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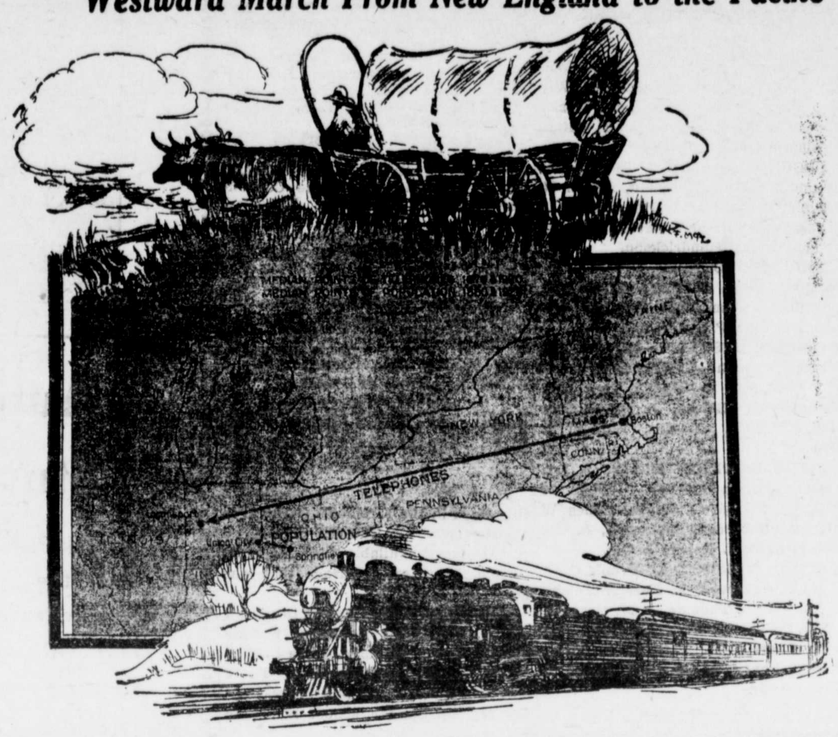
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Telephone Distribution Outstrips Population in Westward March From New England to the Pacific



By JOHN B. O'BRIEN

MORE than keeping pace with the westward march of population, the telephone has steadily progressed from its humble beginnings of 49 years ago and has widened its sphere of influence until today the median points of both population and of telephones are only a few miles apart. Considered at first as nothing more than a toy, the telephone soon came to be regarded as a luxury, while now it is an absolute necessity without which modern business, commerce and social life could exist only with difficulty.

Just to what extent the telephone has contributed to the expansion of the nation might be hard to determine, but certain it is that without its aid and security, rural communities would scarcely have developed as rapidly and as intensively as they have done. Nor could larger towns and cities have attained their great growth if business had been obliged to continue to be localized in one central section. The telephone came along, however, and its development, together with the improvement in transit conditions, enabled cities to spread their industries and activities out over a large area. No longer was it necessary for every important industry to be located within certain prescribed limits. In New York City the shopping district crept uptown from Fourteenth street and Twenty-third street until today most of the section below Fifty-ninth street is devoted to business purposes. Manufacturing concerns were able to move to localities where they could have more breathing space and opportunities to expand. The telephone, conqueror of time and space, has, as it were, made a neighborhood of the nation.

By the early '90's the telephone was taking its place as a real utility. Local service was being constantly developed and country districts were beginning to realize the advantages the wires offered of keeping in closer touch with the towns and cities. Long Distance service was also about to become something more than a name. New York and Boston had been connected by telephone in 1884 and gradually the lines were being pushed westward until in 1892 Chicago talked to New York for the first time and the early vision of Bell and his associates of a service nation-wide in character seemed on the point of realization.

In the decade which then began, the telephone made rapid progress. From 1892 to 1902, while Iowa gained 17 per cent. in population, the telephone in the state grew to the extent of 2,303 per cent. In the same period Indiana's gain in telephones amounted to 2,568 per cent. and Nebraska's to 828 per cent. Other mid-western and western states showed similar gains, which have continued until today there is scarcely a hamlet anywhere in the entire country without telephone connection with the main arteries, the trunk lines of communication.

Another interesting comparison between population and the number of telephones in the United States is shown by the fact that in 1880 there was one telephone to every 1,064 inhabitants; in 1890, one to every 280 persons; in 1900, one telephone to every 57 persons; in 1905, one to every 21 persons; in 1910, one to every 12 persons; in 1915, one to every 10 persons, and today, one to every 7 persons.

Even at the present time telephones are growing much faster in the United States than is the population. The population of the country is now increasing at the rate of one and one-quarter per cent. a year, while telephones are growing at the rate of about 6 per cent. a year.

TELEPHONE LINE FIRST TO 'LAND' FROM LEVIATHAN

Cable Connected Before Liner Docks In New York—But Not In England.

When the gigantic United States liner Leviathan docks at New York you can sit down at the telephone in your stateroom and call up any one of 16,000,000 telephones scattered over the North American Continent. When she docks in England, at the other end of her voyage, you can't even telephone ashore for a cab to meet you at the pier.

This was cited recently by an English newspaper as an example of Britain's relative backwardness in the matter of telephone facilities. "All the trans-Atlantic liners are fitted with telephone systems," says this journel, the Dorset Daily Echo, of Weymouth, England. "The Leviathan, for instance, has a telephone in every stateroom, enabling passengers to converse with anyone in any part of the ship. And when these liners reach New York the first cable thrown ashore, before the ship has docked, contains a lead which is fitted into a socket on the quay, and the ship is at once in telephonic communication with the whole of America! Before the ship stops passengers can speak from their staterooms to their friends ashore, can telephone their offices or ring up hotels and reserve accommodation. The same facilities are offered at such comparatively unimportant places as Buenos Aires and Montevideo. Yet at Southampton, Liverpool or other British ports—among the most important in the world—these facilities cannot be obtained."

The Daily Echo adds, however, that "their installation would be a very simple matter," and concludes with the hopeful statement that efforts are now being made in England "to educate everybody to a clearer realization of what the telephone means, its influence on the national life, and the ultimate extent to which it can be utilized."

Bucharest, the capital city of Roumania, is a bigger city than Denver, Colorado, but Denver has over seven times as many telephones as Bucharest.

Antwerp is a bigger city than Washington, D. C., but Washington has over six times as many telephones as Antwerp.

TELEPHONE TIPS ON WEATHER AID IN HARVESTING

Estimated Saving Of $25,000 In One County Alone From Weather Bureau Data.

In one county alone in New York State, farmers made an estimated saving of $25,000 on their hay crop in 1924, as a result of a special harvest weather forecast service maintained by the Weather Bureau of the United State Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the New York State College of Agriculture and the New York County Farm and Home Bureaus. During the harvest operation a series of forecasts were sent out daily by telegraph and by telephone.

In this way the farmers were given advance information about the weather. These forecasts covered a longer period than do the regular forecasts published in the newspapers, as they were given from one to four days in advance. They were made available to farmers having telephones within two hours after they left the hands of the forecaster. Thus the wise farmer was able to be prompt in cutting his oats, or in holding off from cutting his clover in case rain was prophesied, or he could hasten harvesting if good weather was expected.

The service is available to farmers having telephone connection. During July and August the harvest weather forecasts are dispatched to the county agencies in some thirty-five counties of New York State. In one county, by the use of party lines, practically every farmer having a telephone receives the service. The practice began when, a few years ago, Prof. G. F. Warren, head of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Farm Management of the New York State College of Agriculture, started calling the weather bureau office daily by telephone to see whether the weather conditions were favorable for cutting hay.

At the end of last season a vote was taken by telephone which was unanimous for the continuation of the service and for its extension in so far as possible.

During the year 1924, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company gained over seven new stockholders for every hour of every day and night.

Long distance calls in the state of Georgia averaged 6.7 per cent. more last year than in 1923.

WHY W, J, R AND M ARE USED ON PARTY LINES

The letter W outranks all the other letters of the alphabet as to the ease with which it can be understood, telephone engineers declare.

In order to determine which letters carry best over the wires and which are the least likely to be confused with the digits of the numbers or with other letters, the entire alphabet was subjected to elaborate series of tests over telephone lines by trained engineers. The result was that the letters W, J, R, M passed the best tests in the order given and they were subsequently selected for use as suffixes for party line telephone numbers. That is why these letters are the standard designation for party service in preference to other letters of the alphabet.

NEW CABLE CONNECTS ENGLISH AND DUTCH

So great has been the expansion of telephonic communication between Great Britain and the continent that a new submarine telephone cable has been constructed between England and Holland.

The new cable measures 86 nautical miles. It has 16 conductors with paper insulation and two lead sheathings and will permit of 12 simultaneous conversations to be conducted. It weighs 2,150 tons and was laid from shore without the making of a joint ("final splice") which is an unusual performance. The cable extends from Domburg, Walcheren, on the Dutch coast to Aldeburg, Suffolk.

When two people talk by telephone, to a letter from each to the other. Therefore, every telephone conversation equals two letters. On this basis, the American people send over three times as many messages by telephone as by letter.

In proportion to population, greater Boston has twice as many telephones as Berlin, nearly four times as many as London, and over nine times as many as Rome.

The taxes paid by the larger telephone systems in the United States in 1924 average more than $138,000 a day.

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The County Commissioners of Kent County have ordered me to cause the arrest of all owners of Dogs who have failed to secure the requisite Dog Licenses as prescribed by Law.

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s5-tf State's Attorney.

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