

LONDON TELETYPE AUTOMATIC — ADVANTAGES OF MODERN COMMUNICATIONS

“Two inventions—the typewriter and the telephone—have had a profound effect on modern communications, especially in the business world.” So says the folder issued by the Post Office authorities, which explains the advantages of the Telex Service. And then it goes on: “Meanwhile, the electric telegraph, which fathered the telephone, has also been developing and is proving just as valuable to commerce as its offspring.”

In the United Kingdom the evidence of this lies in the extensive use of private teleprinter circuits and networks rented from the Post Office. The reasons for the widespread adoption of the teleprinter communications are clear. In the first place, the teleprinter has a keyboard similar to

that of a typewriter and can be operated by any competent typist. More important, however, is that the teleprinter combines the most attractive features of the telephone and the letter, that is, immediate contact combined with accuracy and authenticity.

The use of a teleprinter is not new to us at North British—not at least for Head Office and London, because for many years we have enjoyed this vital and speedy link. However, in the past year we have become part of Telex, which is a teleprinter service between all subscribers to the system. All branch offices, as well as Heathhall, are linked in this way.

How Calls are made

By pressing a button on the signalling unit the exchange is called. As soon as the exchange operator on the teleprinter acknowledges the call, the sender types the number required. The exchange makes the connection, and advises when the distant Telex machine is ready for the message to proceed. All the communication is by teleprinter: there is no telephoning.

Furthermore, there is a complete printed record of the whole transaction.

While Telex enables us to have this speedy printed service between units of our own organisation, which literally annihilates distance, we can communicate similarly with any other Telex subscriber. There are some 5,000 firms using Telex in Britain today. Each

has a code listed in a directory, just like the telephone service. More and more firms today are quoting their code on their notepaper as a means of publicising their ability to contact customers through this most advanced method of communications.

Actually, Telex is roughly half the cost of trunk calls. The most recent step forward has been the automation of the London service. At Tottenham Court Road, Moira Pyott, who combines the duties of Receptionist and Telex Operator, can now send out messages just like the automatic telephone. She dials the code she wants—and that applies to anywhere in Britain—and provided the recipient is disengaged, the green light is recorded automatically on her instrument—the signal to go ahead. This only takes a few seconds as against two or three minutes through exchanges.

The automatic dialling will be extended to all Telex subscribers throughout the country in due time. It was introduced a few months ago by Her Majesty the Queen at Bristol. Already over a thousand machines have been converted. When all subscribers' machines become automatic, the contact time will be even less than the three seconds.

Despite criticisms of Post Office systems inherent within the British public, they are to be congratulated on their latest enterprise to catch up on the years of development delayed by the war. For ourselves, we have no doubts that this latest form of communications is a great step forward. By the end of next year it may even be possible to Telex overseas in just the same way.

Moira Pyott operating the automatic Telex at the Tottenham Court Road offices in London. Moira joined the Company from school five years ago.

