

THE SUPER-TOLLTAKER

THAT "the inter-relation of the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph company with the American Telephone & Telegraph company and the relations of that with the Western Electric have much to do with the overloading of the Pacific engineering staff," was the purport of testimony by Major Babcock, expert telephone engineer, at the telephone hearing at Salem Friday.

He testified that the American company has the right to manufacture a long list of modern phone devices, the patent rights of which it has long controlled, but that these devices have not been installed or the subsidiary companies allowed to use them.

He declared that keeping these labor-saving devices out of use adds to the cost of service, and testified that installation of the semi-automatic would give adequate service to 33 to 50 per cent more patrons with the same plant construction now in use.

This is exactly what The Journal has long argued. The super-control exercised by the American company has much to do with the growing cost of phone service.

The American company owns or controls the subsidiaries. For example, it owns 70 per cent of the Pacific company. It appoints the chief officials of all its subsidiaries or transfers them to other subsidiary companies.

The subsidiaries are buffers between the parent company and the public. The parent takes the cream of the business, compels the subsidiaries to worry along with old and obsolete devices, acquires and holds all patent rights to keep competitive companies out of the field, and by using its subsidiaries in the local communities to do the poverty act before public service commissions, protects its own huge profits from attack or question.

The local subsidiary is protected with a cost plus contract. Legislatures have ordained that the phone and other companies be guaranteed a fair return on the investment. That means that rates must be high enough to pay all expenses of operation of every kind, and pay in addition a fair profit.

All this is confirmed by Major Babcock's testimony, quoted above. It is very largely the explanation of why telephone tolls all over America are high and going higher. The parent company milks the subsidiaries, the subsidiaries put up the poverty plea, legislatures guarantee the subsidiaries a fair return on the investment, the whole thing is worked on the infamous cost plus basis, and the people foot the bills.

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE

Comments sent to The Journal for publication in this department should be written in plain, simple English, and should not exceed 300 words in length, and must be signed by the writer, whose mail address in full must accompany every communication.

POINTS TO RURAL LINES Assets They Should Afford Basis of City Phone Rates Portland, July 20.—To the Editor of The Journal—I see the public service commission does not seem to want to get to Portland to look into the telephone rate in rates. Why? Is it because there are too many to protest here, and the many users can't afford to go to Salem to protest?

Little boys of 30 years ago were frequently seen to go to the city to get their hair cut. I wonder if times have changed, even though youthful vocabularies have not?

THE VISITING ELKS Among them was J. V. Burke, a well known member of the city. After sampling the Pacific coast climate, Burke admitted that for business reasons he would rather live in New Jersey.

EVER SINCE NEWPORT has been a summer resort there has been an Abbey hotel. Generations come and go, but the building remains.

WHAT IT MEANT in a somewhat earlier day to be strictly orthodox and yet unregenerate was well illustrated by the case of a man who was told by a son of Sooth who Mr. Lockley could be wild and woolly west with which, alas Mr. Vosted had nothing whatever to do.

THE SUN'S HEAT Vancouver, Wash., July 24.—To the Editor of The Journal—Reading the "Sun's Heat" you today present particularly instructive editorial article. The plea is that such contributions are not more frequent in the form of letters to the "Transactions" of the International Union for Solar Research.

HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN From the Manchester Guardian. Many officers of Wrangle's disintegrating army are drifting into the city, says a Constantinian dispatch, which has been caught and selling fish. The problem of getting a living, Generals and admirals have sold their decorations at a little daily auction in the court yard.

COMMENT AND NEWS IN BRIEF

When armies are abolished Boston will become the sole beach market. Bats, it is said, destroy mosquitoes. Bat, bat, come out from under my hat.

There are 10,000,000 feeble-minded people in the United States, according to the Census Bureau. It is estimated that they appear to be running country newspapers.—Western Leader.

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UNCLE JEFF SNOW Says Cleve Nipponer has glorified and doted up his speedster in lists till she's a regular chicken trap and when he rolls up in front of the Corners department store he catches the chickens, all right, but he can't get them in the order he sets in the law to run out a auto in nine different colors. If and when he gets itched speedin' I don't reckon the Judge'll fine him less'n \$100, for the way this short-skirted chickie swarms into Cleve's office riler more fellers'n the Judge.

THE OREGON CITY

AS A MATHEMATICIAN, Health Commissioner Copeland of New York is an excellent acrobat. By unusual agility in juggling figures he proves that New York is the safest city in the country in the matter of automobile accidents.

On Portland's death rate per 1,000 makes a discrepancy of 64. During the fiscal year of 1920 ending December 1, police records show that 23 people were killed in automobile accidents in Portland.

Portland is not always the safest city in the country. She was faced with an increasing death rate from automobile accidents until the toll reached 42 in 1919. In November of that year, realizing what the toll of the future would be with the tremendous increase in the number of automobiles, an intensive accident prevention campaign was inaugurated by the municipal judge, traffic bureau of the police department, national safety council and The Journal, which resulted, after a year's work, in a decrease of 33 per cent in the number of fatalities in spite of a 35 per cent increase in the number of automobiles on Portland streets.

And now, Portland revisits Commissioner Copeland to revise his figures, and herald Portland to the nation as its safest city.

Responding to an opportunity to buy stock with individual payments of \$30 a month, the company adding \$15 a month, 11,000 of the 13,000 employees of the Standard Oil company of California have become shareholders. The stock purchases by employees will, in a five year period, aggregate \$30,000,000, of which the company will contribute \$10,000,000.

A VACANT LOT'S THOUGHTS IF A VACANT lot could talk it would probably engage in a chronological monologue about as follows: June—I don't believe I have any owner. This crop of weeds and hay and brush is getting mighty heavy. Saw a cop eyeing me today. Don't think he will do anything about it, though. If I have an owner I don't know where to find him and how much more would a cop be expected to know? That ordinance that requires owners to mow the weeds

off their lots is a dead letter, anyhow. August—Saw a tourist party go by today. "Just look," said a gushing sort of woman from California, "these Portlanders bring the wild environment of their hills right into town. If there weren't so many tin cans it would look just like primitive nature, wouldn't it?" I tried to tell her that it was the primitive nature of my owner—if I have one—that accounts for my appearance, but she didn't seem to hear. The weeds and grass are getting entirely too dry for comfort, however. A man dropped a cigarette stub pretty close yesterday evening. If it happens again I'll have a fire and maybe burn down that house on the next lot. I'd hate to do it, though; the kiddies in that house might be caught.

January—No sign of any owner yet. I'm afraid it's going to be a long winter. I suspect I look as dismal as I feel, what with the skeletons of the burdocks and the leafless bushes. April—I have an owner. But if it hadn't been for the man next door I never would have discovered him. The man next door came out two or three days ago and mowed off my weeds. He piled my tin cans and broken dishes all up together. Then he spaded me all over, raked the soil up fine and planted some garden truck. I heard him say, "I guess no one will care if I make this lot produce something a little better than plantain and pibson oak." But today my owner showed up. He said something about having lived here a long time and that he had held office or something. He said to the man next door, "Mine is the great, generous heart of the pioneer. You can make a garden on this lot if you will give me two thirds of the vegetables."

THE OREGON CITY

October 4, 7 and 8 have been filed as the first of the 1921-22 season. It is expected that more than 300,000 boxes of apples will be shipped from Washington this year.

Upset completion of the Solo Anzora goat club, Lincoln county will have the first Anzora goat club in the state and perhaps the largest. The Hotel Hokien, a three-story wooden building at Echo, burned to the ground last Friday. The furnishings and the belongings of the patrons were saved.

Major W. F. Winton, Inspector at Camp Bragg, N. C., for the last year, has arrived at Corvallis to take charge of the field unit of Oregon Agriculture college.

County Superintendent Byland states that the complete corps of teachers has been employed for every school in Clatsop county, excepting two which employ one teacher each.

Director A. P. Davis of the United States reclamation service arrived at Bend Saturday to spend several days on business connected with the Deschutes project.

Washington Yakima's poll tax collections to date are \$39,000 from 13,000 persons. About 7000 are still delinquent.

W. W. Green, county superintendent of Umatilla county, is being urged by fellow educators over the state as a desirable candidate for the position of Ackerman of the state normal school.

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