



Richmond Hill exchange is shown here with the three positions and the staff of operators which handled the service in the summer of 1946. At the extreme left is Miss Dorothy Costoff, sole remaining member on the staff today of this group.

## Rising Telephone Traffic Outpaces Ability To Provide More Equipment Heavy Task Thrown On Local Girls

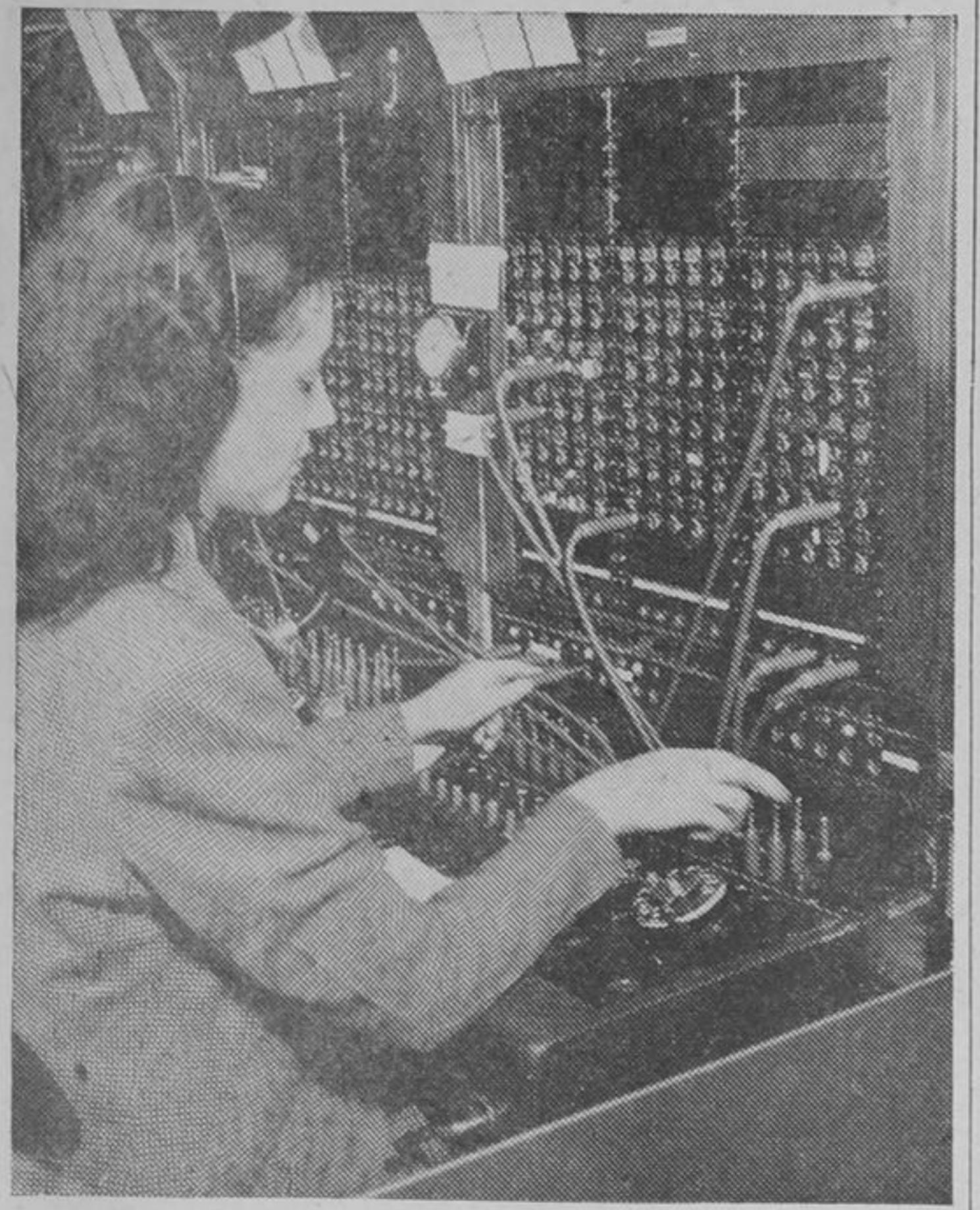
Could you serve customers at the rate of three a minute or answer your doorbell as many times each minute of the working day? Can't be done, you say? Miss Alba Thompson says it can, and what's more she supervises a staff of girls who do it everyday. They happen to be your local telephone operators, each of whom handles 185 local and long distance calls an hour at the switchboard in the Bell Telephone exchange here.

If you recall the seemingly endless line of cars passing through Richmond Hill from the north after a particularly fine summer week end, you can get a fair picture of the traffic that is humming along the telephone highways here, not only in the summer, but all year round. Miss Thompson says that folks in Richmond Hill have been averaging well over 4,000 local calls each day in recent weeks, and upwards of 500 calls to out-of-town points. Just two years ago, telephone traffic was a mere dribble of 1,800 local calls a day compared to the deluge today, and yet in 1947, 1,800 calls represented a substantial load.

But let Miss Thompson give you the picture in her own words, and explain why it just isn't humanly possible for her operators to respond as quickly as they did in former times. In other words, why you sometimes have to wait to get through.

"Two years ago, we had three switchboard positions and seven operators handling them on shifts," she explained. "Right now, there are six positions and twenty operators on the staff. And yet, the traffic has been rising faster than we have been able to obtain new equipment.

**Explains Delays**  
"Just to show why there is delay sometimes — just one reason of several — let's watch the switchboard for a moment," she said. "Here's a call coming in to position No. 1. The girl plugs in to speak to the party, gets the number they want, and then finds that number is on position number five, down near the end of the board. She can't make that long reach over with her arm to make the connection, so she 'posts' the number. Now 'posting' a number means that she signals the girl by means of a small green light which flashes on position number five to



The switchboard girl here is seen "posting" a number from her position to another position along the switchboard out of her reach. She is plugging in with her left hand on the lower part of the board to signal a fellow-operator that a number on the latter's board is being called. The girl on the position being called receives the signal in the form of a small green light, and if she is busy handling another call, she necessarily must await its completion before she handles

of Richmond Hill, and one returning to school. This naturally has placed quite a burden on the remaining girls, and although we have obtained new girls as quickly as possible to fill the ranks, the training of a switchboard operator is something that can't be accomplished overnight. It takes time before a new girl is as proficient in the job as an experienced operator.

"Just as a passing mention, you may be interested to know that there are high points in telephone traffic each day, when our load is at its heaviest. They are between 9:00 and 11:00 in the morning and between 7:00 and 10:00 in the evening. If people could possibly remember that these are very busy times and if some of their calls could be as conveniently placed at other periods of the day, it would certainly help to cut down delays and speed up the service by distributing the heavy traffic more evenly."

Miss Thompson explained that customers themselves can make things a little smoother by observing a few simple rules. "For instance, if a customer fails to ring off after he's through, our girls have no indication that the conversation is over. They have to take time out, and cut in on the line to see if conversation is still going on. If they are busy, that's just a little extra work that takes them momentarily off the essential job of putting calls through. And very often people don't take the short time needed before telephoning to look up numbers in their directory. They rely on the operator to find it for them from the name and address they supply. For the most part, the greater percentage of all calls to 'Information' for this purpose could be avoided and time saved."

**Neighbourliness Helps**  
Another headache from time to time, the chief operator explained, is caused by party-line service. "That's where neighbourliness really counts," she said. "And it's really up to the people themselves who share lines to see that one or the other doesn't take up more than their fair share. "During the last few months, we have had some losses in our operating staff," Miss Thompson said. "As a matter of fact, we have lost six girls, almost a third of our staff, since April of this year for various reasons — some to get married, some moving out

of Richmond Hill, and one returning to school. This naturally has placed quite a burden on the remaining girls, and although we have obtained new girls as quickly as possible to fill the ranks, the training of a switchboard operator is something that can't be accomplished overnight. It takes time before a new girl is as proficient in the job as an experienced operator.

"Now a glance at our premises here will show you that we are very close to reaching the absolute maximum of available space. Within the next two or three months another switchboard position will be installed, and our original three replaced by a newer type. To do this will require a complete rearrangement of our exchange facilities in order that they can be fitted in. With the tremendous amount of wiring necessary for switchboards, you can see that although it may not sound like a vast addition, it will entail a great deal of work and planning to install, and of course it will certainly mean a further spreading of the traffic load of the switchboard at present, which in turn naturally relieves the load on the individual operator.

**Dial Service in 1951**  
"Readers may recall, too, that we made an announcement in August of last year that dial service was being planned for Richmond Hill in 1951. Meanwhile, we must try to do the best with what we have, and as I have mentioned, no effort is being spared to expand our present type of switchboard, as much as possible within these limited premises, so that we can maintain the service as efficiently as possible until the new system comes into being.

"Actually, Richmond Hill is much better off than many communities in regard to the number of new residents who are without service. Our policy has been to provide service for newcomers to Richmond Hill as quickly as possible, thereby keeping pace, telephone-wise, with the growth in the town's business and residential requirements. Restriction of this policy would, no doubt, have resulted in lower operating loads, but would also have resulted in a large number of people who have moved here being without any telephone service for a lengthy period."

Mr. Van Dusen also mentioned that there had been a very sizeable expansion program of wire and



In contrast, the expanded switchboard at the local exchange today shows part of the operating staff of twenty who handle telephone traffic in Richmond Hill. At extreme rear left is Miss Alba Thompson who is the chief operator here. The six positions shown here represent 100 per cent increase in facilities within the last three years, and a seventh is to be added shortly.

## Horticultural Society Draws Record Crowd At Annual Meet C. E. Little Elected President

(By Glad McLatchy)

The spirit of Halloween prevailed at the Annual Meeting of the Richmond Hill Horticultural Society, on Thursday, October 27. Witches, cats, owls and bats hovered around the prize table, just crammed with wonderful prizes, and perky little pumpkins smiled saucily at the record crowd assembled in the auditorium of the Public School.

It was just a little different to annual meetings held in the past and everyone seemed to feel freer and the expressions registered satisfaction at the way Mr. A. J. McLatchy and his committee had handled the situation.

Highlight of the evening came when Mr. R. D. Little presented Life Memberships to Mrs. A. J. Hume, one time secretary-treasurer of the Society and to Mrs. A. L. Phipps, one time director. In making the presentation Mr. Little spoke of the fine and faithful work the two ladies had rendered for many years. Wishing them many more years of association with the local society he presented them with roses.

In reviewing the year's activities, Mr. C. E. Little informed the members that money had been set aside to be used in the beautification of the land adjacent to the Library and also the entrances to the village. This work, he said, would be attended to in the spring of 1950.

Thanking the Directors with whom he had worked, he stressed the fine work of the secretary-treasurer and presented Miss Gladys McLatchy with flowers as a token of appreciation. The Lib-

eral Printing Company was remembered on the thank-you list, especially Col. Picking for his timely boost in the local paper. It was nice to know that two of the directors of the society have brought fame to Richmond Hill by winning prizes at the C.N.E., Mrs. Wm. Banks with flowers and Mr. Douglas Boyd with his silver work; Enjoy Box Social

Something different on the program came with the Box Social. The boxes, all decorated in true Halloween fashion were auctioned by Mr. Harry Kane to interested male bidders who found the next few moments of sociability very enjoyable indeed, and suggested that another box social should be forthcoming in the near future.

Among the out-of-town visitors, Lt.-Col. C. H. Reeve, representative of the T. Eaton Company Ltd., was on hand and presented the Eaton Trophy to Mrs. J. Dedlow for the highest number of points accumulated at the season's shows. Mr. G. Lummis, president of the North York Horticultural Society, presented the Richmond Hill Society prizes to the following members, Mrs. B. L. Anderson, second prize winner in the general class, and to Mrs. Wm. Banks, third prize winner in the same class. Mrs. Albert Rice captured the first prize in the commercial class with Mr. C. E. Little and Miss Jane Little winning second and third prizes respectively. In the new exhibitors class, Mrs. C. Styan won the first prize, Mrs. A. S. Barber second and Miss K. Ball won third prize.

With tables laden with jams, jellies, preserves, fruit, vegetables and flowers, the judges, Miss Jane

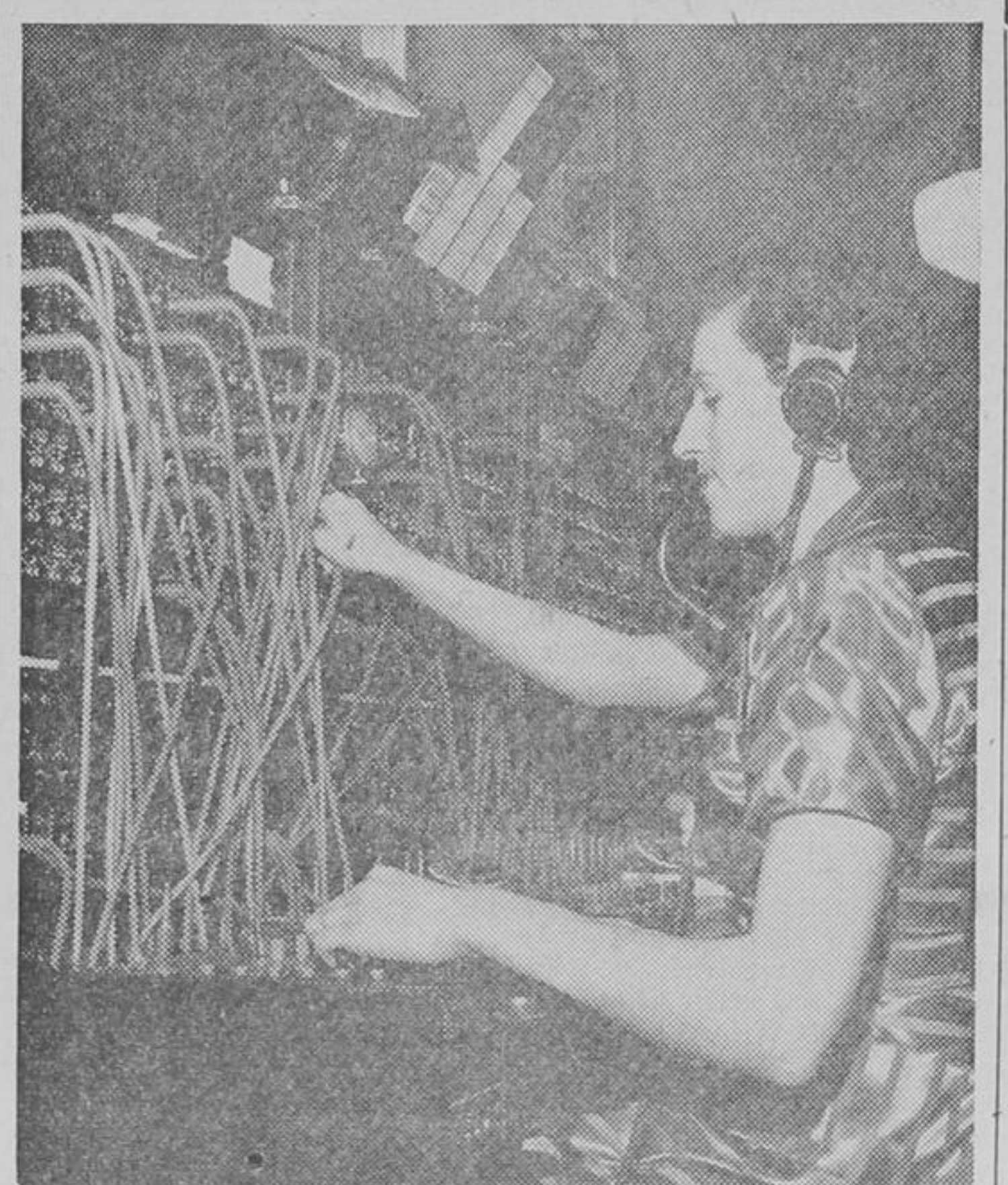
Little of Toronto, Miss Margaret Dove and Mr. Carl James admitted that they had really been hard pressed to commit themselves to first and second prize-winners as everything was so fine in quality and quantity, however the following members received prizes in the various classes; which were donated by Mr. W. A. Wagner and the local Society.

Class 1, apples, J. Dedlow, Mrs. D. Boyd; class 2, pears, Mrs. D. Boyd; class 4, potatoes, A. Stong, Mrs. W. May; class 5, carrots, A. Stong, J. Dedlow; class 6, beets, A. Stong, W. A. Wagner; class 7, cabbage, Mrs. W. T. Cook, Mrs. D. Boyd; class 8, squash, C. Bancroft, Dr. A. Doan; class 9, pumpkin, Miss Cora Brodie; class 10, bouquet suitable for living room, Mrs. I. D. Ramer, Mrs. J. Dedlow; class 11, bouquet of foliage only for living room, Mrs. Wm. Banks, Miss K. Little; class 12, houseplant, (flowering), Mrs. W. T. Cook, Mrs. J. Dedlow; class 13, houseplant (non-flowering), W. A. Wagner, Mrs. J. Dedlow; class 14, green pickles, Mrs. C. H. Sanderson, Mrs. A. Bales; class 15, red pickles, Mrs. D. Boyd, Mrs. J. Dedlow; class 16, mustard pickles, Mrs. D. Boyd, Mrs. Wm. May; class 17, raspberry jam, Mrs. D. Boyd, Mrs. J. Dedlow; class 18, peach jam, Mrs. D. Boyd, Mrs. I. D. Ramer; class 19, conserve, Mrs. A. Bales, Mrs. C. H. Sanderson; class 20, other kind of jam not mentioned, Mrs. Wm. May, Mrs. Wm. Banks; class 21, apple jelly, Mrs. Freeman Barker, Miss Cora Brodie; class 22, grape jelly, Mrs. D. Boyd, Mrs. Wm. May; class 23, currant jelly, Mrs. Freeman Barker, Dr. A. Doan; class 24, other kind of jelly not mentioned, Mrs. D. Boyd, Mrs. A. Bales; class 25, preserved peaches, Mrs. Freeman Barker, Mrs. D. Boyd; class 26, preserved pears, Mrs. C. H. Sanderson, Mrs. D. Boyd; class 27, preserved plums, Mrs. J. Dedlow, Mrs. D. Boyd; class 28, preserved cherries, Mrs. R. D. Little, Mrs. I. D. Ramer; class 29, preserved raspberries, Mrs. D. Boyd, Mrs. Wm. May; class 30, other preserves not mentioned, Mrs. W. T. Cook, Mrs. C. H. Sanderson.

**Elect Officers**  
The election of officers was conducted by Mr. Percy Bone of Thornhill, and the slate for 1950 is as follows: Hon. pres., Mr. Wm. Redelmeier; hon. vice-pres., Mr. R. D. Little, Mr. Robt. Keith, Mr. Allan Bales; president, Mr. C. E. Little; 1st vice-pres., Mr. W. A. Wagner; 2nd vice-pres., Mr. A. Rice; directors for 1950-52, Mr. Paul Angle, Mr. A. J. McLatchy, Mrs. J. Dedlow, Mrs. Freeman Barker and Mr. George Fenwick.  
The Marksman entertained with several songs and they were given Waterman's pens. Miss Lola Jones who accompanied at the piano was also presented with a pen.

**Unionville Girl And Husband Buy Camp**  
Mrs. E. Clifford Labbett of Toronto, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. A. C. Kennedy of Unionville, and her husband have purchased Camp Oconto, a private camp for school girls situated on Eagle Lake in the Rideau Lake district.

Mrs. Labbett has been a camp leader since her C.G.I.T. days, and was director of Camp Tapawingo, the Y.W.C.A. camp at Parry Sound, from 1945 to 1948. She spent last summer at Camp Oconto as senior counsellor.



Miss Dorothy Costoff is seen at a switchboard facing a spaghetti-like mass of cords which indicates in a small way the volume of telephone traffic in the local exchange. It frequently happens that with all the cords plugged in, as they are shown here, there are no remaining cords available for a moment or two for further incoming calls, sometimes necessitating a delay on the part of the operator until she finds herself free to handle additional callers.

this district during the last three years in order to provide more telephone service in the community. He recalled that this community has been particularly outstanding in the post-war period as far as new housing and industrial growth. "Such growth," he said, "as in many other localities throughout the company's territory, had far exceeded the expectation of those who planned telephone development ahead. As a matter of fact," he said "I know

seen a few years ago just how greatly Richmond Hill would develop. For we telephone people, it has been almost like trying to serve a brand-new community that has sprung up overnight while we, hampered by a lack of ready supplies of telephone materials, have naturally been unable to meet the pace of this rapid expansion. It must be admitted, however, that the company's program, evidenced even right here in Richmond Hill, is a very significant story of tele-

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Original Story by ROBERT BUCKNER and ROBERT FLOREY · A ROBERT BUCKNER PRODUCTION · Directed by ROBERT FLOREY

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PERCY KILBRIDE · Directed by ELLIOTT NUGENT

Friday & Saturday — November 11, 12

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**YELLOW SKY**  
Violence and vengeance bent, they met... and something had to give!  
Starring  
**GREGORY PECK**  
**ANNE BAXTER**  
**RICHARD WIDMARK**  
Directed by WILLIAM A. WELLMAN  
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