

SALE OF LITTLE WOLF RIVER TELEPHONE COMPANY.

Editor AMERICAN TELEPHONE JOURNAL:

ONE of the most underhanded outrages ever perpetrated upon the stockholders of a corporation was the sale of the Little Wolf River Telephone Company's lines and exchanges to the Wisconsin (Bell) Telephone Company, whereby \$67,000 of stock that was earning 6 per cent. net per annum was wiped out entirely and this by three gentlemen, two of whom were directors of the company and who had been trusted with its management by the majority of the stockholders.

How was it done? The three gentlemen in question are capitalists. They owned about \$60,000 of bonds issued by the telephone company. As directors of the company, to whom was intrusted its management by over 100 small stockholders, they used the net earnings of the company to the extent of over \$10,000 in making additions to the system. They used the money which was charged to interest account for the same purpose.

There was one debt of \$2,000, on which they had paid no interest for nearly three years, and the creditor put this claim into a judgment. One of these three gentlemen bought this judgment in the name of his bookkeeper and made it a basis of an action for a receiver. A receiver was appointed. During the receivership an attempt was made to reorganize the company and an attempt was made to raise \$30,000 among the smaller stockholders. Two-thirds of this sum was subscribed, but for the lack of the other \$10,000 the receiver was ordered to make sale of the property, which was done, and the property, costing over \$140,000 and earning over 5% on the entire cost, was knocked down to these

	Independent.	Bell.
Appleton	900	600
Madison	1,800	1,000
Racine	1,600	300
Portage	400	none
Janesville	900	500
Lake Mills	100	none
Sun Prairie	200	none
Waterloo	100	none
Dodgeville	275	none
Lancaster	150	none
Richland Center	150	none
Boscobel	75	none
Fennimore	50	none
Sheboygan	800	600
Waupaca	225	50
Weyauwega	75	none
New London	110	120
Grand Rapids	500	none
Superior	1,000	500
La Crosse	1,000	600

gentlemen for \$65,000. This was less than 90 days ago. Immediately overtures were made to the Wisconsin Telephone Company, which culminated in the transfer to that company on June 30 of all the franchises, lines, exchanges and equipments of the company at a price less than that which the gentlemen had themselves invested in it, to use their own statements.

Why was it done? Let the three gentlemen and the Wisconsin Telephone Company make answer. An opportunity was presented and an offer publicly made to take the property and protect the three gentlemen and every stockholder of the company as well, and these three gentlemen would not even consider the proposition to know whether it was made in good faith or not. It was for the sight of a little cold cash that the peace of these three millionaires was disturbed and for the sole purpose of satisfying themselves they sacrificed the interests of small stockholders to the amount of over \$60,000, besides their own stock, if their statements are correct.

On the very day the sale was consummated certain stockholders were negotiating with Chicago parties to take the bonds of the company, but nothing but the ready cash would satisfy these gentlemen and the deal was closed.

Now, there are other people interested in this transaction than the stockholders who will want to know how the result of this sale will affect the Independent Telephone situation in Wisconsin.

To be brief, it will clear the atmosphere, as the Wisconsin Company has taken the trouble and has subsidized certain local papers to advertise the troubles of the Little Wolf River Telephone Company for the past three years. The equipment of the exchanges, though up to date when installed, is out of date, but it is now the property of the Bell Company.

The Independent Companies in Wisconsin were never so strong as they are to-day, as testified by figures from a few of their exchanges, as shown in the accompanying table:

These are but a few of the Independent exchanges in the State. In the above list where the Bell Company has no exchange a toll station only is maintained. There are over 200 prosperous Independent telephone companies in the State, and if the Wisconsin Company thinks it has crippled the situation by securing the properties in the territory of the Little Wolf River Company it will soon wake up to the fact that it has simply relieved the Independent companies of a dead weight and that this same territory will soon be covered by other Independent companies with apparatus of the latest and most efficient design. There will be an exchange in Oshkosh within a year and after Fond du Lac has had the privileges of the monopoly which her subsidized press has been clamoring for for the past few months, she will wake up to the fact that the Little Wolf River Telephone Company, during its three years of existence, saved her citizens, in telephone rentals, the sum of \$21,600, and she will be glad for another up-to-date exchange.

Milwaukee is now of the very few large cities which have not an up-to-date Independent exchange and with an exchange in that city, which is bound to come, the Bell Company of Wisconsin will be crushed as flat as it has been in Michigan.

Respectfully,

A. L. HUTCHINSON.

UNIQUE METHOD OF COLLECTING MESSAGE FEES.

(By W. H. ELGES, Special Correspondent.)

A METHOD of collecting message fees which appears to be quite effective is used by the Lewis County Telephone Company, of Canton, Mo. The accompanying form is printed on a card and sent to the party with whom the message originated. On the form are provided spaces in which are to be

No. 116..	Canton, Station
LEWIS COUNTY TELEPHONE CO.	
Hour. 6.30.....	Date. 6/1.....1903
Received from... Andy Jenge...	
At #60 Canal Street...	
To Miss Lena B. Bohm...	
At La Grange...	
Paid... 1.00	Remarks.....
Messenger... 5	
Telegraph.....	Left Call.
Transfer... 25	
Total... 40.	L. M. Operator.

written the name of the station from which the message was sent, the hour at which it was sent and the name and address of the sender. The name of the party to whom the message was addressed and his address are also given. Room for any remarks is also allowed. The form is filled out by the toll operator who sends it to the proper party.

AUTOMATIC EXCHANGE FOR DAYTON.

The large exchange of six thousand stations which the Automatic Electric Company is building for the Dayton Home Telephone Company, of Dayton, Ohio, is rapidly nearing completion and it will only be a few weeks before the citizens of Dayton will have automatic telephone service.