, who was a willing witness the first day, became suddenly deaf and dumb, much to the displeasure of the court.

Then Harding and the Tennes' bookkeeper, Henry C. Eckebrecht, sentence by sentence, were led through the Citizens' Association list, all the other lists and single "tips," and one by one they admitted that most of the places listed were either run by Tennes or run in close association with Tennes' string.

Tennes alone was obdurate. Though the court spoke in friendly terms, Tennes insisted upon his constitutional right not to incriminate himself. He testified that his real estate business was on the square; that his News Bureau was law-abiding; that he had been in California and had just returned; and that Eckebrecht, his bookkeeper, took care of his real estate business.

Then the proceedings took the form of an inquisitorial arraignment of Tennes with regard to his gambling business. The judge wanted to know if Eckebrecht handled funds for Tennes which did not originate in the real estate business. He asked him about the fund in the First National Bank; he asked him if the money came from handbooks. Tennes repeated a single answer, "I refuse to answer. It might incriminate me." The judge ordered Tennes to the seclusion of the jury room, indicating that he expected to call him again.

Henry C. Eckebrecht, bookkeeper in Mont Tennes' office and a relative, was the only witness to talk frankly. He alone admitted that Mont Tennes

## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

was engaged in the gambling business. He first testified as to Tennes' real estate business, with an office under the name of Tennes and Tennes, at 604 Straus Building, and that he had seen him the same morning prior to taking the stand. He then revealed that he took in the money for handbooks. The number of directly owned handbooks (fifteen) which sent in money from bets were located "all over town." Eph. Harding collected from the individual handbooks and brought the money to Eckebrecht. The witness then identified Eph. Harding in the court room and admitted that Mont Tennes was his boss. Eckebrecht received the money daily from Mont Tennes and deposited it in his own name at the First National Bank. This account was seven or eight years old. It was not his money but Tennes'. The real estate money was kept in the name of the North Shore Real Estate Company. The court then established, through the witness, that Eph. Harding collected the bets from the "bookies" and brought the money in to Eckebrecht and that the latter drew money from the bank to pay the losses of the "bookies" through Eph. Harding. The orders were telephoned out by William Tennes and A. M. Walsmith from the Germania Hotel at Wabash Avenue and Thirty-third Street. William Tennes, a brother of Mont Tennes, got the information and gave it to Walsmith, who telephoned out. He did this each day for the "bookies." Eckebrecht finally admitted that it was the General News Bureau which gave William the "flash" before the races and flashed the winners after the races. Then Eph. Harding drew the currency from Eckebrecht and went around to the "bookies" and paid them.

William Tennes then testified, corroborating Eckebrecht in that he got the information from the General News Bureau. This was transmitted to him by an automatic telephone.

Horace E. Argo, partner of Mont Tennes in the General News Bureau, was located and testified: that the General News Bureau was located in the Manhattan Building; that he owned twenty per cent; Mont Tennes, sixty-five per cent; and John Morelock, the manager, owned the other fifteen per cent; that the business of the bureau was sending baseball and track news, including names of jockeys, scratches and probable odds in advance of races, and results. He said that the profits were from fifteen to twenty thousand dollars a month. He claimed that no accounts were kept. Morelock was difficult to handle, as were his employees who adopted the same tactics, saying that they did not know to whom they were telephoning or why.

William Tennes, Eph. Harding and Morelock were at first very evasive and reticent about the list of subscribers and handbooks. It was difficult to establish through Eph. Harding his connections with William Tennes.

B. E. Sunny, president of the Chicago Telephone Company, on the stand gave out some of the list of subscribers, and Mr. Tracy, of the same Company, explained that the automatic service was preferred by gamblers because it afforded greater secrecy.

Clerks testified that the bets handled by the syndicate in Chicago averaged from six to seven thousand dollars a day, with resulting profits of four to five thousand dollars a month. In addition, the bureau netted Tennes from fifteen to twenty thousand dollars a year. Detailed figures of the operations of the Tennes syndicate showed that the net profits amounted to approxi-

## Illinois Crime Survey

mately seventy-five thousand dollars a year. About ninety per cent of this amount went to Mont Tennes himself. As to the out-of-town collections from nation-wide operations, Morelock testified that they amounted to twenty thousand dollars per month against three thousand dollars from Chicago. Eph. Harding described how he or Eckebrecht or Bud Langford went daily to Room 417 at the Adams Express Building and settled by money their accounts with out-of-town handbooks.

Below is a list of handbooks owned by Tennes in other cities, giving the name of the manager and the amount contributed weekly to the bureau:

San Francisco.....	Joe Walsh.....	\$500
San Antonio.....	Dan Breen.....	80
Oklahoma City.....	Oats.....	120
Detroit.....	Falk.....	
West Baden.....	Harry Romaine.....	400
Cincinnati.....	George Rise.....	425
New Orleans.....	St. Bernard Social Club.....	
Berkeley.....	Branch of San Francisco....	

The following are lists of local "books," the first obtained from William Tennes and the second secured from Joseph Thoney, investigator for the Citizens' Association, showing the handbooks owned by Tennes or getting his service, or operated independently, and the name of the police captain in the district:

### First Precinct—(Captain Morgan Collins)

<i>Address</i>	<i>Proprietor</i>
219 S. Dearborn Street, Room 744.....	Tom Evans
189 N. Clark Street, Cigar Store.....	Alex Word
215 N. La Salle Street, Cigar Store.....	Mat Crowley
175 N. Clark Street, Saloon.....	Hudson
180 N. Clark Street, Astor Hotel.....	Sam Cohen
22 W. Quincy Street, Room 608.....	Big Dutch
115 S. Dearborn Street, Room 418.....	Wagner & Devine
Crilly Building, Room 714.....	Collins
35 N. Fifth Avenue, third floor.....	Grace
12 N. Clark Street, Saloon.....	Pat Reagan
120 N. State Street, Room 43.....	Jones
145 N. Clark Street, Room 307.....	McNichols
114 W. Madison Street, basement.....	
Commerce Building, Room 225.....	Cleary
12 W. Van Buren Street, second floor.....	Sullivan
225 N. Fifth Avenue, Cigar Store.....	Adam Amberg

### Second Precinct—(Captain Ryan)

738 S. Dearborn Street, Cigar Store.....	
743 S. Clark Street, Saloon.....	Pat O'Malley

### Fourth Precinct—(Captain W. P. O'Brien)

2222 S. Wabash Avenue.....	Sol Van Praag
28 E. Twenty-eighth Street, Saloon.....	Shingleton

### Eleventh Precinct—

723 E. Thirty-ninth Street, Cigar Store.....	Tom Burns
4020 Cottage Grove Avenue.....	Langford
5903 S. State Street, basement.....	Schneider

*Tennes as a Vice Chief*

- Fifth Precinct—(Captain S. K. Healy)  
 3433 S. State Street .....Tennes & Jones  
 2237 Cottage Grove Avenue.....Sell & Stall
- Nineteenth Precinct—(Acting Captain Charles Atkinson)  
 4189 S. Halsted Street .....O'Leary
- Twenty-seventh Precinct—(Captain Max Danner)  
 743 W. Madison Street, over Lynch's Saloon..  
 1640 W. Madison Street, Cigar Store.....Shemansky  
 1809 W. Madison Street .....Raggie
- Twenty-ninth Precinct—(Captain W. H. Westbrook)  
 3114 W. Madison Street .....Tennes & Lynch
- Thirtieth Precinct—(Captain Matthew Zimmer)  
 3932 W. Madison Street, rear Cigar Store.....Tennes  
 4007 W. Lake Street, Cigar Store.....Walsh
- Thirty-second Precinct—(Captain Michael Gallery)  
 2800 W. Chicago Avenue, Saloon.....Harnet
- Thirty-eighth Precinct—(Captain William Russell)  
 636 N. Clark Street, rear of poolroom.....Garvey  
 743 N. Clark Street .....Tennes & Fries  
 837 N. Clark Street, Cigar Store.....Karr & Kennedy <sup>1</sup>
- Forty-first Precinct—(Captain James O'Toole)  
 2547 Lincoln Avenue, Cigar Store.....Tennes

Morelock's list of the clients of the General News Bureau outside of Chicago, and the amounts they paid in September for the bureau service, one month prior to the Landis inquiry, follows:

Louisville .....	\$ 750	San Francisco .....	\$1,800
West Baden .....	400	St. Louis .....	1,000
Salt Lake .....	125	New Orleans .....	100
Baltimore .....	125	Albany .....	1,000
San Antonio .....	62	New York .....	3,000
Toledo .....	100	Cincinnati .....	415
Buffalo .....	963	Pittsburgh .....	700
Terre Haute .....	25	Oklahoma City .....	105
Norfolk .....	80	Indianapolis .....	400
Detroit .....	400	Muncie .....	193
Cleveland .....	300		

The September expenses were:

Tolls and wires .....	\$5,175.91
Salaries .....	3,350.75
Information .....	4,200.00
Miscellaneous .....	4,511.00
Total .....	\$17,237.66

No analysis was given of the items "Information" and "Miscellaneous," nor was anything said about the recipients of the amounts under these two items. It is significant to note that the list of out-of-town subscribers given by

<sup>1</sup>Karr and Kennedy were the largest handbook operators in Chicago, according to Thoney, in 1916. Today, twelve years later we find them doing business at the same place. 515 W. North Avenue was credited to Alderman Bauler. He denied at this time, as he had previously, that he was a "bookie" or was financially interested in a handbook.

Illinois Crime Survey

Morelock in court was exactly the same as published five years before, August 9, 1911.<sup>1</sup>

The Citizens' Association claimed that there was a revival of gambling after Mayor Thompson's inauguration, handbooks were being operated with the connivance of the police, and someone "higher up" was receiving money to protect the professional gamblers. Mont Tennes, who controlled racing gambling in Chicago, was charged with paying large sums for protection. It was asked, "Who is receiving this?" A raid or two followed on small places. The press again took up the scent. The *Daily News* of October 5, 1916, charged the administration with "permitting Mont Tennes and his gambling to go on because of cash in hand paid;" that the police pleaded helplessness and the mayor innocence, and that together this was a confession of incompetence. Mont Tennes' system was called a "crew of sure thing betters." Judge Landis was quoted as having told Tennes that his profits were covered with dirt and slime because young men were being made criminals.

On October 5, 1916, Federal Judge Landis requested the cooperation of the Illinois Bell Telephone Company, which operated the Automatic Telephone Company system. He could take no further steps because the interstate transmission of sporting news is not a crime and local gambling is not within the jurisdiction of the Federal Court. No action was taken by the state authorities. Thus the Federal inquiry came to naught.

17. *The Retirement of Tennes and the Rise of Al Capone (1917-1928).*

In January, 1917, Schuettler and his men conducted a number of destructive raids upon large handbooks in a drive against gambling resorts. The

newspapers featured the havoc and destruction wrought, and listed the addresses of the resorts and the names of the proprietors:

- Mont Tennes.....743 N. Clark Street;
- Mike de Pike Heitler.....28 N. Halsted Street;
- Mike de Pike Heitler.....1807 W. Madison Street;
- Sol Van Praag.....2222 S. Wabash Avenue;
- Dan Kinnally.....2153 Thirty-first Street;
- Connors & Company.....Basement of 637 N. Clark Street;
- Karr & Kennedy.....837 N. Clark Street;
- Louis Shemansky.....1646 Madison Street;
- Bradley & Lynch.....542 W. Madison Street.

Although the newspapers published the names of the proprietors only patrons and alleged keepers were arrested. Tennes could not be caught.

Tennes, at this time, transferred a large block of real estate to his son, Ray. One deal alone amounted to one hundred, sixty-three thousand dollars.

In March, after a raid on Tennes' news agency in Room 51, 303 West Chicago Avenue, James W. Breen, assistant corporation counsel, obtained a warrant against Tennes on charges of distributing gambling literature and conducting gambling houses. This case did not come up in court until the following year.

<sup>1</sup> See Section 10.



## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

During the years of the World War, public attention was diverted from gambling. Gambling patronage was at a minimum. After the war there seemed to be less opposition to handbook gambling. In October, 1917, Captain Gleason raided a place ascribed to Mont Tennes, at 743 North Clark Street. In August, 1918, it was reported that Mont Tennes and his associates lost thousands of dollars by the betrayal of their cipher code. On November 25, 1918, John Garrity was appointed chief of police by Mayor Thompson, to succeed Herman Schuettler as acting chief. Nineteen Hundred Nineteen was a quiet year in the fight against gambling. In April, 1919, Thompson was reelected as mayor of Chicago.

In the spring of 1920, in a Senate judiciary hearing relating to the Sterling-Sims Bill to prohibit the interstate transmission of race betting information, Howard C. Barker, of New York, superintendent of the Society for the Prevention of Crime, testified (May 10, 1920) that Chicago was the center of race track gambling in the United States, because a system of trunk lines running all over the country was located on the top of one of Chicago's skyscrapers.

Contemporaneously with this Senate investigation on May 12, 1920, it was charged that the Chicago handbook syndicate had "cleaned up" several hundred thousand dollars the previous Saturday on a "long-shot" winner in the Kentucky Derby; that Chicago was again overrun by handbooks boasting protection. The report gave four hundred thirty-one South Dearborn Street as the mysterious office of the General News Bureau, using five trunk lines. It gave Mont Tennes as the owner, but the principal feature of the most recent arrangements was this: "Since the advent of the Thompson administration it has been freely whispered that Mont Tennes has been forced to surrender a large interest in the Bureau to politicians."<sup>1</sup> Ephraim Harding was still his associate and Tennes was still operating the string of handbooks as a side-line to the news bureau.

In November, 1920, Robert E. Crowe, Republican, was elected state's attorney to succeed Maclay Hoyne, and Charles Fitzmorris was appointed chief of police by Mayor Thompson.

Michael Hughes was then chief of detectives and promised to prosecute gamblers under the Illinois Criminal Code rather than under the Municipal Code, because the penalties were by far more drastic. Then raids followed. A "big haul" was made at 17 South Clark Street, handbook of Mont Tennes, and one hundred inmates were taken. The raid was sensational, with axes, and breaking down of doors and furniture. The state's attorney's office in turn raided Jim O'Leary's ancient gambling stronghold in the stockyards district and the state's attorney demanded the grand jury indictment of Mont Tennes. A great deal of evidence was secured and State's Attorney Crowe avowed that the war was on the square. "They all look alike, no matter what their political complexion may be," he stated. "Some of our best known gamblers do not seem to be convinced, even now, but nobody is immune. The only way they can escape is to close shop. Otherwise it'll be closed for them."

---

<sup>1</sup> *Chicago Daily News*, May 12, 1920.

## Illinois Crime Survey

### 18. *Crowe's War on Gambling.*

Crowe's campaign, which "shook the foundations of national handbook gambling and spread panic through the Chicago gambling brotherhood,"<sup>1</sup> was followed by the indictment of Mont Tennes, described as the alleged chief of the national racing handbook syndicate; J. L. Morelock, manager of the General News Bureau, 431 S. Dearborn Street, which was said to be the central station for dissemination of handbook information; James O'Leary; James Ledwell, brother-in-law of O'Leary; Martin Berlin, resort keeper; "One" Ryan, resort keeper; and Abe Cooper, resort keeper associated with the Tennes ring. Tennes was in Florida, but his associates claimed that the General News Bureau was "a legitimate organization for the dissemination of sporting news."

On March 27, 1922, the men indicted on February 24, 1921, went on trial. Tennes was represented by three able attorneys, among them former State's Attorney Maclay Hoyne. The case against Mont Tennes, Morelock, Cooper, and Argo was nolle prossed because the prosecution had not been able to show that the defendants had conspired to operate horse-race betting books. Thus ended another "gambling drive" which had been inaugurated with a great show of vigor and relentlessness.

Ephraim Harding, formerly a partner of Tennes, committed suicide. He died a poor man. He had been living on an allowance from Tennes for three years during his sickness. At this time Tennes gave every indication of having accumulated a large fortune. His financial standing is reflected in a single deal on April 11, 1923, when he purchased for \$390,000 the northeast corner of Sheridan Road, Broadway, and Devon.

### 19. *Dever and the Closing of Gambling Resorts.*

In April, 1923, William E. Dever, Democrat, was elected to the office of mayor and Morgan Collins was appointed chief of police to succeed Fitzmorris.

The news was spread through the gambling fraternity that a new combination headed by Tennes was in the process of formation and would renew operations on a large scale.

Within the first year of his incumbency in office, Chief of Police Collins closed two hundred downtown handbook "joints" that were estimated to produce \$364,000 per year for Mont Tennes. Collins did this quietly. Occasional raids provoked talk, but he made few threats or announcements. At the moment he came into office, gambling was centralized in the "Loop" district. A year later the gambling business was disclosed as absolutely dead. "You'll find a 'cheater' here and there, but these fellows can't establish themselves in one place long enough to make it pay." At this period the leaders of the old Twenty-second Street levee, now established in the west suburban area, branched into gambling with great success in Cicero and Berwyn. Al Capone was overlord with such old heads as James Mondy, La Cava brothers, "Three Fingered" Jim Murphy from the West Madison Street levee, Frankie Pope, "the millionaire newsboy, a gambler and the son of a gambler:" and the Cusicks of the Twenty-second Street levee, as members of the suburban syndicate.

<sup>1</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune.*

## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

Despite the raids, Mont Tennes himself, of course, was never arrested. He always had the defense that he was the dispenser of sporting news. Tennes' national service remained the same. The principal receiving station was then on the second floor of an old hotel building at Wells and Kinzie Streets. The office was as busy as an important relay station in a commercial telegraph system. Later, the principal office was in the Otis Building on Madison and La Salle Streets, in the heart of the "Loop," still under the name of the General News Bureau. But raiders went after his clients without mercy.

Then came the "swan song." Nine months later, Tennes' retirement from race-track gambling was widely announced; that he had sold out to Jack Lynch, for a number of years leading figure in the same field. Tennes was reported to have lost five hundred thousand dollars on his race books, but other observers connected Capone's "clean-up" of five hundred thousand dollars on horse racing in a few years with the retirement of Mont Tennes.

On November 19, 1924, Robert E. Crowe was elected to succeed himself.

The period under Collins is known in the underworld as the "time when graft was taken from the politicians and given to the police." They place Schuettler's raiding campaign periods in the same category.

Two types of gambling warfare have already been observed—destruction of property by bombing, and the police raids inspired by a competing ring upon its competitor. With the advent of prohibition and its mobilization of large forces of gunmen, a new type of attack was introduced—the daylight robbery, unsolved and unprosecuted.

The first notable robbery of this kind occurred on August 21, 1925. Bandits raided the race book operated by Jack Lynch and Mont Tennes, the largest gambling establishment in the "Loop." So Tennes had not retired. The bandits lined up nearly thirty book-makers, sheet-writers, clerks, and customers, and escaped with money and jewelry valued at fifteen to twenty-five thousand dollars. The bandits were acquainted with the establishment, as they actually called people by name in commanding their victims during the hold-up. They were pursued through the "Loop" streets from 120 South Clark Street, and the chase was thrilling as it took place during the most crowded hour of the day. Thousands viewed the pursuit, hundreds knew of the robbery, yet after fifteen minutes the police had thrown a veil of secrecy over the whole affair. One traffic policeman incurred the displeasure of a superior by attempting to gather information for a reporter. No report of the robbery was made, either to the Central Station or to the detective bureau. Nothing more about the robbery appeared. Tennes and the police had no desire for publicity; Tennes, because he was illegally engaged in the handbook business, and the police, because they feared that publicity would disclose the long immunity Tennes had enjoyed.

The death of William Tennes, and later of Edward Tennes, brothers of Mont, were the only glimpses of the old king to appear in 1925 to 1927. During these years, in the main, gambling was suburban with the chieftainship in the hands of the Capone syndicate. With the reelection of

## *Illinois Crime Survey*

Thompson for a third term in April, 1927, upon a wide-open policy, suburban gambling as well as vice suffered a great decrease in business. As one gangster put it, "Who's going to go out there when I can find anything I want right here in the city?" In circles close to Capone, it was well known that he had contributed substantially to the Thompson campaign. At any rate, Capone who had operated just outside the city during the Dever administration, immediately after the election of Thompson returned to his old haunts in the old levee district and established headquarters at the Metropole Hotel.

Alphonse Capone, Barney Bertsche, Bugs Moran, and a host of other gangsters and "racketeers," who first came into prominence as the distributors of liquor concessions, found that with such weapons as bombs, sawed-off shotguns, machine-guns, and the threat of being "taken for a ride," they need not confine themselves to the "beer racket" and the distribution of beer privileges. Accordingly, a powerful syndicate was formed. To this syndicate every gambling house keeper, handbook owner, vice resort keeper, and beer runner had to contribute a percentage of the income derived from their enterprises, or risk being blown up or "taken for a ride." Just what division was made of the tribute levied and collected from those purchasing concessions from the syndicate cannot be stated. The protection and immunity enjoyed by the syndicate members was almost conclusive indication that certain public officials and politicians were receiving their share of the booty from the syndicate.

"Two rival 'mobs,' which, besides owning and operating a majority of the places, have 'muscled in' on a forty per cent basis on nearly every independent operator of any significance, are monopolizing the concession privileges by means of the same system of terror that made the beer business so highly explosive.

"They have opened headquarters downtown, where quaking road-house proprietors and dive-keepers who, because of past political performance, had hoped to do some quiet cheating unmolested, are given to understand it is good business to count in the hoodlums on a partnership percentage. The 'divvy,' they are told, takes care of everybody—the 'mobs' and the 'law.'"<sup>1</sup>

The north side "mob" was ruled by Barney Bertsche with Big George (or "Bugs") Moran and Frankie Frost, and were later joined by the Aiello brothers of whom there are nine. The south side "mob" was under the control of Capone. Tennes was selling his service in both territories, and outsiders who tried to sell the same type of service found themselves bucking the syndicate.

Such an outsider was the Empire News Company. It had been suffering raid after raid, its equipment and telephones were destroyed by the police, when finally, on July 15, 1927, it obtained a temporary injunction from Judge James A. Wilkerson, restraining the police from interfering with its business. This victory on the part of a new competitor gave Tennes some concern. "Last night," said a news item, "it was reported that Tennes was

---

<sup>1</sup> *Chicago Daily News*, June 20, 1927.

## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

hastening back from his summer home on Eagle River, Wisconsin, to take part in a conference today that may bring peace in the tangled situation. Barney Bertsche, Alphonse Capone, the Cicero gambling overlord; and representatives of the Empire Service are expected to be present.

This condition in earlier days brought war with numerous bombings and attempts on the lives of principals of the past, and it was generally recognized that another war could be expected. The new service was furnishing its "dope" at from \$25 to \$30 per week. Tennes, with the advantage of a monopoly, had gradually raised his rates until they had reached \$100 to \$125 a week, with an average around \$75. It was estimated that at least two hundred purchased the service in and around Chicago, making the gross intake \$15,000 a week. The Empire Company (the intruder) was able to get a considerable number of customers so Tennes hurried back to the city to protect his business of \$750,000 a year.

Betting was virtually legalized when on June 13, 1927, a state statute approved the pari-mutual. July, 1927, Terry Druggan tried to test the pari-mutual by filing injunctions against several race tracks. He further charged a conspiracy to monopolize racing in violation of the Interstate Commerce Law in the shipping of race horses. By the time the petition for the injunction came up for an argument, the racing season closed and the matter was dropped. It gave race tracks a great deal of publicity.

By August, 1927, the gambling war was imminent. It was expected the war would be more deadly than the beer wars. It was reported that influential politicians, occupying important posts in the city administration, helped guide a gambling syndicate composed of powerful gangsters. Estimates of the profits of politicians from protection to gambling establishments ran over a half million dollars a month.

Jimmie Mondie had waxed wealthy during the last few years in Cicero in the Capone syndicate, and was now reputed to be a millionaire. He was recognized as spokesman in gambling matters for Al Capone and Jack Cusick. The latter was at 16 South Clark Street, in the heart of the mercantile district, the central office of the new gambling trust. Due to the unrest, Mondie was conducting personally a great many conferences with gamblers whom he had summoned to his quarters. They could continue in business with a guarantee of no police interference at a flat twenty-five per cent of their earnings. Small joints would be forced to hand over a flat weekly assessment. In the colored district Dan Jackson, Republican Committeeman in the "black belt," was associated with Mondie. Mont Tennes himself was known as an associate.

Capone had been driven from the city according to police reports, in December, 1927, and was finding shelter only with difficulty in other cities. Now the gamblers learned that Capone had contributed to the Thompson campaign fund. Not only gamblers were in rebellion against Mondie at this time, but politicians, because he was charging the same twenty-five per cent, even though politicians "fronted" for the game.

The houses of Fitzmorris, the city comptroller and former police chief, and of Dr. W. H. Reid, were bombed on January 26, 1928. The following quotation from the *Daily News* is of interest:

## Illinois Crime Survey

"Two bombs intended to wreck the homes of Charles C. Fitzmorris and Dr. William H. Reid, two of the stalwarts of the Thompson administration, early today were interpreted in gambling circles as a protest from the followers of Al Capone against the recent reorganization of protected gambling in Chicago, whereby Capone went out and more favored individuals came in.

"The bombings, evidently carefully planned as to time, were touched off only three minutes apart.

"The bombings were quickly followed by statements from both Mr. Fitzmorris and Dr. Reid disclaiming any knowledge of or even theory as to any possible motives for the outrage.

"'What can I say? Who would do a thing like that?' said Mr. Fitzmorris as he surveyed the wreckage within his home. 'I have absolutely no theory—the thing is a mystery to me. I will say that I have absolutely no affiliations or connections with any gambling factions or gambling places. There are, of course, some gamblers who harbor a grudge against me for what I did to them when I was chief of police. But I don't know who would harbor a grudge deep enough to inspire a thing like this.'

"'I don't believe the bomb was intended for me at all,' was the assertion of Dr. Reid. 'I have my theory as to whom it was meant for. I can't imagine why anyone should wish to perpetrate a thing of that sort against me.'"<sup>1</sup>

Later the homes of Lawrence Cuneo, secretary to State's Attorney Crowe, and the undertaking establishment of Municipal Judge Sbarbaro were bombed. When the home of Cuneo, brother-in-law of Crowe, was bombed, soon after the bombing of the establishment of Judge Sbarbaro, the mayor and his cabinet, as well as Mr. Crowe, the prosecutor, went into seclusion with an armed guard at their homes. Commenting upon it editorially, the *Daily News*, (February 23, 1928) said:

"Now that leading city and county officials of this community are in a state of siege, with police details guarding their homes against assaults by bomb-throwers, the long-continued farce of law enforcement which does not enforce manifestly must have the curtain rung down upon it.

"The suspicion that the assaults on representatives of the city administration and on representatives of the state's attorney's office indicate that secret dealings with persons in authority help to explain the prosperity of some gamblers and some booze runners, and the notable vicissitudes of others is too wide-spread to be dissipated by mere disclaimers. For if the law enforcing agencies of this community have no moral reason for fearing the foes who strike at them so viciously why do they not strike back with all the force of outraged virtue armed with all the powers of orderly government?"

It was now discovered that Frankie Pope had moved to the city and opened two large establishments on Clark and Diversey, which he was conducting with the old Cicero personnel. A little later, Barsoti, who had never been in the gambling business before, opened in close proximity. Bombings followed which were interpreted as mutual.

<sup>1</sup> *Daily News*, January 26, 1928.

## *Tennes as a Vice Chief*

During the absence of Al Capone from Chicago, his interests were in the hands of Antonio Lombardo,<sup>1</sup> an ardent Democrat, while the Aiello Brothers, Republican adherents, were known to represent the armed forces of the north side "mob." At the moment of this writing Capone has returned to Cicero, which is again wide open. The leaders of both sides are not venturing forth without bodyguards and are watched every minute of the day and night, even though a truce is on. Civilians of importance, not only of Chicago, but from other cities, have tried to effect a permanent peace between the two armed forces. Recently, when a banquet was given for the purpose of arriving at such a peace, it was discovered that the cook who prepared the meal for the banquet was approached by one of the factions with a large offer to poison the leader of the other faction. The next day, even though a nominal peace had been established, the police discovered a machine-gun nest in a house opposite the home of one of the leaders.

It is questionable whether Tennes has actually retired from the field of handbook gambling. If he has retired, it has not been due to the fact that he has suffered losses in his business, but rather to the ascendancy of the gunman, the "hi-jacker," the bootlegger, and the "racketeer" in the world of gambling in Chicago as well as in politics. It was a question of either continuing the handbook business and paying extortion money for the privilege to gangsters who have assumed the role of overseers so far as the distribution of concessions for illegal activities are concerned, or of getting out. Tennes, presumably, preferred the latter.

---

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written, and on September 8, 1928, Lombardo was shot down at Madison and Dearborn Streets, in broad daylight, in the presence of thousands of persons, but Capone still survives. The slayers of Lombardo were not caught.