

EDITORIAL PAGE



THE ADVANCE

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EDITOR

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A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT.

The front page of the Advance is, generally speaking, for local news. Occasionally, however, an event of general importance will break into it, either through a leath of local news or else thru its very importance. The result of a presidential election or the opening of a world war in Europe will get the front page of this newspaper even though Pasquotank is in the midst of a local election.

Likewise the editorial page of the Advance is for views on local issues; but occasionally we digress into more distant fields. And when a great achievement like the traversing of the continent by the telephone is consummated, and the event almost ignored till a more convenient season by the great daily press we feel that more than a flippant paragraph or mere passing mention is due.

The men who spoke across the continent on Monday, January 25th, were men long accustomed to the miracle of the telephone; and yet when a voice on the Atlantic brought instantaneous response from the Pacific the oldest of them could not escape a thrill of wondering, awe and amazement. Indeed some knowledge of the problems and difficulties that were to be overcome adds to the exultation that one feels in the success of the undertaking.

It was, perhaps, a little more difficult to string wires from Denver to San Francisco than from New York to Denver, but the actual construction of the line was the least of the engineering troubles. His real problem was to make the line "talk", to send something 3,000 miles with a breath as the motive power. In effect, the voyage of the voice across the continent is instantaneous; if its speed could be accurately measured, a fifteenth of a second would probably be nearly exact. In other words a message flying across the continent on the new Trans-continental Line travels not at the rate of 1,160 ft per second, which is the old stage-coach speed of sound, but at 56,000 miles per second. If it were possible for sound to carry that far, a 'Hello' uttered in New York and traveling through the air without the aid of wires and electricity, would not reach San Francisco until four hours later. The telephone now only transmits speech but transmits it thousands of times faster than its own natural speed.

But, while the telephone is breaking speed records, it must also guarantee safe delivery to these millions of little passen-

gers it carries every few minutes in the way of sound waves created at the rate of 2,100 a second. There must be no jostling or crowding. These tiny waves, thousands and thousands of varying shapes, which are made by the human voice, and each as irregular and as different from the other as the waves of the sea, must not tumble over each other or get into each other's way, but must break upon the Pacific coast just as they started at the Atlantic, or all the line fails and the millions of dollars spent upon it have been thrown away. And in all this line, if just one pin-point of construction is not as it should be, if there is one iota of imperfection, the miles of line are useless and the currents and waves and sounds and words do not reach the end as they should. It is such tremendous trifles, not the climbing of mountains and the bridging of chasms, that make the Transcontinental Line one of the wonders of the ages.

The engineer in telephony can not increase his motive power. A breath against a metal disk changes air waves into electrical currents and these electrical currents, millions of which are required for a single conversation must be carried across the continent and produce the same sound waves in San Francisco as were made in New York. Here is a task so fine as to be gigantic. In his 'History of the Telephone,' Herbert N. Casson says that the energy set free by cooling one spoonful of water just one degree, would operate a telephone for ten thousand years. It was to nurse and coax this baby current of electricity three thousand miles across the continent, under rivers and over mountains through the blistering heat of the alkali plains and the cold of snow-capped peaks, that has taken the time and thought and labor of the brightest minds of the scientific world.

In spite, however, of the fact that, compared with the electrical problems, the mere engineering task of constructing the line may appear simple to the scientist, no one can run his finger over the route of the new line on the map without being impressed with the magnitude of the undertaking. The data and figures are tremendous. The line crosses thirteen states it is carried on 130,000 poles. Four hard-drawn copper wires, .165 inch in diameter, run side by side over the entire distance, establishing two physical and one phantom circuit. One mile of a single wire weighs 435 pounds, the weight of the wires in the entire line being 5,920,000 pounds or 2960 tons. This, of course, is the transmission wires alone. In addition to these, each physical circuit uses some 43,600 miles of fine hair-like insulated wire 4-1,000 of an inch in diameter, for its loading coils.

Simply to string this immense amount of wire across the continent, to set the poles and insure insulation, to conquer the innumerable difficulties offered by the water, land, forests, mountains, deserts, rivers and lakes, was in itself a task of no mean magnitude. The Panama Canal is hailed as one of the greatest achievements of the world's workers, as it is, but the almost invisible lines of the Bell System, considered simply as to labor and cost constitute a monumental achievement.

The Canal was begun nine years ago and has cost \$310,000,000; within the same space of time the Bell Company has spent twice that amount in its engineering construction work alone.

An exchange says that a foreigner visiting in New York thinks that every State should have a

State Theatre. North Carolina already has one it appears with bi-ennial performances, and farce comedy predominating.

HERE AND ELSEWHERE

Florence, South Carolina is not far from Elizabeth City's size, and from a recent issue of the daily paper there we clip the following:

One of the great problems which every movement for civic advance has to meet is that of living up to all elements of team work. Harmonious cooperation of all interests is necessary. A great many communities are cursed by petty jealousies. Their power for mischief affects every public enterprise. If one man starts a movement, all the people who do not like him begin to throw cold water. They make sarcastic remarks about his project. The result is that people feel disinclined to take hold and push, for fear lest they make themselves ridiculous.

It is difficult to promote public objects under the most favorable conditions. The moment that people let personal feeling enter in, it becomes impossible to get unity of action. One set of people will try one thing only to see it fail under a wet blanket of ironical skepticism. They feel disgusted, and the next time any one else starts anything, they in turn stand back and jeer.

The practical outcome is that every one feels afraid of starting any new movement, for fear of becoming ridiculous. It is easier to stand on one side and make superior remarks about the poor judgement of your neighbors than to take hold and push. Civic sentiment dissipates, and the town's growth languishes.

Is there anything of that spirit here? Most towns have something of it, and some have far more than others. In so far as it exists people should get over it. They must pull together, ignoring personal differences, if they want Florence to advance in population and public advantages.

FOR SALE OR RENT—Type writers New or second hand. Only a few machines for rent. Any person wishing to rent should make arrangements to do so in advance. ADVANCE OFFICE

Norfolk Southern Railroad
ROUTE OF THE NIGHT EXPRESS
Schedule in Effect

O c t o b e r
N. B. The following schedule figures published as information ONLY and are not guaranteed.
TRAINS LEAVE ELIZABETH CITY

—SOUTH BOUND—
10:56 P. M. Daily—Night Express—Pullman Sleeping Cars for Raleigh, Newbern and Intermediate Stations.
9:58 A. M. Daily for Edenton
1:00 P. M. Daily for Raleigh Goldsboro and Intermediate points. Pullman Parlor Car for Newbern.

—NORTH BOUND—
5:51 A. M. Daily for Norfolk and Intermediate Stations.
2:23 P. M. Daily Express for Norfolk ONLY
3:30 P. M. Daily for Norfolk and Intermediate Stations.
2:05 p. m., Monday, Wednesday and Friday for Suffolk.
For Further Information apply to C. F. Garrett, Ticket Agt. Elizabeth City, N.C.

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Jan 12—1 month t and f

Baltimore Steam Packet Co.
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Steamers leave daily and Sunday's December 13th and 27th, January 10th and 24th, and each alternate Sunday thereafter, until further notice.
Portsmouth, Sundays 5:00 p. m. Week days 5:30 p. m., Norfolk, 6:30 p. m.
Old Point Comfort 7:30 p. m.

It Always Helps

says Mrs. Sylvania Woods, of Clifton Mills, Ky., in writing of her experience with Cardui, the woman's tonic. She says further: "Before I began to use Cardui, my back and head would hurt so bad, I thought the pain would kill me. I was hardly able to do any of my housework. After taking three bottles of Cardui, I began to feel like a new woman. I soon gained 35 pounds, and now, I do all my housework, as well as run a big water mill.
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