

# THE GIRLLESS SWITCHBOARD

COMPLETED PLANT ACCEPTED BY LOCAL COMPANY.

FRANCHISE GRANTED YEAR AGO

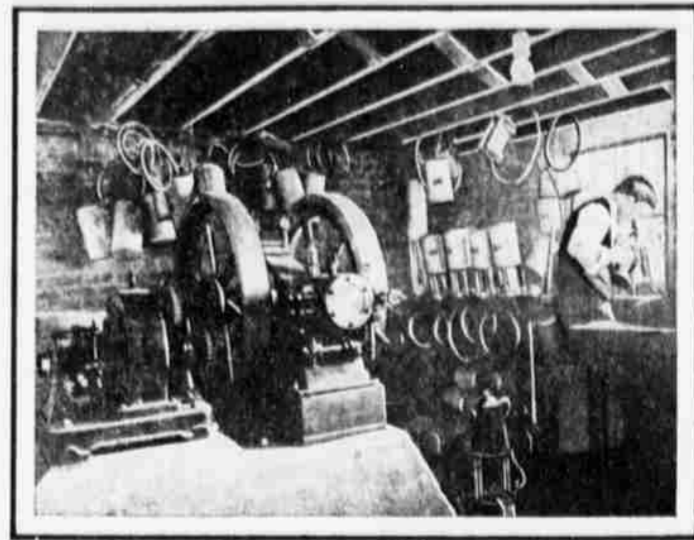
Automatic Exchange First One This Section Turned Over Norfolk Long Distance Telephone Company by Construction Company.

Norfolk's girlless telephone exchange, the first automatic exchange constructed in north Nebraska, has been turned over to the Norfolk Long Distance Telephone Company. The local exchange has accordingly passed out of the hands of the construction company and this marks the first time in nearly a Norfolk installation.

Anniversary of Franchise. The work is further marked in local



Power Board and Connection Switches



Power Plant



Office Building

telephone history by the anniversary of the granting of the franchise to the independent company. A year ago Wednesday the city council by a vote of five to three passed the franchise on its last reading.

**Machinery That Thinks.** More revolutionary than were the horseless carriage or the talking machine to the ideas of the ordinary man is the girlless telephone exchange which thinks in its mysteries along with wireless telegraphy. Machinery that thinks and gets the part of the familiar "hello-er" who by the way doesn't say "hello" anymore—is indeed a startling piece of mechanical fancy.

Electricity is the brain fluid which courses through the wire nerves of the thinking switchboard. Click, click, click, as fast as the dial turns in the central office turns, rises or falls, responding with unerring discrimination to the suggestions coded off by the telephone patron several blocks down the street.

**Switch Board Expensive.** The girlless switchboard is expensive. It costs money to get machinery which thinks. The switchboard equipment, including telephones purchased by the automatic company here, cost \$16,810.

The switchboard is the most interesting and beyond doubt the most intricate and mystifying piece of machinery in Norfolk.

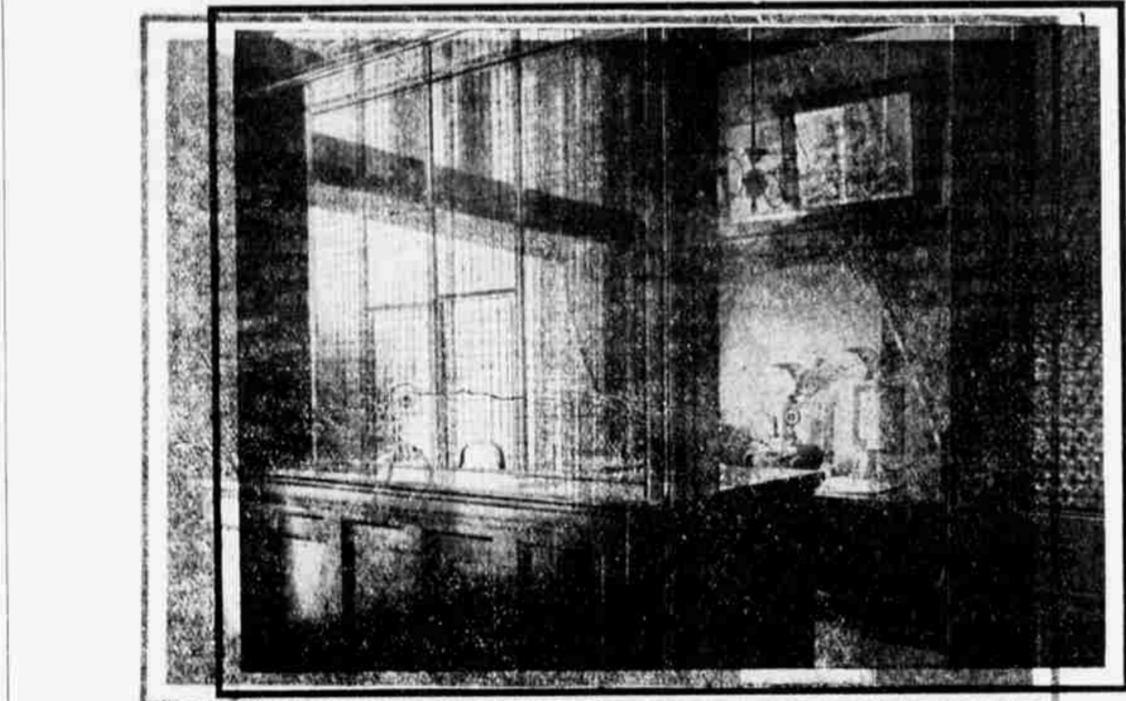
Little electric lights flash here and there. Click, click, click, little rods, turn, rise and fall, first in one section, then jumping to another series slip into the final connection.

**Can't Be Understood.** You can't understand why all this activity takes place. To understand it you would have to understand electricity which no one understands.

The men who work around the automatic-central-girlless-unit will explain. They have watched electricity. They know how it is in the habit of noting and they know the fixed avenues along which the electric fluid is in some way forced to flow. Why it does they don't know. But the click, click, click, marks the constant making of connections.

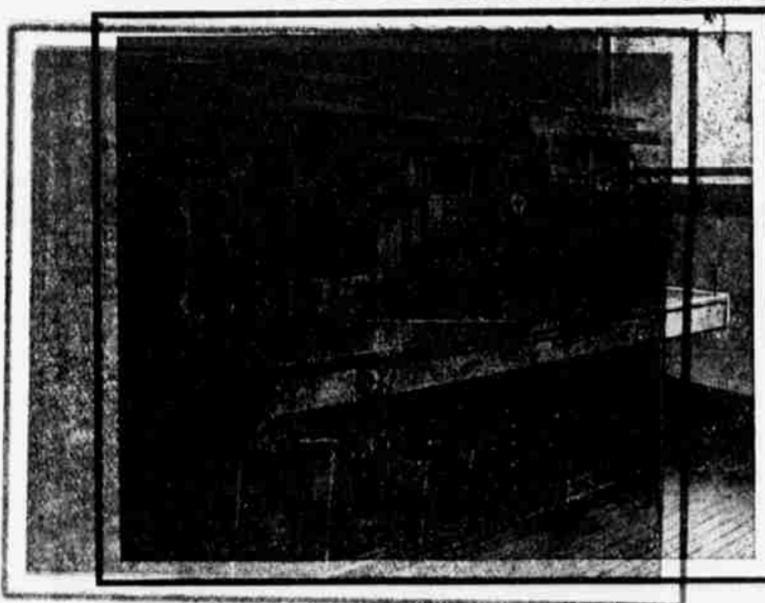
**Corresponds to Dial Movements.** Each movement made on the dial of the telephone has a corresponding

movement in the switchboard mechanism. When the receiver is taken down the dial is opened into the switchboard. Then with each swing of the dial the field is lessened and the connection is brought one step nearer home. The first movement of the dial takes the Keith switch. As the dial rotates back it sets up the first selector. The second movement of the dial sets up the second selector and narrows the field down to a hundred possible connections. The activity is now transferred to a new board. The electric current picks out the first of ten connectors which is not busy. The third movement of the dial picks up the connector and moves it up the required number of notches. The last move-



Cashier's Office

ment of the dial rotates the connector journey across the board. The dial proper pick and the connector constantly flicker on and off. It is ready to be completed by the pressure of the button. Every time a connection is made



Long Distance Board

The Norfolk automatic plant has a capacity of 10,000. The same machinery is used for the long distance service. The Norfolk automatic plant has a capacity of 10,000. The same machinery is used for the long distance service.

**Construction Company Built Plant.** The Norfolk automatic plant was built by the Construction Company. It is the first automatic plant in Nebraska. The plant was built at a cost of \$16,810. The plant is the most intricate and mystifying piece of machinery in Norfolk.

**History of the Norfolk Plant.** It was a year ago last May that W. J. Stoddard, vice president of the Norfolk Independent Telephone Company, began a campaign to secure a franchise for the Norfolk automatic telephone exchange.

Opinion in the city was divided. Some people thought it was a good idea, while others thought it was a bad idea. The city council finally decided to grant the franchise to the independent company.

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The Norfolk Long Distance Telephone Company is also to build west on the main line of the Northwestern and up the Keosauqua line.

The Norfolk Plant.

The Norfolk exchange has attracted

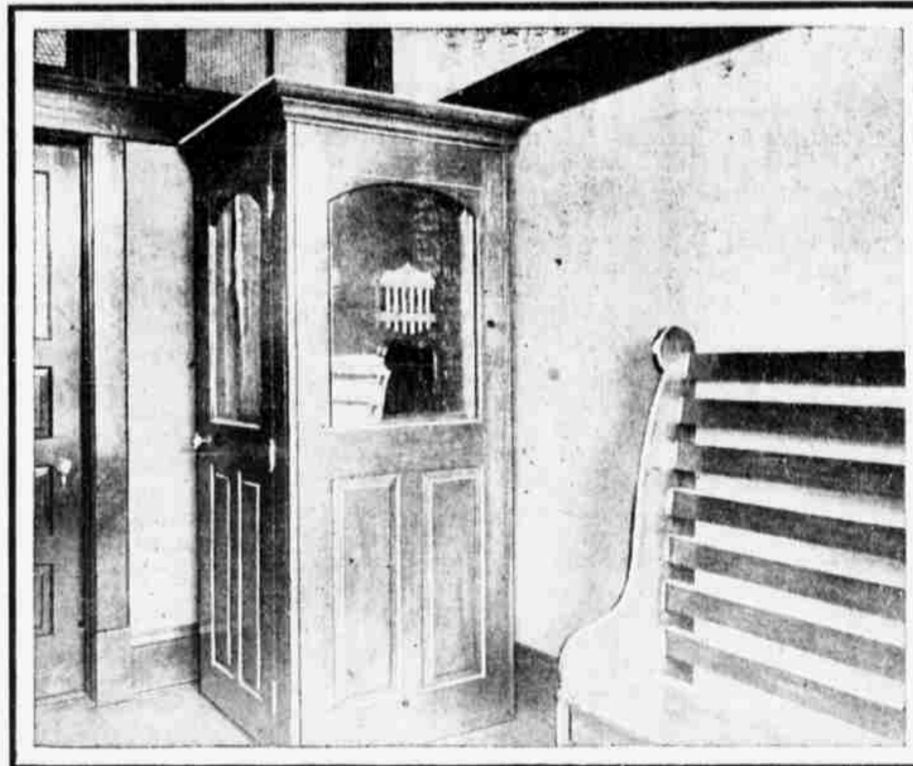
What of Central? A telephone without a central girl probably suggests to many people the old motto of "What is Home Without a Mother?" Anyway, central is up against com-

On July 15 a temporary office was opened in the Cotton block. August 12 the first shipment of material was received. Actual work on the plant began three days later. During the months following an exchange building of press brick was built on Norfolk avenue, several blocks of underground

considerable attention given the company a new telephone exchange because it is the first in automatic telephony in the city. It is also the first built and best equipped plants in the whole county and finally because Norfolk for its population is the smallest city

And Norfolk people say that the "Busy tone" is every bit as consoling as "Hello, Russ" of the real central.

With the world know what a central girl is in a year or two. Automatic plant managers say that the automatic system has already established itself. Prominent officers of the Nebraska



Waiting Room

the were laid and several miles of telephone cable stretched.

**Service Started May 11, 1908.**

Two months ago, at noon on Monday, May 11, sixty Norfolk avenue subscribers were "cut in" to the switchboard. The first man to use the automatic system was Councilman E. B. Kaufman. He called S. G. Mayor at the Star Clothing store.

**Fourth in the State.**

Norfolk was the fourth city in the

which has an automatic exchange.

The local company is capitalized at \$200,000. The plant within the corporate limits cost \$50,000, present outside line \$5,000.

The national telephone field has been a place of great activity the last dozen years. Government statistics show a growth of from one telephone to every 939 inhabitants in 1896 to one telephone to every thirty seven inhabitants in 1907. California with a tele-

metrion with a machine which thinks and acts quickly and which can do nearly every thing but ask "Number?" company say that their organization is not yet satisfied to purchase automatic equipment.

In the long run it is a question which telephone subscribers will probably take the leading part in determining.

**Still Have Some Operators.**

The Norfolk automatic exchange is



Manager's Office

state to secure an automatic telephone exchange. Lincoln, Omaha and Hastings have automatic plants.

**Is a Dozen Years Old.**

The first automatic system was experimented with as a novelty at the world's fair in 1892. In 1896 the first plant was installed.

Today Norfolk is one of the seventy-three cities in the United States and Canada where automatic systems have been installed. It is said that there are now 240,500 automatic telephones in use.

**Norfolk a Telephone Center.**

Norfolk has long been an important district center in the Nebraska system. The independent organization has selected Norfolk as the headquarters for the district wire chief and the long distance lines of the independent company in six counties in this vicinity will be tested out of Norfolk. The third district headquarters of the Nebraska Independent Telephone association are in Norfolk.

The Norfolk independent company is to secure long distance service to Minneapolis and the northeast through Sioux City; Columbus by way of Madison and Fremont by way of West Point will give Omaha connections,

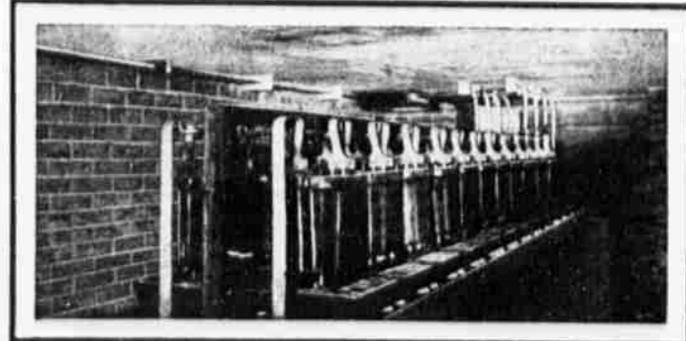
state to every fourteen people has seen the greatest development. The city of Los Angeles has a telephone for every four and a half people.

**Millions in Nebraska Phones.**

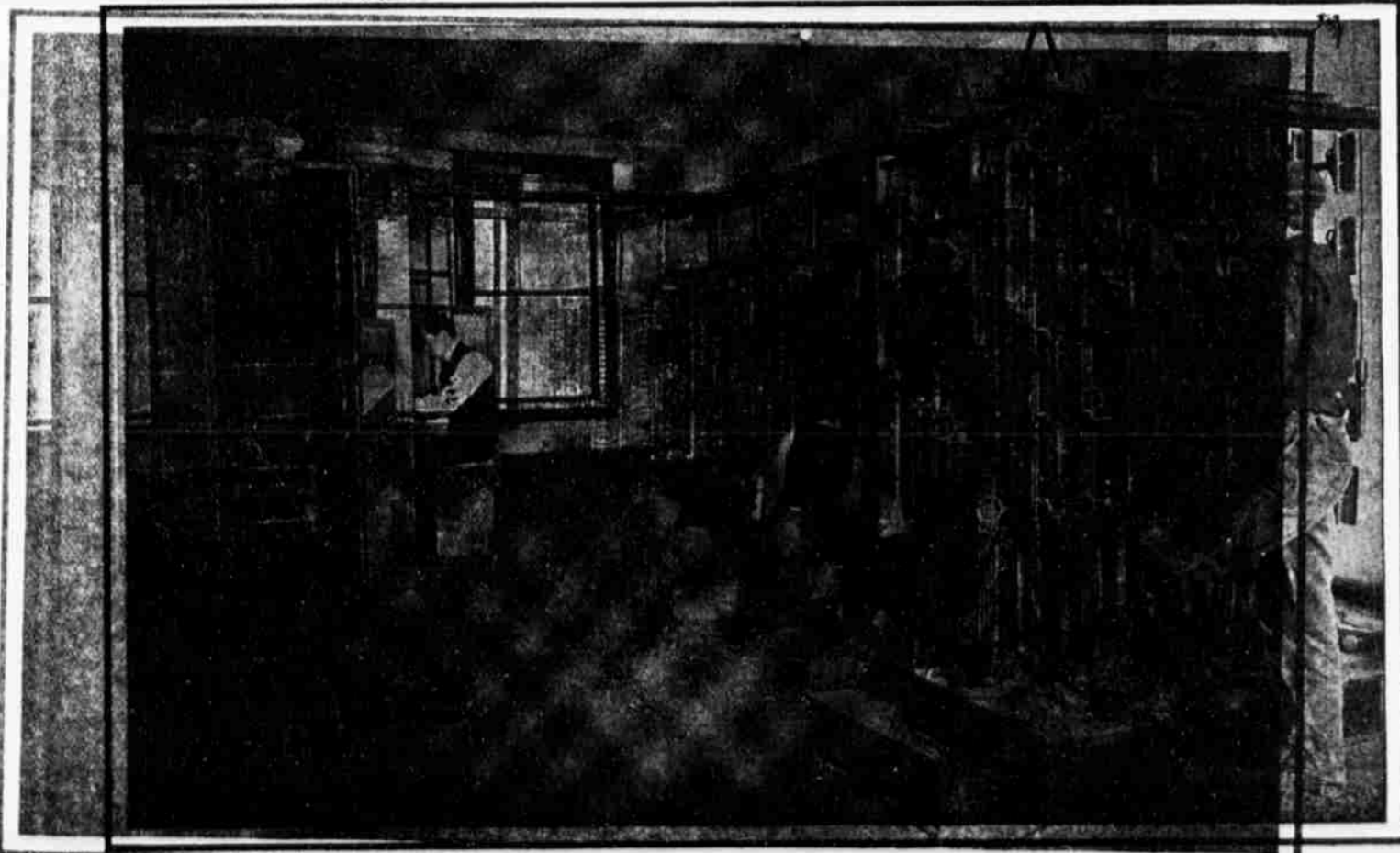
Millions of dollars are invested in telephones in Nebraska. The independent interests claim that the investment reaches about \$11,000,000, of which they say about \$6,000,000 represents independent capital.

**Switch Board on Upper Floor.**

The automatic switchboard in the Norfolk independent office occupies the entire second floor. On the first floor are the business offices and the long distance operating room. The dynamo and repair rooms are on the basement floor.



Battery Room



Terminal Rack and Keith Switches