

Maryland Law Reveals Only 10 Wiretap Sets

not 8/1/65
BALTIMORE, July 31 (AP) — Since Maryland's new law requiring registration of wiretapping and related equipment went into effect June 1, fewer than ten of the devices have been registered. State police have reported.

Capt. Thomas S. Smith, head of the State Police Intelligence Division, said he assumes that all the agencies which use the recording equipment have registered, although the number was fewer than he suspected were around.

Prior to June 1, Capt. Smith said, he notified the 77 private detective agencies in Maryland of the law's requirements. He said he received replies from "only half a dozen or so."

The replies came from "all over Maryland, especially the metropolitan areas, but not necessarily Baltimore," he added.

House Speaker Marvin Mandel (D-Balto.) who introduced the legislation passed by the 1965 General Assembly, said he was amazed at the small number of devices registered.

"There must be far more," he declared.

The law provides for registration by persons who manufacture, sell or lend wiretapping equipment or electronic devices to intercept and record private conversations.

Penalty for each violation is a year in prison or a \$500 fine, or both. The law provides that unregistered machines may be confiscated.

Mandel said the law is not limited to telephone conversations but covers things like pocket recorders and electronic "bugs" on walls if used secretly to overhear conversations.

Assistant Attorney General John W. Sause Jr. said ordinary tape recorders probably would not have to be registered unless they were specially designed or adapted for intercepting conversations.

Sause said the new law does not provide for inspection of homes or businesses and Capt. Smith said the law would be "practically impossible to enforce."