Tests Planned To Determine Intoxication

DR. MAINE H. BRADDOCK

Police Chief John M. Gold said yesterday that encouragement will result from the.Police Department's new test for determining the percentage of alcohol in the blood of persons who have volunteered for the tests. The experiments will check the accuracy of the Intoximeters, which soon will be used by the local Police Department.

Tests will be made to determine the degree of intoxication of an individual. The test methods involve the use of a commercial Intoximeter and a laboratory blood test. The results of the Intoximeter test—which presumably shows the degree of intoxication—will be checked against a laboratory analysis to determine the percentage of alcohol in the blood. The blood test will indicate the degree of intoxication of the individual. Intoximeters will soon be used here. Volunteers will be used for the tests.

Dr. William A. Wolff, associate professor of chemistry and technology at Bowmen Gray School of Medicine, who has had 15 years of experience in the medical field, is in charge of the work when the Intoximeters are used.

Directed by Sergeant Sergeant M. H. Byrd of the police department, who has had special training in use of the Intoximeters, will direct that phase of the experiments.

"We will ask the volunteer to blow into the balloon of the Intoximeter and then furnish a blood sample so that results of these can be checked against the results of the machine," Chief Gold said.

"The tests will be repeated on other, we are learning, and will have our tests made by recognized experts," said Chief Gold. "Frankly, in other divisions of law enforcement we have used as extensively as possible scientific equipment."

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Lt. Jim Cofer, Sheriff Ernie Shore and Dr. Wolf of Bowman Gray School of Medicine with the Intoximeter in 1951
Wolff and the traffic division joined other states in 1951 in using the test to determine alcohol intoxication. It was first used on July 21. 20 Officers had been trained in its operation 3 days earlier.

A Twin City Sentinel article described its operation:

The officer who makes the test is guided by one simple observation. If it takes more than 80 seconds for a decolorization of a balloon into which a suspect has exhaled—then there is not enough alcohol in the subject's system to merit a charge of alcohol influence...The degree of alcoholic influence may be determined by the time required for the color to change, as indicated in a guide chart provided with each testing set. Breath is the material used for making this test. After it has served its purpose in the balloon, it is then released into tubes to be used by the chemist in making his test."

The first court case, on July 24, got a conviction with an intoximeter result of .24 and a blood test of .25. Its first Superior Court test was August 30. The defendant was found guilty and sentenced to 4 months on the roads and lost his driver's license for two years.