

Life of the "Phone Girl" Is A Happy One



Unusual Comforts and Conveniences Provided Phone Employees

Dancing, Music, Library Rest Room, Hot Meals

Elaborate Training School Equips Girls to Earn a Better Livelihood

A little over a year ago she was just another of the great army of unemployed American girls—clean, bright-eyed, alert and eager to grasp an opportunity. But she—like thousands of her sisters—lacked the one thing essential—a young woman's speedy success in the industrial world—a business education.

Today—just fifteen months later—she has a proud record of four promotions in as many seasons, and ranks as one of the successful Assistant Toll Instructors of the Bell Telephone Company.

Her rapid rise was due to the business education she received at the hands of the telephone company.

That—in a word—is the story of the remarkable success of Miss Elizabeth Greenwalt, who in January, 1919, was a student in the educational department, located in the great telephone building at Meridian and New York Streets, and who is today occupying the responsible well-paid position of Assistant Toll Instructor.

It is not an unusual story. As a matter of fact it is one that is duplicated many times among the nearly a thousand happy young women who make it possible for Indianapolis to have telephone service.

CONTENTED TELEPHONE EMPLOYEE EXPLAINS ADVANTAGES OF THE WORK.

According to Miss Greenwalt, the lot of the telephone employee is a most pleasant one. She smiles most affably as she tells you that not for the world would she trade places with other young women in offices and factories. "But," she adds, "it is a work any girl of ordinary intelligence can learn in a very few weeks—and best of all—she doesn't have to lay out any money for her telephone education. Instead of that, the company sends her to its own school and pays her while she is learning. As soon as she is out of the school her pay is substantially increased, and if she keeps her mind on her work there is no limit to the possibilities for advancement. I'm sure many girls would not be willing to work in offices and factories if they knew how attractive telephone work really is."

The visitor to any of the telephone buildings in the city—there are many of them scattered over Marion county—finds plenty to substantiate Miss Greenwalt's statements. The life of the telephone girl is a happy one—at least, insofar as the telephone company can provide for the happiness of its employees.

A GLIMPSE OF THE TELEPHONE GIRL OFF DUTY.

For instance, on top of the "Main" building at Meridian and New York Streets there is a big glassed-in rest-room where the girls spend their spare time. You can find little groups of them here at all hours, comfortably chatting, reading, resting on the wicker couches, writing to the "folks at home," playing the piano or dancing to the tunes produced on the perfectly modern Victrola.

You always find dancing in the rest-room—no matter what else is going on. The happy youthful spirits of the bright-faced girls seem to respond eternally to this well-named "poetry of motion."

Of good books there is a plenitude, supplied by the well-stocked shelves of a circulating library. The latest newspapers and magazines are also conveniently placed to while away an idle half hour.

Unlike most employees in other occupations, the telephone employee has access to this rest and recreation department at times other than the noon hour. She is employed for two periods of four hours each, each day. A fifteen-minute rest period is provided in the middle

of these work periods, in addition to the full hour allowed for lunch. In this way the girl may visit the rest room once every two hours if she so desires.

Should she feel indisposed—a quiet nook in another part of the building is provided with hospital beds and cots. She can lie here in absolute quiet—subject to the ministrations of the capable first aid department at any time her health seems to demand it.

AND, OH, GIRLS, THE HOME COOKING OF THE PHONE LUNCH ROOM.

At meal time she can buy a home-like hot lunch at even less than it would cost her to bring the cold victuals from home. She may have her noon meal in this lunchroom—or she may take all three meals here every day—at a cost much lower than she would have to pay in lunch rooms or boarding houses that are maintained for profit.

At every meal she finds kindred spirits at her right and left hand. Girls of her own age, interested in the very things that engage her own interest. It is an environment that must stimulate any alert young woman.

No doubt these are some of the reasons why many girls who started in telephone work ten and fifteen years ago are still glad to be enrolled as telephone employees. There are even some who have been on the local payroll for over twenty years. But in spirit and efficiency they are all still "girls."

Not all of the young women in the telephone work are local operators. There is such a demand for competent people to fill the high positions, that almost any girl of apt mind can qualify for advancement in a comparatively short time.

PLENTY OF WORK FOR THOSE WHO CAN NOT REPORT AT 8 AND LEAVE AT 5.

Another thing that makes telephone work attractive to young ladies who could not afford to seek other employment is the great adaptability of the hours. This is particularly advantageous to students—whether in high school or college—who find that the telephone company can give them fascinating and lucrative employment that will in no way interfere with their school work. Many an ambitious girl has paid her way through

school by taking advantage of this opportunity—and it is always possible for more of them to do so.

Other girls, who prefer not to go all the way to the center of town each day for their employment, avail themselves of the opportunity to work in the various outlying exchanges within easy walking distance of home.

EXCEEDINGLY HIGH TYPE OF GIRL FOUND IN THE WORK.

It is no doubt these factors of adaptability of hours to the needs of educated young women, the nearness of the work to the home, and the splendid provision made to interest girls of the right type in the work, and to fit them for it, that accounts for the exceedingly high standard of young women found in telephony.

It is a work to which the fondest mother can safely entrust the morals of her daughter. The girls are characterized by well educated, refined women who are on hand in every department to watch over their welfare. You see these matronly looking women with their kindly, smiling faces in the rest room, the locker room, the educational department and the lunch room, as well as in the work rooms.

These older employees seem to take an unusual interest in helping the newer girls adjust themselves to their environment. They see to it that no girl gets to the great switchboard until she has become thoroughly accustomed to the work.

NO NEED FOR TIMIDITY ON THE PART OF NEW EMPLOYEES.

From the moment the prospective employee steps into the enrollment office she is met in a way to assure her that she need have no fear of being embarrassed by her new occupation. For weeks she is schooled in the mechanics of telephony from the standpoint of both the local and long distance operator. She is taught the extreme simplicity of what to outsiders at times seems to be a hopelessly complex operation. She has it demonstrated to her that it is easy to give a subscriber the right number—and to do it quickly. She is taught what the various signals and signs of telephony mean—and how they operate.

And long before she is asked to take her position in front of the great switchboard she is given practical experience work in a "laboratory," that is

an actual switchboard room in miniature. Here, before a practical working switchboard, she receives and transmits calls just as she will later do when she gets into the actual work. The only difference lies in the fact that until she is absolutely sure of herself she gets no calls from the subscribing public. Her "number, please," is spoken into a phone, at the other end of which is an instructor, whose sole interest in life is to make the learner a more efficient operator.

Should the student make mistakes in her practice work she is shown how to correct them—and how to avoid them in the future. She learns exactly what to do and say under all circumstances. Every condition that can possibly arise when she is seated before the big switchboard taking her instructions from the general public, is duplicated over and over again before the school-room switchboard. And her education is stimulated by the fact that other girls, to right and left of her, are doing the same thing.

At first the calls are given to her slowly. As her efficiency increases, they are speeded up until at last she is handling calls as rapidly as they are ever handled even in the rush hours. And then she is ready to graduate into the actual work.

But, unlike most business schools, this one has paid her all the time she was learning—instead of asking her to pay it. This one gives her a permanent position immediately upon graduation and sees to it that her salary is advanced and her opportunities increased as her service lengthens.

SICK BENEFITS, INSURANCE AND PENSIONS FOR FAITHFUL WORKERS.

Should she take sick, a special insurance feature, to which she contributes nothing, pays her a sick benefit. After a reasonable length of service she is likewise entitled to a death benefit—and after a still greater length of service to retirement on a pension—should she so desire.

At all times her health is guarded. She is protected from disease by unusual sanitary precautions. Every girl is entitled to free consultation with the company's physician. Lungs, heart, eyes and hearing are also watched, both for the good of the employee and for the good of the service. This means less time off on account of sickness—and a remarkable freedom from those periods of depression known as "the blues," to which many

WHERE REST PERIODS ARE SPENT



HOT HOMELIKE LUNCHES ARE PROVIDED. AT LESS THAN HOME CAN PROVIDE THEM

WHERE THE "NUMBER PLEASE" ORIGINATES



ELIZABETH GREENWALT A TOLL STUDENT 15 MONTHS AGO—NOW ASSISTANT TOLL INSTRUCTOR

"EMBRYO" PHONE GIRLS' LEARNING THEIR WORK AT THE EXPENSE OF THE COMPANY



MABEL COMSTOCK HAS FOUND THE WORK INTENSELY INTERESTING FOR THE PAST 11 YEARS

feminine workers in other fields are so frequently subject.

There is at all times a friendly rivalry between the girls in the various exchanges—each trying to excel the other in good spirits and efficiency. Nor are the girls in the outlying exchanges at all willing to admit that their sisters in the central building have any advantage that can not be duplicated in the other exchange buildings. Some of these girls in the outlying buildings even insist that their own rest and recreation rooms are cozier and more attractive than the beautiful rest room in the "Main" building.

ANOTHER "SUCCESS STORY" FROM THE IRVINGTON EXCHANGE.

For instance, there is Mable Comstock of the Irvington office, who is perfectly content to help handle the phone traffic of Indianapolis' classic suburb. Miss Comstock says that as a convenient homelike place to work, the Irvington exchange can not be equaled anywhere. She is decidedly proud of the cozy type of bungalow architecture used in the building, the great trees back of it and the homelike lawn and hedge in front. "It's like working in your own home," she says—"almost like not being at work at all."

Eleven years ago Miss Comstock was a messenger. A little later she enrolled in the telephone school, and since then her rise has been rapid. She has become by turns, operator, recruiting officer, supervisor and clerk. Those who know her say that, like many other girls, the cheerful associations she has built up in telephone work, and the attractive nature of her employment, will probably add

materially to the length of her service. Unless, of course, she should at some time before that period has elapsed, go the way of so many telephone employees. "From telephone bell to wedding bell," say the happy telephone girls, "is not always a long step." Growth of business is not the only reason why there are always vacancies to be filled in the telephone industry. Scores of girls leave every year to take up happy home duties.

At any rate, it is true that there is no over-abundance of telephone employees. Any clean-thinking girl of ordinary intelligence can quickly qualify for the work. Her pay starts the moment she enrolls in the training school. It commences to advance the moment she leaves it. The position—with its many opportunities for advancement—is hers as long as she is willing to give service efficiently and pleasantly.

POSITIONS OPEN NOW FOR AMBITIOUS GIRLS.

Opportunities are now open for beginners in both the local and the long-distance departments. Good positions at attractive hours also await experienced telephone operators who

are always glad to return to this desirable work.

It is a position that requires no previous experience and offers speedy advancement. The girls are not put to work answering calls until they have been given suitable training. The pay starts the moment the girl is enrolled in the telephone school.

As a matter of fact, the rate of pay while learning is really higher than that usually paid to stenographers and bookkeepers just out of business college. Yet stenographers and

bookkeepers are not paid at all while they are learning their professions. Indeed, many of them not only have no income while attending school, but have to pay from \$50 to \$100 for the privilege of learning.

Contrasted to such conditions, what business opportunity is brighter than that offered to girls who take up telephoning—a free education in a work that offers lifetime employment—pay while learning—immediate advancement—and an opportunity to work up to an unusually well-paid, responsible position.

Girls Interested in Learning Telephone Work Should Apply to the

Indiana Bell Telephone Co.

New York and Meridian Streets

Employment Desk in Main Lobby

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.