

The inevitable effect of the low rate of wages paid by the company was, as the local manager stated, the class of operators desired turned away, the applicants for positions fell off, and the company had great difficulty in obtaining either the number or class of operators required to properly carry on its business. It was necessary, therefore, to increase wages, and to do this immediately if the service were not to continue to suffer, and the alternative which apparently confronted the Montreal conference, in reference to the Toronto exchange, was whether the increase of wages should take place immediately, the hours remaining as they were, until, at least, after the College street exchange was completed, or whether there should be an increase in wages and at the same time a readjustment of hours which would help to offset any increased cost of service consequent upon the increase in salaries. 'If short hours are continued' wrote Mr. Dunstan on January 16, 'an increase in salary must be made and the present cost of service thereby advanced. It is very advisable to make the change in hours and wages coincide.'

It would appear that when the matter was discussed at the Montreal conference it was the evident desire of those present that the wages and hour question, so far as Toronto was concerned, should be dealt with at one and the same time, that any changes in wages might be accompanied by a change in hours. Also, that if at all possible, the change should be made without waiting for the completion of the College exchange. It was decided to increase the wages of the operators at Montreal, the change to take effect from the first of the year. A salary schedule applicable to the Toronto exchange was tentatively adopted and Mr. Dunstan was evidently instructed to go more fully into the question and see if it would not be possible to have the new schedule put into effect forthwith. It would appear that it had been represented to the conference that there was a considerable number of applicants for positions as operators in the company's office on the Toronto list; also, that notwithstanding his letter of December 20, 1906, Mr. Dunstan had conveyed the impression that it would be possible to so arrange matters at the Toronto Main exchange as to afford the necessary relief to the operators which would be required under the adoption of an 8-hour schedule. Mr. Macfarlane the general manager, was emphatic in his statement before the commission that at the time of the conference he understood the then equipment at the Main exchange afforded sufficient means for providing the necessary relief. After Mr. Dunstan's return to Toronto he had a conference with Mr. Maw and Mr. Clarke, the inspector of service and superintendent respectively, and the chief operators. At this meeting he discussed with them the possible adjustment that could be made, and thereafter wrote Montreal stating that he found the number of applicants was far less than had been stated at the conference, that as a matter of fact there were only 7 out of 106 who could be counted upon as being of any real service. This letter contains the recommendation of the local manager for a change to the 8-hour schedule and sets forth the real reasons why the change was made to take effect at the time and in the manner it did, despite objections which were quite apparent to the company. The letter which is dated Toronto, January 10, is as follows :-

OPERATORS HOURS AND SALARIES.

BELL TELEPHONE COMPANY, TORONTO, JANUARY 16, 1907.

Bell Telephone Company,
C. F. SISE, Jr., Esq.,
General Superintendent,
Montreal, P.Q.

'DEAR SIR,—Upon my return after the late conference on above matter, I thought it advisable to bring together the various chief operators and their first assistants. It is not wise to consult the staff, but it is very desirable to ascertain the probable feeling before adopting a radical change, and the chiefs and their assistants are so closely in touch as to enable them to speak from the operators' standpoint. My memorandum of the salary schedule adopted at the conference is as follows:—

'Local operators, 1 to 6 months.....	\$20 00
" 6 to 12 "	22 50
" 12 to 24 "	25 00
" 24 to 36 "	27 50
" and thereafter.....	30 00

Long distance, \$2.50 per month additional.

'To complete the schedule we would recommend giving local supervisors an increase of \$5 on being assigned to that work, or rather after they have shown by a few weeks' experience their ability to make good. A further increase of \$5 at the end of six months, not exceeding the maximum rate of \$35.

'Monitors, \$37.50.

'Long distance supervisors, checkers and monitors, maximum, \$37.50.

'I inclose schedule of hours recommended for the Main exchange, based upon the principle of an eight-hour day, one hour for lunch, no regular relief, shorter hours for those who take the broken periods and unpleasant hours, the newer operators taking the greater portion of the evening work, but a sufficient rotation among the older ones to make the evening staff efficient.

'The distribution of operators must depend upon the traffic. As this varies between city and city, and even between particular offices in a city, so must the schedule of hours differ to some extent. We think that the arrangement proposed for the Main here is better than that suggested by Montreal, that is, the operating curve will more closely follow our traffic curve. The main thing is that both offices will be applying the same general principle.

'I was very glad to find that the chief operators were absolutely satisfied that the proposed changes are not only in the interest of the service, but that they will be gladly received by a large proportion of the staff. They think there is no doubt as to that. The teacher feels that she will now be able to get applicants of the right quality, and that they will no longer turn on their heels and go out as they have done in the past. They all expressed themselves as greatly pleased, in which view Mr. Maw and Mr. Clarke heartily coincided.

'It is beyond question that there is now much dissatisfaction because operators cannot earn enough to pay for their board and clothing. If short hours are continued an increase in salary must be made, and the present cost of service thereby advanced. It is very advisable to make the change in hours and wages coincide.

'The position with regard to applications is this: A statement was made at the conference that we had several hundred on the waiting list. Upon my return I asked Mr. Maw to report, and the following speaks for itself:—

'"For the year 1906 and up to date I have on hand 106 applications. Out of these 99 are objectionable and undesirable, leaving 7, which are only fair, but in case of emergency might be considered. Applications previous to 1906 are undesirable and out of date."