

Spotting Trouble

Modern Equipment Helps Company Maintain Lines

When a telephone subscriber lifts his receiver off the hook, a humming dial tone tells him that he may call his number. In the few seconds that it takes him to dial a 7 or 10 digit number, he may be able to talk to a friend, relative or business associate anywhere in the country.

But unknown to most telephone users, the most modern high speed automatic trouble detecting equipment must be kept in constant operation to insure the customer that he will be able to dial and that once dialed, his call will reach the proper party almost instantaneously. Jim Leggett, local manager for the Pacific Telephone Co., stated that if a call is routed to a faulty piece of equipment, it is automatically re-routed and completed through different equipment without the caller ever knowing it.

AT THE SAME time that the call is being rechanneled, every essential piece of information about that call is being punched out on a large card to help equipment men correct the failure.

"By the time our caller has reached his party, trained personnel are already working to repair the faulty equipment," Leggett said. In the few seconds that it takes for a telephone in Van Nuys to start ringing from the time the number was dialed

in Torrance, that call may have passed through as many as a dozen separate pieces of equipment in the local central office.

AT EACH step along the way, the successive piece of equipment is automatically tested. If it is found to be faulty, another piece of machinery is selected to handle the call and a trouble card is dropped from a large bank of equipment known as the master test frame.

By reading the pattern of punched holes on the card, the equipment man can determine the nature, extent and location of the breakdown. As soon as the trouble is located, the faulty equipment is taken out of service until it is repaired.

Other equipment, too, operates behind the scenes to help insure prompt and accurate service to the telephone user.

One, the line insulation test frame (LIT), for example, continuously checks every subscriber's line to be sure that it is in proper operating condition.

THE LIT, operated by an automatic timer, is capable of

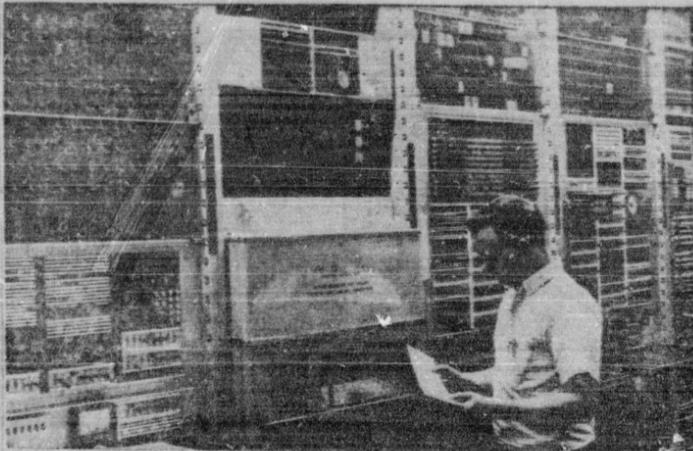
individually testing every line coming from a subscriber's telephone to the central office in as little as two hours.

If the machine detects trouble in the line, such as a short circuit, a ground or a wet cable, it automatically activates a teletype machine which prints out a code number corresponding to that subscriber's telephone number.

In the plant service center, a desk man converts the code to the actual telephone number, dials the number and tests the wires connected to that particular subscriber's telephone.

BY READING a meter built in to the test switchboard, the desk man is able to determine the nature of the trouble and, in many cases, the approximate location. A lineman is then dispatched from a centralized maintenance dispatch center to pinpoint and repair the faulty wire.

"Behind every telephone call," stated Leggett, "and in most cases unknown to the telephone user, is a 24 hour a day, seven day a week operation designed to insure our customer with the best possible service."



COMPUTER AID . . . Michael Neal, a Pacific Telephone equipment man in the central office, reads a trouble card dropped by the master board. From the pattern of the punched holes in the card, Neal is able to locate, analyze, and repair defects in telephone equipment. The location of defects is only one application of modern electronic equipment to telephone service.

TESTING SERVICE . . . Bob Alvarez, desk man in Pacific Telephone's district plant service center, tests a subscriber's line for functional defects. By reading the meter on his left, Alvarez is able to determine the nature of the trouble and, in many cases, the probable location.

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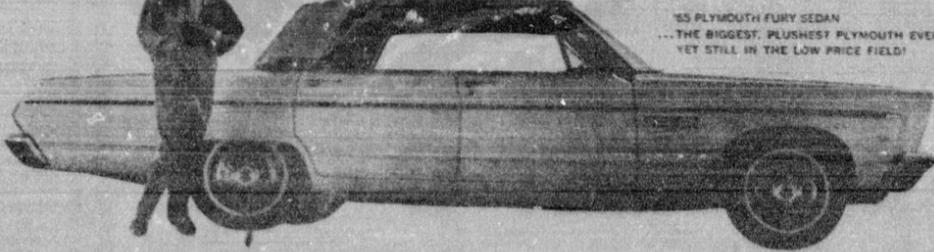
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