

Fete Recalls Strides in Telephony

Bell's Varied Achievements Revealed During Centenary

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WASHINGTON. — Everybody has been talking telephones because of the well-publicized Alexander Graham Bell centenary. Reading the pounds of publicity, I learned more about Alexander Graham Bell than I ever knew before. I had read of how he dreamed of making the telegraph instrument "talk" and how and why his dream came true. I didn't know about his father's deep study of phonetics and his own interest in "making speech visible," in teaching the deaf to talk, or that he was an accomplished musician or many other facets of this remarkable man's remarkable history.

I already knew a little about the telephone business from first hand observation.

It was just about 20 years before I ever used a telephone that Bell, thanks to his harmonically trained ear, found on that day in 1875 that what he thought could be done, had been achieved in his own laboratory on Court street, Boston. From then on it was just a question of removing "the bugs." The next year he was demonstrating his instrument before audiences with conversations over several miles of wire. Before he died at the age of 75, people were talking over an under-water cable from United States to Cuba.

I doubt if the great inventor were to return to earth today he would

mission circuits now are provided by the Bell system for use of radio networks. (It's "wireless" to your home from your radio station, but it's "wired" between stations.)

(2) The writer has been using a lot of these circuits five days a week for most of the last 14 years.

(3) He worked two college vacations as "electrolysis inspector" for the telephone company.

To explain further:
(1) You know how electroplating is done? The object—say it's a spoon—to be plated is suspended in a "bath" containing the material with which the spoon is to be plated. An electric current is passed through the substance in the bath into the spoon. The substance follows the current as far as it can, which is the surface of the spoon. Anyhow it moves.

(2) You've seen the lead-sheathed cables containing telephone wires being pushed through the manhole into conduits that lie under the pavement. The sheath on the cable protects the insulated wires that carry the current which rings your phone bell and carries your voice.

(3) But other electric currents get loose and run all over the place. You'd be surprised but almost every foot of earth or anything that will conduct an electric current in a city has some electricity flowing through it. When the power companies were careless about preventing leaks in their wires it was worse. Stray currents left power wires or the rails of electric railways and took a short cut back to the power house.

(4) Wherever they found a good conductor like a lead cable, that was like thumbing a ride for the wandering volts and amperes. So far so good. But eventually they had to leave the cable, to find their way to a better conductor or just to say "so long" and struggle back to the dynamo.

(5) When they did that, "electrolytic action" set in. The lead in the cable sheath followed the current as far as it could (like the substance in the bath) and left the sheath porous. Dampness and destruction came in and soon your telephone line was out of order.

My job consisted of sitting by the hour watching the face of an ammeter (which registers the direction and flow of electric current) and discovering where the current was escaping. Then I had to get the power company to do what it could to stop leaks and the telephone company did all it could to keep stray current out or to provide a safe exit for what got in.

In the process I learned much more than I earned—not much about electrical engineering but I had a fine worm's-eye view of several Middle Western cities—bird's-eye views, too, for I worked in cable boxes up on poles, as well as down in manholes, and also learned that it isn't only newspapermen who "meet so many interesting people."

When I ponder on my electrolytic age and also when I "address the mike" Mondays through Fridays now, I am deeply and doubly grateful to Alexander Graham Bell.



A study of Alexander Graham Bell in later life shows how he spent many hundred "man-hours" of his time—tabulating statistics concerning the deaf. At one time he produced a "Memor on the Formation of a Deaf Variety of the Human Race."

he greatly surprised at the strides in telephony which have been made since his death, great as they have been. He may not have considered, however, one of the temporary problems (electrolysis) which created many a headache for the telephone companies and which helped, indirectly, to provide the writer of this column (who was to be a future extensive user of telephone facilities) with a part of his education.

To explain the above remark:
(1) 150,000 miles of program trans-

Jones Finally Gets Birthday

One day recently I received a telephone call from my friend Capt. E. John Long, USNR, who is assistant curator of the United States naval museum at Annapolis. I detected exultation in his voice and, sure enough, when I joined him at the club he was wearing that "Eureka-I-have-found-it" expression which blooms only on the face of a Bell discovering the telephone. A Lord Carnarvon (and-or) Howard Carter exclaiming as he leans over the mummy-case: "King Tut, I presume?"—or possibly you or me when we finally get a firm hold on the end of our vanished pajama cord.

What happened to Long was comparable. He had recorded the confirmation by his chief, Capt. H. A. Baldrige, chief curator, of the long-suspected but never-proved date of birth of John Paul Jones, father of the navy. And it was fortunate he had, for the post office department was demanding it for the next memorial stamp.

Baldrige already had a letter of Jones' containing this sentence: "America has been the country of my fond election from the age of 13." Since it was known he sailed from Whitehaven, England, in 1780 that would make the birth date (1760 minus 13) 1747.

But the birth date was not actually recorded in any authentic writing, not even the early Jones biography by Charles Sands. However, there came into temporary possession of Captain Baldrige a copy of that work, upon whose margins Janette Taylor had written some caustic comment. Miss Taylor was a niece of Jones who had been a close and meticulous student of her uncle's life and many of his papers which she possessed.

One of her holographic statements re the picture of Jones in the frontispiece was this:

"... it is even too old, making every allowance for his mode of life, for a just representation of his appearance at the time of his death, he was then only 45 years and 12 days." (His death, 1792, is of record.)

That tied it. No wonder the captains tossed their scrambled eggs in the air like graduating midshipmen. John Paul has an official birthday only two centuries late—and his face on a stamp for a present.

In an attempt to end mess hall griping, the army aims to make kitchen police a respected and respectable army chore. We'll have to wait on the critical judgment of the long-suffering mess lines before we really know; but meanwhile we'll offer a toast of powdered K-ration lemonade to General Ike and his staff—just for trying.



DIVERSIFIED DIET . . . Anything from Russian borsch to Italian spaghetti is contained in the lunch pails of students at the American school in Tsingtao, China. The reason: Eighteen nationalities are represented among the students.

NEWS REVIEW

Clash on Budget Looms; Union Merger Advanced

CONGRESS: Budget Trouble

As in the case of reducing personal income taxes, the Republican congress divided on the extent of slashing President Truman's 1948 budget request of 37.5 billion dollars.

While GOP members in the house led by Representative Taber (Rep., N.Y.) favored a 6 billion dollar cut, senate Republicans led by Senator Taft (Rep., O.) stood out for a 4½ billion dollar decrease. It was expected that a compromise figure of 5 billion would be reached, permitting a 20 per cent income tax reduction and a sizable surplus to be applied against the national debt.

House Republicans charged their senate colleagues with having succumbed to military and naval pressure against substantial reductions in army and navy expenditures. Declaring there was room for economy "and an end to extravagance" in every federal agency, including the army and navy, they asserted that the services could take a 15 per cent slash in appropriations without hampering national defenses in the slightest.

Taft replied any cut in military appropriations be held to 10 per cent to assure national security and fulfillment of overseas obligations.

LABOR: Discusst Unity

Divided in 1935 over the issue of vertical (mass) organization of workers, the "House of Labor" was another tortuous step closer to unity with CIO acceptance of an AFL invitation to merge the two great American labor movements with a total membership of over 12 million.

Significantly, John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers, who left the AFL to head the new CIO and then returned to the AFL, was named on the AFL negotiating committee headed by Pres. William Green. Fa-

miliar with the mechanics and personalities of both unions, John L. is in a strategic position to pave the way for unification.

Representatives of two former AFL unions were named on the CIO committee led by Pres. Philip Murray. They included Emil Rieve of the Textile Workers and Jacob Patofsky of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. As former units in the AFL, these two CIO unions also can bring their combined experience in both labor movements into the discussions to reach a common ground of agreement.

WHITE HOUSE: Emergency Ending

Continuing to keep abreast of the GOP, President Truman paved the way for an early end to the national emergency proclaimed in 1939 and extended in 1941.

With the Republican congress bent on restoring normalcy, Mr. Truman again anticipated GOP action by asking the legislators to repeal 24 temporary laws, temporarily extend 12 others, permit another 10 to run out their course, and cut back 12 appropriations.

Among the 24 laws the President tabbed for repeal were those authorizing the secretary of agriculture to buy and distribute food for U. S. territories and possessions; disposal of ships under lend-lease and accumulation of 90 days annual leave for government employees. Laws which he said should be allowed to run their course include restriction of active duty of reserves to emergencies; government construction and use of petroleum lines, and temporary maintenance of housing on public lands.

Trimming of emergency laws would reduce the President's wartime powers still in effect to those covering the official war period, which will end with ratification of peace treaties.

POTATOES: Seek to Avert Loss

Seeking to avert the loss of at least 20 million bushels of surplus potatoes taken over by the government in support of the 1946 crop, the department of agriculture offered them to commercial exporters and processors for 5 cents a hundred pounds. The support price was \$2.20.

The department's latest offer compared with a price of 35 cents previously set for export sale. Because of the low food value of potatoes, their perishability and high handling costs, foreign governments have preferred to purchase more nutritious and less cumbersome supplies of grain.

Inasmuch as they can buy wheat flour at five to six cents a pound, the foreign governments also have been hesitant about paying 15 to 20 cents a pound for dehydrating potatoes. Sale of the potatoes to processors at 5 cents per 100 pounds will bring the price of the dehydrated potatoes down appreciably, providing a stimulus for export.



CONFIDENT OF VICTORY . . . Marion Schultz—freckles and all—has her pet kitten "Hoby" all bundled up against the cold winter winds as she prepares to enter her in a New York pet show.

SHORT OF DEMAND

Improved Medical Care Urged

WASHINGTON. — Present-day medical personnel and facilities fall far short of the demand, Thomas Parran, surgeon general of the United States Health service, declared in calling on congress to provide better medical care for all.

In his annual report on the nation's health, Parran asserted: "We have yet to solve the economic problems of medical care. We have yet to make it possible for everyone, regardless of income, to obtain the basic services needed for protection of his own health and that of his neighbors."

The two major problems confronting public health workers were

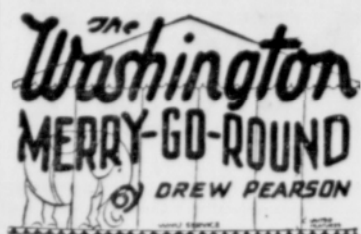
listed as the extension of necessary health services and the battle against chronic diseases, particularly those of old age.

"As we have gained victories over the major communicable diseases, conditions such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes have moved to the fore as the causes of death," he said.

The surgeon general noted three public health milestones in the past year: Passage of the 375 million dollar hospital survey and construction act, the national mental health act and drafting of a constitution for the World Health organization. He reported a generally favorable

situation in checking communicable disease. Outstanding exceptions were a winter epidemic of respiratory diseases, an increase in the incidence of diphtheria, an outbreak of oriental small pox on the Pacific coast and continued prevalence of infantile paralysis on an epidemic scale for the fourth consecutive year.

Parran said research in the year indicated new and better treatments for malaria, tuberculosis, ringworm and shock. He also noted a new treatment to prevent dental cavities and a narcotic which may prove a valuable substitute for morphine.



OTHER SIDE OF UNRRA

WASHINGTON. — All the angry shouting and politicking which surrounded UNRRA during the last two years have given taxpayers the general impression that this global agency was just tossing money down the drain. That, however, was not the case. Here are some little-known facts about UNRRA's remarkable accomplishments.

UNRRA supplied enough grain to make 11,500,000 loaves of bread for Europe, prevented Europe from becoming a disease-ravaged, epidemic-plagued continent, rebuilt health departments all over Europe, supplied them with DDT, penicillin and sulpha drugs. It inoculated hundreds of thousands against typhus and typhoid, thus preventing the type of epidemic that ravaged Europe after World War I.

Last year UNRRA fed at least one meal a day to five million children, helped reclaim 10 million acres of flood land for planting this year. It took care of one million displaced persons, provided them food and shelter, saw hundreds of thousands of them safely home.

Despite its errors on the political side, UNRRA did two things. The agency made nations work together in harmony, made the postwar world a better world for millions who otherwise might have perished. It is only fair to remember this side of the picture.

GOVERNMENT JOBS

Memo to government workers:

Don't get too excited about those statements by Representatives John Taber and Harold Knutson that the congressional budget committee, of which they are members, favors immediate reduction of government personnel by one million workers.

Inside fact is that most members of the committee, excluding Congressmen Taber and Knutson, are apprehensive that a too-sudden slash in the personnel question will be referred for further study to the senate and house appropriations committees.

When a decision finally is made, the reduction in government personnel will be much closer to 500,000 than one million.

BEATS TRUMAN AT FARMING

La Verne Hall of Westby, Wis., champion 4-H farmer of America, who has made \$53,000 at the age of 20, called to shake hands with President Truman, who never was able to make a go of farming in Missouri.

GOP Congressman William Stevenson, who escorted his young constituent, told the President how Hall was chosen "national achievement winner" among junior farmers at the International Livestock exposition in Chicago. One of the prizes was a silverware set from the White House.

"I'd like to meet more of your type," said Mr. Truman, perhaps remembering how his own farm was sold for its mortgage. "You young Americans are doing great things for the country. It must feel pretty good to be a successful farmer at the age of 20. When did you get started?"

His visitor replied that he started at the age of 11 with one pure-blooded calf and two Poland China hogs. He did not mention that his farm holdings are now worth \$53,000.

QUEER VISITORS

The late FDR once told a visitor he was considering sending an ambassador from the American people to the state department, since that department sometimes seemed so out of tune with the rest of the USA. Unfortunately, that condition hasn't changed.

While thousands of Hitler's victims still sweat it out in displaced persons camps unable to get visas, the state department has been throwing the doors open to various interesting visitors. These include Austria's former premier, Kurt Schuschnigg, Pastor Niemöller—who reiterates his belief in a powerful Germany—and now, one of the key Fascist operatives of the Near East, Ahmed Hussein.

Hussein arrived ostensibly as a correspondent for Cairo newspapers but he is still head of the pro-Fascist "Young Egypt" party, and an intimate of the infamous "Mufiti" of Palestine, whom Hitler chose as his fuchrer of the Middle East. Since reaching these shores, Hussein has cast off his role of newsman and has registered with the justice department as a foreign agent representing "Young Egypt." He has been selling his special brand of pro-Fascist, anti-British venom.

CAPITAL CHAFF

It hasn't leaked out, but Brig. Gen. Elliott Roosevelt was recommended for a permanent reserve commission by the army reserve officers commissioning board, headed by Lt. Gen. Jimmy Doolittle. But when President Truman sent the nominations to the senate, Elliott's name was omitted. On the list, however, were several GOP opponents of the Roosevelts, particularly former Maj. Gen. Pat Hurley, who blasted both the President and the state department a year ago.

MOST MOTHERS DO THIS

If Baby Has A Cold



WORKS FOR HOURS while child sleeps to relieve coughs, muscular soreness and tightness.

Best-known home remedy you can use to relieve distress of children's colds is comforting Vicks VapoRub. Even while you rub it on, VapoRub starts to work to ease distress . . . and it keeps on working during the night. No wonder most mothers always do this when a cold strikes. **VICKS VAPORUB**

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Watch Your Kidneys!

Help Them Cleanse the Blood of Harmful Body Waste

Your kidneys are constantly filtering waste matter from the blood stream. But kidneys sometimes lag in their work—do not act as Nature intended—fail to remove impurities that, if retained, may poison the system and upset the whole body machinery. Symptoms may be nagging backache, persistent headache, attacks of dizziness, getting up nights, swelling, puffiness under the eyes—a feeling of nervous anxiety and loss of pep and strength. Other signs of kidney or bladder disorder are sometimes burning, scanty or too frequent urination. There should be no doubt that prompts treatment is wiser than neglect. Use Doan's Pills. Doan's have been winning new friends for more than forty years. They have a nation-wide reputation. Are recommended by grateful people the country over. Ask your neighbor!

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