

PHONE TO PACIFIC FROM THE ATLANTIC

Perfect Test of Transcontinental Line Made by Inventors Bell and Watson.

4,750-MILE RECORD SET

President Wilson, Mayor Mitchel, and Other Noted Men Participate in Celebration.

On Oct. 9, 1876, Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas A. Watson talked by telephone to each other over a two-mile wire stretched between Cambridge and Boston. It was the first wire conversation ever held. Yesterday afternoon the same two men talked by telephone to each other over a 3,400-mile wire between New York and San Francisco. Dr. Bell, the veteran inventor of the telephone, was in New York, and Mr. Watson, his former associate, was on the other side of the continent. They heard each other much more distinctly than they did in their first talk thirty-eight years ago.

The completion of the first transcontinental telephone line was celebrated yesterday afternoon and last night in New York, San Francisco, Washington, Boston, and Jekyl Island, Ga. In the afternoon congratulatory messages were exchanged between President Wilson in Washington and President Moore of the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco, and between the Mayor of New York and the Mayor of San Francisco.

4,750-Mile Conversation.

The record for long-distance talking was established last night when Theodore N. Vail, President of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, on Jekyl Island, talked by way of Boston to Mr. Watson in San Francisco, the wire being stretched 4,750 miles. In the afternoon Mr. Vail had talked to Mr. Watson through New York, a distance of 4,300 miles.

Telephones in New York, Jekyl Island, Washington, and San Francisco were all on one big loop, and while persons in any two of the places were talking, hundreds in the four places were listening to the conversation. There was never any hitch in the tests. Everything that was said was heard through all the telephones as clearly as ordinary telephonic communications are held within the limits of a city.

Those who spoke from the New York end gathered in President Vail's reception room on the fifteenth floor of the Telephone Building at 15 Dey Street. Several hundred persons, including nearly all of the city officials, many prominent business men, and the officers and Directors of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and the New York Telephone Company, were present by invitation.

C. N. Bethell, senior Vice President of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, presided at the gathering. Before the transcontinental messages began he made a short address, in which he gave statistics showing the development of the telephone since its invention. At 4:30 P. M. here, when it was 1:30 in San Francisco, John J. Carty, chief engineer of the company, announced that all was ready, and Dr. Bell picked up the receiver in front of him as Mr. Watson, in San Francisco, picked up his receiver. Then, speaking in an easy tone, Dr. Bell said:

"Mr. Watson, are you there?"

First Voice Across Continent.

And Mr. Watson replied that he was and that he heard distinctly. Thus was the first human voice heard across the continent. The hundreds at both ends of the line broke into enthusiastic applause.

After talking for a minute or two through a modern instrument, Dr. Bell picked up an exact duplicate of the telephone made for him by Mr. Watson in 1875, the original of which is in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. This was connected with the San Francisco wire and Dr. Bell spoke through it.

"Hello, Mr. Watson," he said. "Can you hear me?"

"I hear you perfectly," Mr. Watson replied.

A pleased smile spread over Dr. Bell's face as he realized that he had talked to San Francisco through the instrument at which hundreds had laughed in derision in 1875. This, to him, he confessed, was the most touching incident of the afternoon.

After Dr. Bell had switched back to the modern telephone to resume his talk he heard a sound that at first he thought was due to some imperfection in the transmission of the voice over the long wire, but in a moment he realized that Mr. Watson had turned away from his telephone to tell the San Francisco audience what Dr. Bell had said, and that the noise he had heard had been the applause of the audience, 3,400 miles away.

Congratulate Bell and Watson.

At his telephone on Jekyl Island, Mr. Vail heard everything Dr. Bell and Mr. Watson said to each other, and he interrupted to offer his congratulations to both men. They in turn congratulated him on his administration of the affairs of the telephone company.

A little later Dr. Bell again picked up the model of the first telephone, and before using it told of the first time in history when the human voice was heard by wire. It was on March 10, 1876, when Bell and Watson were experimenting with the telephone in a boarding house in Boston. Dr. Bell was in his room on the top floor, and Mr. Watson in his room on the floor below. Wires ran between the two rooms, but the telephone apparatus, at that time absolutely unproved, was arranged only for the transmission of the voice in one direction. When all was ready Dr. Bell spoke into the transmitter in his room, saying, "Mr. Watson, come here, I want you." The same minute Mr. Watson ran excitedly into Mr. Bell's room, exclaiming, "I heard you. I could hear what you said." And the two inventors realized for the first time that their dream of a telephone had come true.

So yesterday, with the model of the original telephone, Dr. Bell repeated his words to San Francisco. "Mr. Watson, come here, I want you," he said, and Mr. Watson replied, "It would take me a week to get to you this time."

Mayors Exchange Greetings.

After Dr. Bell and Mr. Watson had talked Mayor Mitchel and Mayor Roth of San Francisco exchanged greetings. Mayor Mitchel said:

"Hello, Mr. Mayor. As Mayor of New York, which stands at the gateway of the East, I greet you, as Mayor of San Francisco, which stands at the gateway of the West. It is a long way to San Francisco, but I think that by the completion of the transcontinental telephone line our respective cities are now doubly joined together, first by the Panama Canal, which joins us together for the rapid passage of maritime commerce, and now by the telephone, which links us together by the power of the human voice."

The two Mayors then chatted for several minutes, exchanging pleasantries.

After President McAneny of the Board of Aldermen, Controller Prendergast, and others had talked to officials in San Francisco, President Wilson entered the circuit. He first spoke to President

Continued on Page 4.

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Continued from Page 1.

Moore of the Panama-Pacific Exposition, and said:

"It appeals to the imagination to speak across the continent. It is a fine omen for the Exposition that the first thing it has done is to send its voice from sea to sea. I congratulate you on the prospects for a successful Exposition. I am confidently hoping to take part in it after the adjournment of Congress."

Next Mr. Wilson talked to Mr. Watson.

"I want to say to you, Mr. Watson," he said, "that I consider it an honor to be able to express my admiration for the inventive genius and scientific knowledge that have made this possible, and my pride that this vital cord should have been stretched across America, as a sample of our energy and our enterprise. I want to convey to you my personal congratulations, Sir."

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart, Mr. President," replied Mr. Watson. "I consider it a great honor to talk across the continent for the first time with the President of the United States."

President Talks to Bell.

Dr. Bell, who had heard all that passed between the President and Mr. Watson, was then introduced by wire to the President. He said:

"I am glad to have the opportunity of talking to you, Mr. President, over the first transcontinental telephone line."

"I am very much obliged to you," said Mr. Wilson. "I want to congratulate you very warmly on this notable consummation of your long labors and remarkable achievements. I think this will be remembered as a memorable day. I convey to you my warm congratulations."

Dr. Bell thanked the President but said that the telephone system of the United States was the product of a great many minds and not of one alone, in answer to which the President said: "But there has been one leading mind."

Mr. Wilson and Mr. Vail then exchanged greetings, and after that everyone invited to the celebration had an opportunity to talk and hear across the continent.

The telephone line used across the continent yesterday will be opened for commercial purposes on March 1. It was announced that the charge for a telephone conversation between New York and San Francisco would be \$20.70 for the first three minutes, and \$6.75 for each minute thereafter. When one man in New York talks to a man in San Francisco \$2,000,000 worth of apparatus will be tied up and cannot be used for the duration of the conversation for any other purpose. It is expected that, in normal conditions, it will require about ten minutes to put a call "through" across the continent.

In the line there are two physical and one phantom circuits and in each physical circuit there are two wires and 6,800 miles of hard drawn copper wire. There are 870 pounds of copper wire in each circuit mile and 2,900 tons in the entire line. The line crosses thirteen States and passes through Salt Lake City, Denver, Omaha, Chicago, and Buffalo, with a branch that runs through Pittsburgh, Washington, and Philadelphia. In the main line there are 130,000 poles.

Among those present at the demonstration in New York were Col. George W. Goethals, City Chamberlain Henry Bruere, Fire Commissioner Robert Adamson, Dock Commissioner R. A. C. Smith, William A. Marble, Francis L. Hine, H. G. S. Noble, George F. Baker, Newcomb Carlton, Clarence H. Mackay, Jacob H. Schiff, A. Barton Hepburn, Benjamin Strong, Jr., and Albert H. Wiggin.

J. P. Morgan was with Mr. Vail at his home on Jekyl Island.

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