

ORDINANCE REQUIRES 'PHONE IMPROVEMENT

BY HAROLD D. STROUD

In the Chicago Telephone's ordinance made effective November 6, 1907, and to which there has been no contrary amendment, it says:

5. Company to adopt Improvements and Make Extensions—The Chicago Telephone Company shall, without extra charge therefor to its lessees, subscribers and patrons or the City of Chicago, at all times maintain its plant, system, wires, cables, electrical conductors and other equipment and service at the highest practicable efficiency, and to that end shall promptly adopt and put into use within the city of Chicago all available improved apparatus, appliances, equipment and methods of service, developed in the progress of the art of telephony, which shall have come into common use from time to time, or if experience has shown them to be practicable, and shall furnish the same to its said lessees, subscribers and patrons within said City of Chicago. Said Chicago Telephone Company shall at all times during the period of this grant so operate its plant, systems, wires, cables, electrical conductors and other equipment as to give to its said lessees, subscribers and patrons the best service possible under then existing conditions of the art of telephony.

Clause 17. Forfeiture—The Chicago Telephone Company by the acceptance of this ordinance expressly agrees that in the event it shall make default in the observance or performance of any one or more of the agreements, duties or obligations imposed upon it by any of the provisions of this ordinance, and if any such default or defaults shall continue for a period of three (3) months (exclusive of all times during which the company may be delayed or interfered with, without its connivance, by unavoidable accidents, labor strikes, or the orders or judgments of any

court entered in any suit brought without its connivance), after written notice thereof to it from the city of Chicago, then and in each and every case the said city of Chicago by its city council shall be entitled to declare this grant and all the rights and privileges of said Chicago Telephone Company hereunder to maintain and operate its system of wires, cables, electrical conductors, poles and conduits in any of the streets, alleys, tunnels or public ways in the said city of Chicago, to be forfeited and at an end.

The city of Chicago has spent thousands and thousands of dollars of the people's money, and have caused to be spent through appraisals and investigations thousands and thousands more, and, after all of this, what has it amounted to? There has been a delay of three years in making a revision of the rates, so that the next revision is several years away. In the meantime the Chicago Telephone Company may enjoy immunity as far as fair rates are concerned but it is clearly up to the new telephone commissioner and the city fathers to serve notice upon the Chicago Telephone Company that it must improve its apparatus.

Automatic telephones are not an experience any longer and if the city of Chicago will appoint a real sincere investigation committee to look into the question of efficiency or apparatus they will find, independent of their own investigation, that noted engineers throughout the world have approved automatic equipment, and engineers from the British government, from France, Australia, Canada, South America, Cuba and a number of other countries have approved the adoption of automatic equipment for their countries.

This is not a matter to be treated lightly, especially in our larger cities where the telephone service is getting near the point where it will be ab-