

Dial System Spells End For Town's "Hello" Girls

An "Individual Exchange Survey" made in Georgetown late September 1949 contains information of interest in this narrative since it gives one glimpse of the Company's behind the scenes problems and efforts to solve them. The survey reports that "Early in 1949 the (Georgetown) town council officially approached us regarding service—and was advised at that time that Georgetown was in the dial program, for 1950 or 1951. It is felt that we will again be approached in the next few months—Severe and continuous irritation caused by heavily loaded rural circuits. Rural estimate which will provide relief is under construction. Completion expected by January 1950." The same record reported 21 employees of the Company in Georgetown, and the fact that there were still (July 30, 1949) 61 "held orders."

Comparing 1945 and 1949 there was considerable increase in the number of telephone calls a day in Georgetown: 2734 originating calls per day in 1945 and 4441 of same in 1949. The population in Georgetown had also risen in Georgetown, 143 in June 1945 and 233 in December 1948, the last time such a study was made before the survey, apparently.

By the close of 1949 there were 1,517 telephones in Georgetown.

During March 1950 the "Chattering" column in the Georgetown Herald gave the telephone office and one of its staff good publicity. It is quoted in part:

"NUMBER PLEASE"
"HADN'T REALIZED, until we talked with Miss Mabel Chave the other day, how large the staff of the local Bell Telephone Company office has grown. Miss Chave is the chief operator, and tells us there are eighteen girls in the Traffic Department, who operate the switchboard, in addition to Miss Isabel Thompson, who has charge of the Commercial Department. Inquiring further, we learned the names of the girls who belong to those politely-voiced "Number Please" queries we hear when we ring for a number any hour of the day or night."

"They are Mrs. William Bonathan, Nan Brown, Marjorie Cascadden, Doris Kean, Mrs. Hugh Lindsay, Mrs. Eugene Logan, Violet Louth, Dorothy Olney, Lena Palmer, June Plarlow, Merle Pries, Rose-Marie Robinson, Mrs. Mel Spence, Marion Stuart, Mrs. Duncan Tait, Mrs. Floyd Vary. The two occasional staff members who come in to relieve when someone is away or ill, are Anna Craikie and Mrs. William Miller, who sometimes relieves the night operator, Mrs. Bonathan."

"Mrs. Vary, Miss Stuart and Miss Kean are Senior Operators who do supervisory work."

"When Miss Chave first came here as Chief Operator, there were in the neighbourhood of 800 phones in Georgetown, while the official figures for phones in 1940 stand at 1543. (1517 for 1940 as of December 31, 1940—M.M.C.P.) This has necessitated what is known as a seven-position board at the Bell office, with five or six operators on the job during the day. We wondered which days and times of day were busiest and found that Friday and Saturday mornings are usually the busiest times while the hours nine to eleven in the morning and from 6.30 to 8.30 p.m. evening find people using their phones more than at any other times."

"With the Bell providing continuous day and night service, the hours the girls work are, of necessity, quite different, by arranged from usual office routine. They work a five day week, and their days or evenings are divided into six, seven and eight hour "tricks." The six-hour trick is usually in the evening hours, and there is a half hour off duty. If a girl is working the seven-hour trick, as a rule it is broken into two, three and a half hour sessions, one in the morning and one in the evening. The eight-hour trick is usually a straight day trick or night trick. A fifteen minute rest period is included."

"The longest long-distance call which has gone through originating from the Georgetown office was to Australia. Most long-distance calls, however are to Toronto or are placed through Toronto, and from the Georgetown office there are five direct lines and two direct circuits to Guelph, Brampton and Milton."

"And of course everyone knows whenever there's a fire,

the first thing to do always is call the operator, because the siren is rung from the phone office. There are two levers controlling the siren which the operator receiving the alarm immediately pulls. Then the Fire Chief is usually called and the Hydro Superintendent. Sifted speaking, however, the Bell operators are required only to ring the siren and then answer the firemen's inquiry from the Town Hall. But often, in order to be of more service, in addition to notifying the Chief direct, the operators try to locate the firemen at their various places of employment."

"Just about a year ago, the Bell Telephone office was completely renovated with an attractive new colour scheme, commercial office, and comfortably furnished lounge room with interior decorations by Eaton's, making the surroundings for the staff very pleasant indeed."

TWO-PARTY PHONES
On August 16, 1950 the Herald carried an announcement headed "GLEN WILLIAMS WILL GET 2-PARTY PHONE SERVICE." It read:

"Glen Williams will have complete two party telephone service by early October. This news was announced by W. O. Misener, manager of the local Bell Telephone office and all individual telephone users who will be affected by the change in service have been notified."

"There has been a growing need for improved telephone service in Glen Williams which, though not incorporated as a village and still officially only part of Esquimaux (sic) Township has had tremendous growth in the past ten years. Most business firms as well as a few private individuals have put in two party service but the large bulk of the population are still on rural lines."

"Telephone service rates in Glen Williams will be exactly the same as in Georgetown. The new numbers will be contained in the new telephone book which is due to be distributed in October."

By the end of 1950 there were 1,500 telephones in Georgetown. Following are several announcements appearing in the Georgetown Herald during 1950. Dial service, promised tentatively in an interview three years earlier for 1950 or 1951, was now definitely in the Company's program. In an announcement by W. O. Misener's in October 1950 or soon afterwards was "off the records" when it was given to interviewees, but from now on the local Press could make the announcement with confidence that it was official."

DIRECTORY CHANGES
(July 25, 1951) — The new Georgetown telephone directory to be issued here early in November will contain several important changes due to the steady increase in the number of telephones in service.

W. O. Misener, Bell Telephone manager announced this week that the new directory will contain listings for subscribers in the following exchanges: only: Brampton, Caledon, Erin, Georgetown, Laurel, Milton, Mono Mills, Orangeville, Shelburne and Victoria.

"Four exchanges: Aurora, Newmarket, Roche's Point, and Sutton — are being removed from the Georgetown book. These four exchanges will be contained in a separate directory to be issued early in October for Newmarket-Richmond Hill - Aurora and Victoria."

"Changes in the new book, the manager stated, will provide telephone subscribers here with a more convenient directory for local calling, in view of the increasing importance of Georgetown and other localities in this area as telephone centres."

(September 5, 1951). Increase of 25c per month for two party residence telephone service in Georgetown and of 50c for residence individual lines are proposed in Bell Telephone's application for revised rates filed in Ottawa with the Board of Transport Commissioners for Canada, according to W. O. Misener, the company's manager here.

"The proposed increase for individual line business service is \$1.00 monthly and for two party business service it is 75c monthly."

"No change is proposed in long distance rates."

BELL PURCHASES RUSTON PROPERTY DIAL PHONES PROMISED IN 1953

Georgetown will have dial telephones in 1953.

Announcement is made this week by the Bell Telephone Company of the purchase of property on Main Street by the company. It is the old Ruston property on the corner of Main and James Streets, vacant since the death of Miss Jessie Ruston two years ago.

The company plans to tear down the house and erect a new building to house the mechanical apparatus required for the new dial telephone service.

W. O. Misener, district manager for the company, states that this is the first visual step in that direction. It will also be necessary to erect additional cable throughout the town and change all telephones both in town and in the country. The amount of work necessary will take considerable time and it is hoped that materials will be available for all the work to be completed in 1953.

Residents of Glen Williams will have an added benefit from the new service, for all telephones in that area will be converted to two-party or private line service. This was originally planned last fall, but had to be abandoned at that time because of material shortages. The company does not plan to convert these phones from rural lines now, with the dial project definitely underway, but will do so when the changeover to dials is made.

EDITORIAL
The Editors Corner
Dial Telephones Coming

Indicative of the progress and growth of Georgetown is an official announcement, this week by the Bell Telephone Com-

pany that dial phones will be in use in Georgetown and district in 1953.

The company has purchased the old Ruston property on Main Street and plans to tear down the present building and erect a modern one which will house the complicated equipment needed for operation of the mechanical dial system. New cables will be laid in town; and the tremendous job will begin next year of converting all present telephones to the dial apparatus.

The new system will have definite benefits in faster service, plus an added factor for residents of Glen Williams who will have their country lines replaced with private and two party service. From time to time there are complaints of delays in placing calls, of poor connections and other minor annoyances which are bound to crop up in a manual system particularly when old equipment is being used. Business firms, particularly, will be glad to have faster service.

However, there will be some regret too, when one thinks that most of the present staff of telephone girls will be replaced by mechanical devices which will take away the "personal touch" from making a telephone call. There is something friendly about a voice saying "Number, please," "The line is busy," "One moment, please," "Here's your party," and "I'll ring again."

But such is progress. Machine replaces man, or in this case, woman, and the day will come when telephone girls will be as extinct as horses and high button shoes.

(continued next week)

elf Maybe I'll get my Christmas tree to stand up?

"Thus, hope springs eternal in the human breast. One milestone nearer the grave, but also a milestone passed in the effort to live life with dignity, humor and love."

Perhaps you don't like those three terms. Perhaps you would prefer rectitude, righteousness, and religion. Or industry, intelligence and integrity. Fair enough.

I like mine because they are more difficult. I find it extremely hard to be dignified, no matter how I try. It's almost impossible to retain a sense of humor when you have Rotten Kids. And it's extremely difficult to love. Truly and without qualifications.

This is all very abstract. Let's get down to concrete examples. Have you ever tried to be dignified while performing a flying tackle at your daughter in the snow in the backyard as she is leaving home for good, at midnight?

Have you ever tried to retain a gay sense of humor when your home form has given you, for Christmas, instead of the crock you confidently expected, a bottle of shaving lotion? (Some people can drink it; I can't!)

Have you ever tried to love someone with bad breath, a constant sniff and dishevelled nails, but who is basically a good, dull person?

Ah, well, the hell with it. It's another year. Once a square, always a square. And all three members of my family agree that I'm the most perfectly rounded square they have ever met. But I'm trying to become at least a parallelogram in '58. And the same to you.

Sometimes I feel like crying, bursting into tears and letting the drips fall where they may. But I can't. The floor has just been polished. And somebody has to take out the garbage, and drive the cleaning lady home, and something cheering about the whole thing. There's no place to go but up.

Maybe Hugh will become a famous actor. Maybe King will become a waitress who doesn't have her thumb in the soup. Maybe the Old Lady will become normal.

And, who knows, maybe this is my big year. Maybe I'll break 100 in golf. Maybe I'll write the Great Canadian novel.

ONE OF A SERIES

Georgetown, Ontario, 14 Edith Street, December 24th, 1967

Dear Mr. Editor:

I must rejoice with you in your editorial of December 21, in which you commented happily that the present need for increased library facilities in Georgetown indicates that the art of reading has been restored to its rightful place in our culture, although as you say, "There was a day when television threatened to make us a nation of illiterates, so busy were we with the fascinations of this new entertainment media."

The statement in quotes above, written by you, contains within itself a very apt illustration of the danger of becoming illiterate, which we may or may not have just barely escaped, in the use of the plural noun "media" whose "medium" should obviously have been used.

Just so you, our esteemed editor, do not become even more illiterate than TV already appears to have made you, may I state, in the most elementary terms, that TV is an entertainment and communications medium, as also is the newspaper by which you make your living, or radio, or a library. Taken together, however, they are media, or mediums if you prefer, as any good dictionary will point out to you. Simple, eh?

Not so simple, however, are the potential consequences of your illiteracy. I am particularly concerned because of the danger of its spreading into other facets of our language. Envisage, if you will, the pandemonium that would result, were you to prepare a compendia or even a synopsis of all the crimes you have committed in the name

of good grammar. Or the disease might spread in the opposite direction, in which case you might be responsible for a plethora of "proparandum," amounting to hysterium or mania, against the use of "good English in radio, TV, dramam, or operum."

Now Mr. Editor, before you write your next editorial, say a little prayer for those who will be reading it, and remember—although it is now legal in this country to induce mis carriage, this is not a licence

THE GEORGETOWN HERALD THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 1948 PAGE 5

Says Editor Should Be "Singular" In Editorials

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