SPECIAL REPORTS

TELEPHONES AND TELEGRAPHHS

1902
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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR,
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS,

Sir:

I have the honor to transmit herewith a report on the telephone and telegraph systems and the municipal electric fire alarm and police patrol systems of the United States. This report was prepared in accordance with the provisions of section 7 of the act of Congress of March 6, 1902. The statistics cover the calendar year ending December 31, 1902, and were collected and compiled under the supervision of Mr. W. M. Steuart, chief statistician for manufactures. The text has been prepared by Mr. Thomas Commerford Martin, of New York city, expert special agent, with the cooperation and criticism of Mr. A. V. Abbott, as to the telephone portion, and Mr. W. Maver, jr., as to the telegraph portion.

The report presents statistics concerning the physical equipment, service, and financial operations of the commercial and mutual telephone and telegraph systems of the country and the physical equipment of independent rural telephone lines. It also gives data relative to the systems controlled in whole or in part by railway companies, and the ocean cable systems that were in operation all or part of the year.

This is the last of a series of reports on the generation and utilization of electric current. Former reports relate to street and electric railways and central electric light and power plants. The statistics for the telephone and telegraph systems were published on December 15, 1904, as Bulletin 17 of the Bureau of the Census, and those for municipal electric fire alarm and police patrol systems on May 31, 1904, as Bulletin 11.

With the publication of this report the Bureau of the Census closes the first complete census of the generation and utilization of electric current for the transmission of power, messages, and conversation. These industries are of such vast importance, have undergone such rapid changes, and have advanced during the past decade to such an extent that, in order to convey a correct idea of their development, the census should be taken at more frequent intervals than decennially, as required by the present law.

The telephone and telegraph companies have uniformly treated the request of this office for statistical information with the utmost courtesy and consideration. They have freely furnished information of a confidential character concerning their financial operations, and have manifested a willingness to assist in the compilation of reliable statistics, which has been gratifying to all engaged in the work. Some companies have incurred large expense for clerical assistance to compile the data, and have furnished the office with every facility for making a complete report. Unfortunately the account books of some of the smaller companies and mutual systems were so incomplete that accurate answers could not be given to all of the Census inquiries.

Very respectfully,

[Signature]

Director.

Hon. Victor H. Metcalf,
Secretary of Commerce and Labor.