

A FRANK STATEMENT TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS

Our reason for existence is to render telephone service to you, for your business use and for your social convenience. No one is better able than we are to appreciate the fact that the quality of our service is of the utmost importance to you and to the entire community. Our objective, now as always, is to make your telephone service the best possible; that is vital to our welfare as an operating telephone company.

IN THE PAST

... we have been justly proud of our service. It was fast and reliable. Before the war our service in Hillsboro was on a par with the best in any comparable city in the United States.

DURING THE WAR

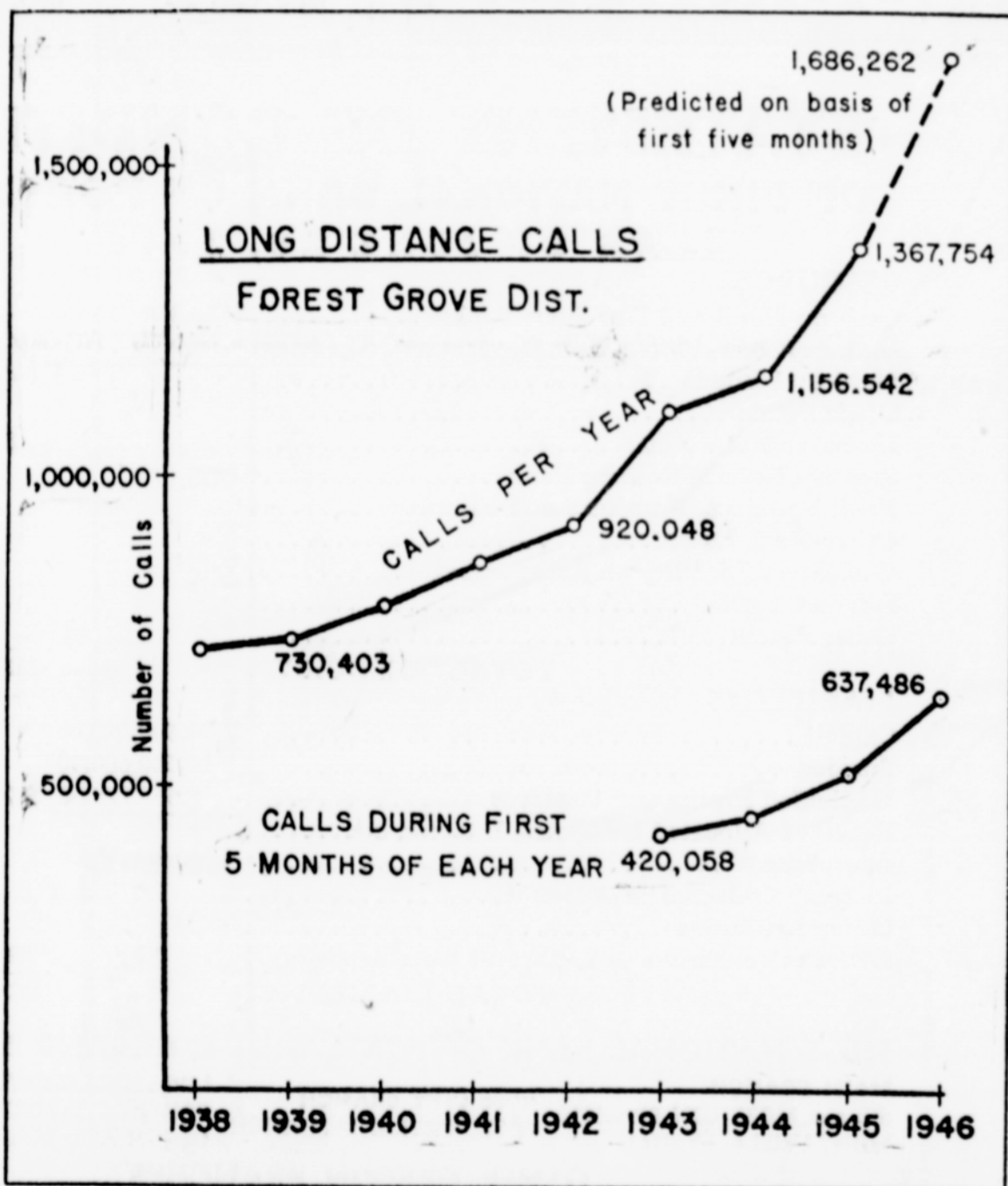
Then came Hitler's mad rush into Poland in 1939. In common with every other civilian service, the adequacy of our telephone service steadily declined for reasons quite beyond our power to alter. Governmental regulations, plus the common urge of patriotism, demanded that we should serve the needs of the army, the navy and associated war industries first, at whatever sacrifice of convenience to ourselves or to you. Our every resource in money, equipment and man-power was thrown into the effort to win the war. Ordinary civilian requirements had to take second place.

At the same time there began a rapid dissipation of our force of trained operators and technicians. Many of the best of the people upon whom we depended for operation and maintenance of our plants left us. They went either into the armed forces or into war industries with whose inflated wage scales we could not compete, as our own wage scales were held at fixed ceilings by the government.

Our Hillsboro force has not been affected so badly as many of our other exchanges, but we still have too many comparatively new and inexperienced operators. Our standard of efficiency has naturally declined despite the hardest and most nerve wracking work by the small group of fully experienced employees who have remained throughout the war period.

With a progressively weakened force of operators, and no new equipment whatever, we handled a rapidly mounting load of traffic everywhere in our system. The figures speak for themselves:

In Hillsboro, during the month of May, 1938, there were placed 7,957 Long Distance Calls. In the month of May, 1946, there were placed 18,724 Long Distance Calls, an increase of 135%.



During the war period, it was impossible to obtain materials to meet this great increase in civilian telephone service requirements: quite properly, the government imposed drastic limitations upon supplies for other than military and war industry needs.

In other words, as the war-time load increased by leaps and bounds, our ability to cope with it was taken from us, through no fault of our own. That condition, of course was not confined to this company; it was nation-wide, part of the price that we all had to pay to serve the army and the navy and win the war.

For six years our entire industry faced these conditions:

- VASTLY INCREASING DEMANDS BY ARMY, NAVY AND GOVERNMENT.
- RAPIDLY MOUNTING CIVILIAN DEMANDS FOR ORDINARY TELEPHONE SERVICE.
- A VOLUME OF TELEPHONE TRAFFIC FAR BEYOND OUR WILDEST PRE-WAR DREAMS.
- RAPID AND PROGRESSIVE DEPLETION OF OUR FORCE OF SKILLED MEN AND WOMEN, TECHNICIANS AND OPERATORS.
- INABILITY TO OBTAIN EQUIPMENT OR SUPPLIES TO MEET CIVILIAN REQUIREMENTS.

It is not surprising that our service to the public deteriorated during that period; on the contrary, we have every reason to be proud of our war record, proud of the fact that despite the magnitude of our war effort we were still able to serve the civilian public as well as we did. In every other country at war, little attempt was made to maintain telephone service at anything like a pre-war basis: civilian telephone service was ruthlessly curtailed or eliminated altogether, as it happened to suit the plans of those responsible for war operations and war industries.

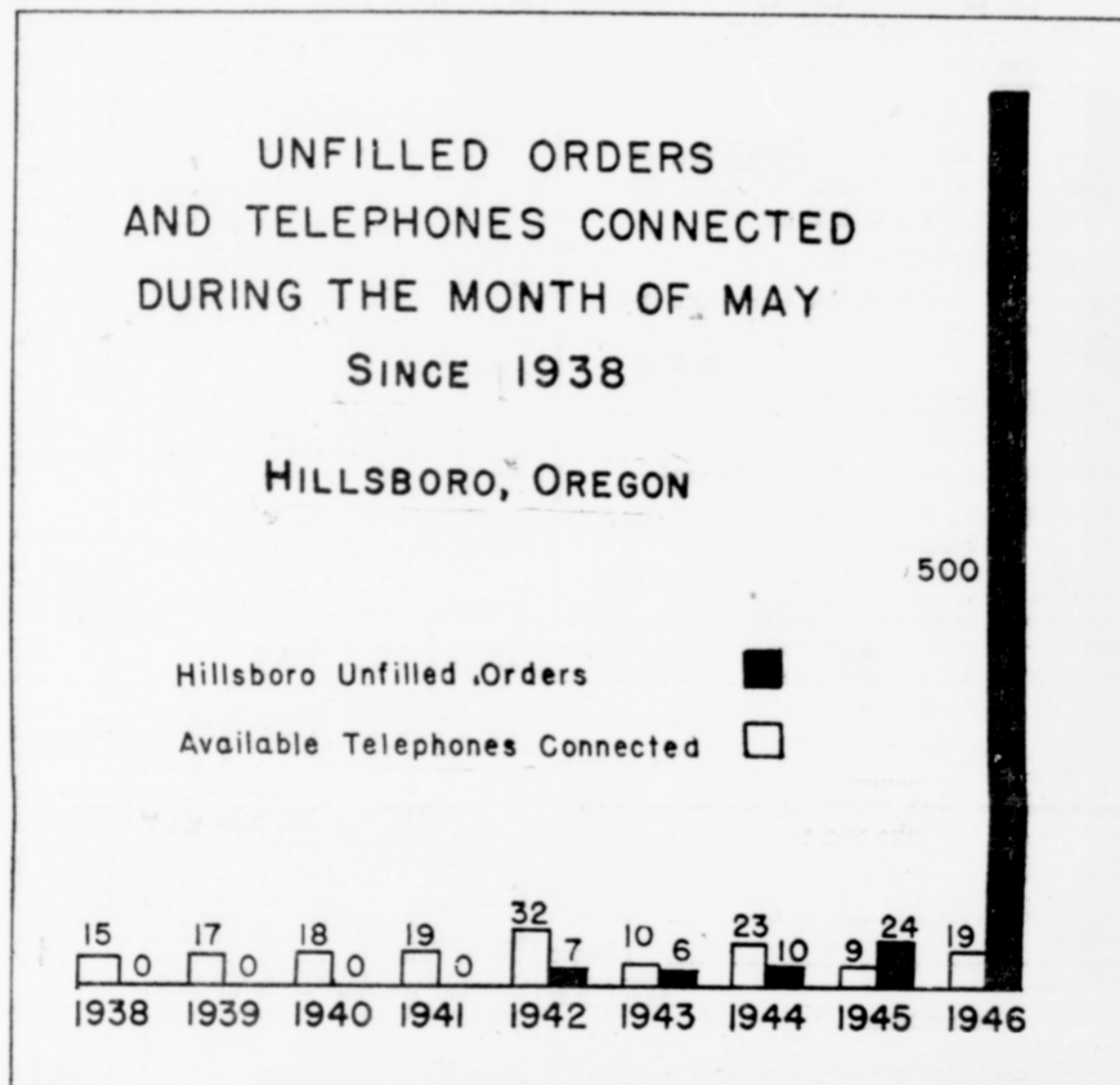
AFTER V-J DAY

When the war ended, we all heaved a sigh of relief and looked forward to the early return of normal conditions. We placed our orders for new telephones and wire and switchboard equipment and hoped for a let-down in the traffic load. So far from V-J day having brought us any relief, our orders for new equipment, except for a few dribbles, have not been filled and our over-loaded facilities and overworked personnel are called upon to handle an ever-increasing load.

Since 1939, all over the U. S. A., the number of long distance calls, both placed and actually completed, has increased beyond the power of anyone to predict and beyond the power of any company to handle promptly with the personnel and equipment obtainable. At the same time, owing to war conditions, it became vastly more difficult for our operators to put through and complete the calls that were placed.

In our Forest Grove District (comprising 18 Exchanges in the area around Portland) we handled 730,403 long distance calls in 1939. In 1945 we handled 1,367,754 long distance calls.

The tempo is not slackening. There is no let-up. Long Distance Calls placed in this district totalled 117,641 in January, 1946. In May, 1946, there were 143,564.



We have a waiting list of over 9,000 applicants for telephone service, 500 of them in Hillsboro. We want to serve them as soon as we can, if only for the obvious commercial reason that our inability to serve them is costing us perhaps \$50,000 every month, over our entire system.

During the war period our installations of the few telephones that have been available have been regulated by government orders. That condition still holds. W. P. B. Order U-2 dated September 27, 1945, sets out certain rules and schedules of priority to which we are legally required to adhere.

Great pressure has been exerted by some people who apparently felt that their needs should over-ride the general good and the governmental regulations. We have done our best however to allot our available services regardless of personalities, in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the law. We believe these various regulations are in the best interest of the most people; in any case, they are the law to which we must conform.

But we cannot serve them until we can obtain new telephones, line materials, new switchboard facilities, all the appliances that are essential to a big increase in our service. The same reasons that are holding up supplies of every sort all over the United States, have made the manufacturers of telephone equipment unable to meet the tremendous post-war demands of the industry. In short, the war time conditions that impaired your telephone service are still with us.

Supplies are trickling in slowly however and with a return to anything like normalcy in manufacturing conditions, the situation should improve rapidly from now on.

IN HILLSBORO

New telephones have been ordered and will be installed as soon as the manufacturers can deliver them.

New switchboard facilities have been ordered and will be installed as soon as we receive them.

New cable additions will be installed as soon as the cable and auxiliary equipment is received.

You may rest assured that we are very much alive to the present inadequacies and shortcomings of our service, which are common to telephone service all over the United States at this time.

Until normal conditions return, we and our subscribers alike are the victims of conditions which are affecting practically every business and service to some extent in the entire United States.

We hope that these conditions will not last much longer and we are determined to restore the service to its former efficiency at the earliest possible moment. Meanwhile, we ask you for your patience and reasonable consideration.

West Coast Telephone Company