

'Based upon records supplied by the offices interested, Mr. Baldwin concludes that the service here is inferior to that given in Montreal. Notwithstanding the defects of a service which is too hurried to be certain, I am led to believe from many sources that the service here, taken as a whole, is at least as good as that in Montreal.

'Subject to the above, I am in entire agreement with Mr. Hayes and Mr. Baldwin, except that they have not touched upon the important question of switchboard economy resulting from a higher loading of operators, and concerning which you are the best judge. Over a year ago I wrote as follows: "Every credit must be given for the training of operators in team work and in rapidity of movement. They are subjected to close and intelligent supervision. Personal experience and constant intercourse with subscribers leads unmistakably to one conclusion, namely, that the present service, while good, is far from perfect, and faults are those of too rapid operating. Complaints against transmission except from subscribers having Blake instruments, and against lack of promptness in making repairs are rarely if ever met with, whereas those with regard to wrong numbers, bells ringing, operators' failure to repeat, hurried utterance, and other troubles from the same cause are common. The service is good, but it is not what it should be. Its strong points are those of the system and equipment; its weak ones are those of operating.'

'The experience of the past twelve months has only confirmed the view which I have held from the beginning, and which is supported by the statements of Mr. Hayes and Mr. Baldwin.

'The same careful and intelligent management unhampered by a system fundamentally wrong would have given a greatly improved service at a materially reduced cost.

'As you know, both Mr. Maw and Miss Bogert were carried away by the plausible features of the scheme, and were at first enthusiastically favourable; because of the general desire to make the plan a success, unusual efforts were made, and the whole operating force threw themselves heart and soul into the work. People cannot work at high pressure forever, and this is now realized. Mr. Maw is frank and manly enough to now admit that the principle is wrong, and with this Miss Bogert coincides. They based their calculation on the vain hope that at sometime they would have a thoroughly trained, experienced staff. Short hours would secure the best material; everybody would be punctual; there would be no temporary absence and operators would remain for a long, if not indefinite period. By the very nature of things this could not be so. An analysis of the causes which led to resignations prior to the adoption of the system, showed that length of hours did not enter into the question. Experience since its adoption has confirmed this, and we never suffered so severely as during the past summer. Mr. Maw now realizes that the life of the operator is only between two and three years, and that we must always count upon having at least one-third partially. He therefore feels that it is impossible in an office like the Main to employ a plan which involves operators working at an extremely high rate. There is no room for beginners nor for operators who because of sickness or other reasons are not of the best. Success was predicted upon a seasoned efficient staff, something which cannot be obtained. It is the old story of the weakest link, and experience shows that the chain breaks when pressure of traffic due to any of the causes which operate in Toronto becomes too great for the operator not of the highest grade.

'Mr. Maw now says that better results can be obtained by a reasonable load carried for a day not exceeding 8 hours, with a somewhat increased wage.

'As previously pointed out, from 30 to 40 per cent of the staff board, and this percentage must govern. They require a living wage, and are now feeling it impossible to meet the increased cost of board. The teacher states that the best applicants, on learning that the salary is but \$18, and that they cannot depend upon much overtime, fail to fill in and return their applications. It is a fact that the most intelligent and brightest operators are those who do not live at home, but are thrown upon their own resources. It is a weakness in any system that it should discourage the best material and be applicable only to the less desirable. To pay the present high rate per hour for

much overtime is most uneconomical, and results are not secured if there is any foundation for the idea that the service suffers when operators become tired. Service may not be materially depreciated at the end of the day when operators have been working under ordinary pressure, but it certainly must suffer when operators work overtime after being subjected to a heavy strain for the preceding 5 hours.

'I feel that events have only justified my original contention that there is nothing about the work of operating which differentiates it from any other work to such an extent as to make a 5 hour day advisable or economical. If this is now the general opinion, it would appear unnecessary to make further tests, although this may be of value in other directions. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to revert to a longer day, because we have not the equipment which will permit unloading. Until the College exchange is opened the operating force must carry the present traffic, and it would neither be wise nor fair to increase the hours without decreasing the load. It would appear that nothing can be done for about a year, but I would recommend that after relief comes through the College office that we should then increase hours and wages and decrease the load. The increase in wages would not equal that of hours, and the cost per 1,000 calls should be lessened. In the meanwhile I think we should get from Mr. Hayes as much information as possible, so that when the change is made we can put in force the most improved schedule. Conditions have been kept in a disturbed state, service and the net revenue have suffered by reason of this experiment, and it is most desirable that in making another change we get the best results obtainable. \* \* \* \* \*

'Yours truly,

'(Signed) K. J. DUNSTAN,

'Local Manager.'

Immediately subsequent to the receipt of these reports, the local manager at Toronto was requested to attend a conference of the general manager and chief officers of the company at Montreal during the first week in January, 1907. This meeting had been called for the purpose of considering the general question of the wages and hours of the company's employees, and in particular to discuss the advisability of adopting a uniform arrangement of hours in Toronto and other localities.

From Mr. Dunstan's letter of December 20, 1906, to Mr. Baylis it will be seen that Mr. Dunstan, while himself strongly favouring a return to an 8-hour schedule, felt at the time the letter was written that a return to the longer hours could not be made until the new exchange on College street was completed, and the company's plant enlarged so as to admit of an extension of equipment, and an increase in the number of operators sufficient to cope with the increase in the company's business. Nothing, he thought, could be done 'for about a year.' Mr. Dunstan, moreover, clearly realized that it was high pressure of work and low wages which were responsible for the inefficient service in Toronto, and he told the head office so very plainly. 'The faults,' he says, 'are those of too rapid operating. People cannot work at high pressure forever, and this is now realized.—The principle is wrong. It is impossible in an office like the Main to employ a plan which involves operators working at an extremely high rate' and, elsewhere in the same letter, 'as previously pointed out, from 30 to 40 per cent of the staff board and this percentage must govern. They require a living wage and are now feeling it impossible to meet the increased cost of board.' In a letter of January 16, 1907, hereafter set out, he states 'It is beyond question that there is now much dissatisfaction because operators cannot earn enough to pay for their board and clothing.'