

## PHONE SERVICE CALLED ATROCIOUS AT RATE HEARING

Higher Cost O. K. Says Lawyer if Order Has Teeth For Improvement.

Assistant Corporation Counsel Fertig to-day attacked the New York Telephone Company before the Public Service Commission at a hearing on the company's application for increased rates. He said the expenditures by the company of \$450,000 for advertising and other publicity in support of the increase of rates during the hearings was a misuse of money which should be applied to construction and bettering telephone service.

"If these hearings were before a court," he said, "there would be no difficulty in having the company declared in contempt for its brazen efforts to prejudice the hearing."

A. C. Hume, a lawyer of No. 547 Fifth Avenue, described the service at present as "simply awful." Speaking for a number of uptown lawyers, he said, they were willing to pay higher rates if the order authorizing the increase "had teeth in it to compel proper service."

Dr. Edward E. Hicks of the Kings County Medical Association said he was the spokesman for twenty-three Brooklyn physicians who were willing to pay a higher rate if the present "atrocious service" was bettered. They opposed the proposed toll rate and wanted a flat rate.

Olin J. Stephens of the Stephens Fuel Company of the Bronx said he believed the company should have a higher rate because the present service was bad due to the disorganization of the staff of the company and the resignations of underpaid employees to go into higher-paid work.

W. L. Parks of the Flatbush Taxpayers Association urged the Commission to go deep into the company's statements of its financial needs.

"We feel," he said, "that the company is wrong in regarding the 80,000 unfiled applications for telephones as a liability. We believe that such a demand for service is an asset of the company."

Company, Brooklyn, said that if an increase of rates was necessary for restoring telephone service to the efficiency of five years ago, the increase should be granted publicly because the present service was "atrociously inefficient and imperfect."

George B. Branson, an insurance broker, said he believed the present poor service resulted in a loss to every downtown businessman of from 5 to 7 per cent. of his office time.

"Let the commission," he demanded, "in granting increased rates make it possible for the subscriber to take recourse to legal action to recover damages for inadequate and inefficient service. The people are tired of futile cursing at the service and want a means for taking an action which will get results."

George A. Morrison, No. 918 Sterling Place, Brooklyn, a contractor and builder, said he was paying \$100 a month for service which was not worth \$40 a month to him.

"About all I get, half the time," he said, is "excuse it, please, I'm sorry."

When he mailed a check to the company saying the bill was paid under protest as a cessive for poor service, Morrison said his service was suspended. The check was not acknowledged. After he protested for a week service was restored and the check was brought back by a messenger, who said the bill would be adjusted.

"In other words," said Morrison, "the company evaded making any written record of its arbitrary action in suspending service while it was in receipt of my check." Commission Hill said the telephone company lawyers if they wanted to cross-examine Morrison. They laughingly declined the offer.

B. S. Waxman, chairman of the Flatbush Taxpayers Association charged that

new subscribers could always get installation through the mediation of persons politically powerful.

T. P. Selwyn, Vice President of the company, submitted figures showing that traffic had more than doubled since 1911 and that the company had increased its operating forces 51 per cent. since 1914; 357 "positions" for operators have been added to switchboards and 1,721 more are needed.

Operators were handling 100 calls an hour in 1910, he said, and a year later were handling only 64 calls an hour, showing the company was doing the best to "run 'em down."

Seventeen per cent. of the calls are not registered because of busy wires, "don't answers" and wrong numbers, thirty per cent. of the employees kept 20 were persons who had six months or less experience. The company regarded two years as necessary to train an efficient operator.

## CANADA PROVINCES VOTING ON BOOZE

Wets Confident of Carrying Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba.

MONTRÉAL, Oct. 25.—Voters of four Canadian provinces are to-day balloting on the prohibition question, and in the Western provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta it is claimed by the "wets" that British Columbia's recent election deciding for the sale of liquor under government control will have a decided influence in favor of the anti-Prohibitionists. In Nova Scotia the "drys" are very confident of success.

been shown in the campaign except in the far northern city of La Pas, where wet enthusiasts took an official referendum Saturday which resulted overwhelmingly in favor of the wets.

In all the provinces the one question the voters have to answer is whether importation of intoxicating liquor shall be permitted. Control by the Government will be established in all provinces voting wet and open selling of liquor will not be retained.

American slain in Cananea, Mexico WASHINGTON, Oct. 25.—M. T. Sawyer, an American, was murdered in Cananea, Mexico, last Wednesday, the State Department was advised to-day. The American Consul at Nogales has been instructed by the Secretary of State to request the local authorities there to take all possible measures to apprehend the murderer.

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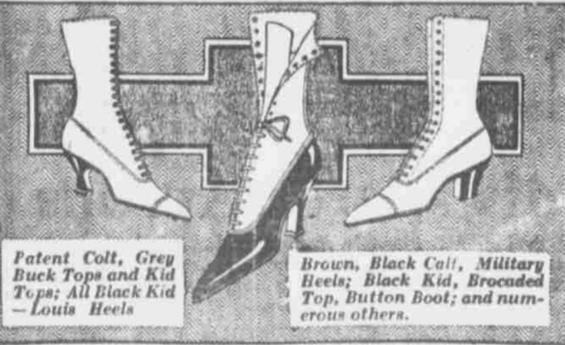
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See page 21 for Other Hearn Advertising.

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