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MUNICIPAL TELEPHONY IN GREAT BRITAIN.

By F. Dagger, Telephone Engineer, Toronto.

Notwithstanding the attacks of its opponents, municipal telephone systems in Great Britain are increasing in number, and so far the results have been most encouraging. At the present time municipal exchanges are in operation, or in course of construction, at Glasgow, Portsmouth, Brighton, Swansea, and Hull. The Glasgow system which first gave service in March, 1901, has now in operation 11,500 telephones, the average revenue per telephone being \$21. In order, however, to compare this revenue with Canadian rates ten per cent. royalty paid to the British Post-Office must be deducted, which reduces the average receipts per telephone to \$18.90 per annum. This exceedingly small charge to subscribers has enabled the municipality to meet all operating and maintenance expenses, leaving a balance sufficient to provide for interest and sinking fund, and to set aside a surplus of \$17,775.50 for depreciation. This is an exceptionally good showing for two years and nine months' working, and furnishes undeniable proof that municipal telephony is anything but the failure alleged by its opponents. The undertaking which

can pay its way as the Glasgow Corporation Telephone Department is doing, and can at the same time provide telephone users with a service covering 143 square miles at such a low annual cost, has no occasion to fear the assaults of its enemies, and can treat with contempt the opinions of "experts on behalf of the companies who try to split hairs over the particular merits of different types of equipment, or find fault because the original estimates have been exceeded in order to provide a larger reserve capacity for increase of business.

Regarding the quality of the Glasgow municipal system the following statement by Frederick M. Adams in the Brooklyn "Eagle" should be sufficiently convincing:

"The Glasgow telephone service is the best I have ever inspected. Mr. Bennett informed me that statistics showed that the average time required to make a connection was less than fifteen seconds. I made a test on my own account, and called up ten subscribers. Of the nine who responded, the average time from unhooking the receiver to answers from those addressed was fourteen seconds. It should be explained that the telephone booth is practically unknown in the office of a Glasgow business man. The instrument is on the edge of his desk, and the receiver and transmitter are in one piece. This aluminum device is connected with a wire cord, and the customer may converse leaning back in his chair or walking about the room, as he prefers. It is a most decided improvement over the clumsy and antiquated system which yet prevails in most exchanges in the United States."

In speaking of the Glasgow rates Mr. Adams says: "Permit me to make a contrast. I live in a suburb of New York city, and it costs me forty cents to telephone to any part of the city, and fifty cents to get a connection with Brooklyn. Newark, New Jersey, is only twenty-five miles away, and the rate is seventy-five cents for a few minutes' conversation."

The following figures, taken from the report of the Corporation Telephone Department for the year ending May 31st last, make an interesting study, and it will be noted that the financial position of the undertaking is growing stronger each year, so much so that in a few years we may look forward to a reduction of the already low rates:

	1902	1903	1904
Capital expenditure	\$938,415	\$1,319,468	\$1,526,208
Average cost per station (including spare plant and preliminary expenses	171 26	144 65	136 67
Amount borrowed and not repaid	902,809	1,181,136	1,390,336
Gross revenue	129,118	271,400	359,450