



WESTERN ELECTRIC COMPANY, INC.,  
OMAHA, NEBRASKA

THE

# Westerner

VOLUME 1 / NUMBER 4 / DECEMBER, 1957

## New Employees Reminisce Of Old Christmas Customs

Christmas brings more than visions of dancing sugar plums to peoples' heads, particularly, the older heads of persons who reminisce of a life in other lands, of Christmases in faraway places. People with such memories work at the Omaha Shops.

One is Michel Nemece, wireman, who has a very vivid memory of the Christmas traditions in his homeland of Serbia, now a country in the Yugoslavia federation, because these traditions are still practiced in his home.

Mike fought in the guerilla forces of Draza Mihailovic when the Germans

On January 6, the family prepares large quantities of food for the feast on the 7th which marks the birth of Christ and the end of the time of fast. On this day before Christmas, Mike performs a ritual that his father and his father's father had performed: he, as the man of the house, kills a young spring lamb. Equipped with twenty years' experience as a butcher, Mike has an easier time of it than the other men of his community. But, experienced or not, the other men will do the solemn slaughtering as required.

The preparation of the lamb for the



Michel Nemece—Celebrates Christmas on January 7.



*As we approach Christmas and the beginning of the New Year, I want to extend my greetings to all of you in the Omaha Shops and to your families for a very Merry Christmas and health and happiness throughout the New Year.*

*For some 500 of us, this is the second Christmas together, while for more than 600 others, it is the first. In our association I have been especially impressed with the spirit that prevails in the Shops.*

*This spirit has shown itself over and over again in the sharing of knowledge and experience with new employees, in meeting production schedules, in maintaining high quality standards, and of all of us doing his job to the best of his ability.*

*It is most gratifying to note this same spirit extends to our day-to-day relations with one another, and that we work together in an atmosphere of friendliness and cooperation.*

## AT & T Stockholders To Vote On New Security Offerings

A special meeting of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company stockholders will be held January 15 to authorize offerings of additional securities to its stockholders and to employees.

The meeting will be asked to authorize approximately \$720,000,000 in convertible debentures to stockholders and offerings of 7,000,000 shares to employees. The new capital will be used to meet the demand for new telephone facilities.

Authorization of the employees stock plan will permit employees at AT&T and its subsidiaries as Western Electric, to purchase the 7,000,000 shares, probably during the next five years.

Payments for the 1950 offering under the employees stock plan—a 3,000,000 share issue—were completed last July. Under conditions of that plan, each employee could buy a certain number of shares, paying for them through a payroll deduction. The number of shares he could buy was

Draza Mihailovic when the Germans The preparation of the lamb for the



Michel Nemeč—Celebrates Christmas on January 7.

occupied his country. He was captured in April of 1942 and deported from his land to Germany, where he remained a prisoner for four and a half years. When Mike gained his freedom, he chose not to return to Serbia because Tito had disposed of Mihailovic and the communist regime controlled the country.

Mike remembers the date of his arrival in the U.S. down to the hour and minute. It was 2:30 a.m. on May 20, 1946. A few months after his arrival Mike joined the Serbian community in Omaha.

Mike, and his family, observe Christmas in the solemn traditions of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The Church celebrates its religious days under the Julian calendar, which varies 13 days from the standard Gregorian calendar, putting the birth of Christ on January 7 and the beginning of the New Year on January 14.

The long standing traditions of his faith are very much alive in the Nemeč's home. Several weeks before January 7, the members of his family enter a time of fasting. No food doing with blood—not even an egg—is eaten. His wife even cooks the family bread during this fast, as bakeries use lard in their bread.

feast is done entirely by the man of the house. While Mike cooks the lamb on a spit over an open fire, his wife prepares the Christmas foods such as *pitaa* (a strudel-type pastry), and decorates the dining table with three candles—red, white and blue—colors of their homeland. When the lamb is cooked, Mike carries it to the basement where it will cool. The next day it will be brought forth, and served cold.

Though weary from the culinary activity of the day, the Nemečs will wait up for the midnight mass. Following the mass, they will greet their friends with "*Hristos se rodi*"—and reply to the greeting "*Vojistino se rodi*." "Christ is born"—"Truly He was born." Then they return home and rest for the feast beginning in mid-morning and continuing through Christmas Day, January 7.

Our new citizens from Germany find Christmas customs of the new land similar to those of the old land.

Angelika Hennig, repairman in the unit surface wiring section, finds, like the fictional Connecticut Yankee transported back to King Arthur's court, that it is the little things that make the difference. Some of these

*Continued on next page*

for more than 600 others, it is the first. In our association I have been especially impressed with the spirit that prevails in the Shops.

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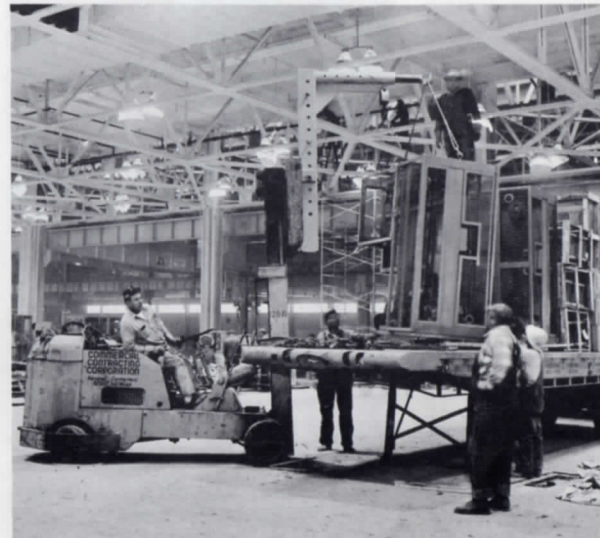
*It is most gratifying to note this same spirit extends to our day-to-day relations with one another, and that we work together in an atmosphere of friendliness and cooperation.*

*As you and those dear to you gather together during the Holiday Season, I extend my sincere wishes for a very Merry Christmas.*

*W.P. Heath*



## MACHINERY BEING INSTALLED IN CABLE BUILDING



Machinery is now being installed in the cable building of the new plant at Millard. On December 3, the first machine was brought into the building, which is 80 per cent completed. Shown above, a fork truck lifts an annealing machine from a delivery truck, and, at right, places the machine in position.



The strand annealer treats the wire with heat to improve its electrical conductivity.

Initially, six exchange wire insulating lines will be placed in operation. There will be 42 lines when the cable shop is in full production.

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Payments for the 1950 offering under the employees stock plan—a 3,000,000 share issue—were completed last July. Under conditions of that plan, each employee could buy a certain number of shares, paying for them through a payroll deduction. The number of shares he could buy was based on the amount of his salary.

Approval of the convertible debenture issue will give each stockholder a "right" to purchase one \$100-principal debenture for each nine shares of stock he owns.

It is expected that the debenture

*Continued on back page*



CHRISTMAS MEMORIES . . . . CONTINUED FROM FIRST PAGE

"little things" which Angelika and her friend, Lilly Irene Krause, wireman in the unit cable wiring section, reminisce about is the 1st Christmas Day and the 2nd Christmas Day, Christmas trees with candles, pfefferkuchen, and the traditional meal of goose.

Angelika Hennig arrived in the States on December 31, 1953, a year after her husband, Manfred, assembler in the mount, stamp and unit assembly section, arrived. Lilly Krause came with her family to this country on

not use them on his tree. He will use on the top of his tree the Christbaum spitz, a spear-like ornament he brought from Germany. He also brought Christmas plates. These plates, decorated with the working *Frohliche Weihnachten* are filled with cookies, candies, nuts and fruit, and are placed under the Christmas tree, one for each member of the family. This custom is still practiced by the Wolfs.

Walter Wolff arrived in the United States on July 26, 1956, from Braunschweig in Hanover. His wife, Ilse,

This is St. Nikolaus Day in Germany, when St. Nick, dressed somewhat in the costume of our Santa Claus, visits the neighborhood children. He is welcomed by the children with somewhat mixed feelings. He does bring them gifts of nuts, apples, and chocolates. And he does sprinkle these goodies about for the children to scramble after—but he also carries a big stick. With this stick he raps the naughty boys and girls, and scolds them on their bad habits and poor behaviors. He knows all that the children have done during the year, and he demands changes and obedience if they expect gifts on Christmas from the Christ Child.

It is still difficult for Piotr (Peter) Zuk, cleaner, to speak our language and explain the Christmas traditions of his former home, Chorewo, Poland. But one hard, bitter fact he can communicate is that Christmas traditions are no longer observed; they are forbidden.

Peter was a prisoner of the Germans during World War II and when he was freed he remained in Germany because he did not like the communists who invaded and possessed his home. His wife, Stefrin, joined him in Germany and they came to America on February 21 of this year.

and their children, Sigrid and George, came with him. Alfred Wolf and his wife, Christa, arrived on Washington's Birthday of this year.

All four—Angelika, Lilly, Walter and Alfred—remember the seasonal smells of the traditional Christmas goose cooking, and the Christmas



Lilly Krause and Angelika Hennig—candles and pfefferkuchen.

December 12, 1955.

Concerning the 1st Day and the 2nd Day of Christmas, well, in their homeland, Angelika and Lilly enjoyed two holidays, the 25th and the 26th. Another change, Lilly notes, is that Americans set up their tannen, that is Christmas trees, much earlier than families do in Germany. Also, in their former country it is Mother's task to decorate the tree and she does so behind locked doors so the children cannot steal a look until the appointed time. This time is usually after evening Church service. Then Mother lights the candles and the doors are flung open so the children can run in and stare with wonder on the shining ornaments and the glittering tinsel.



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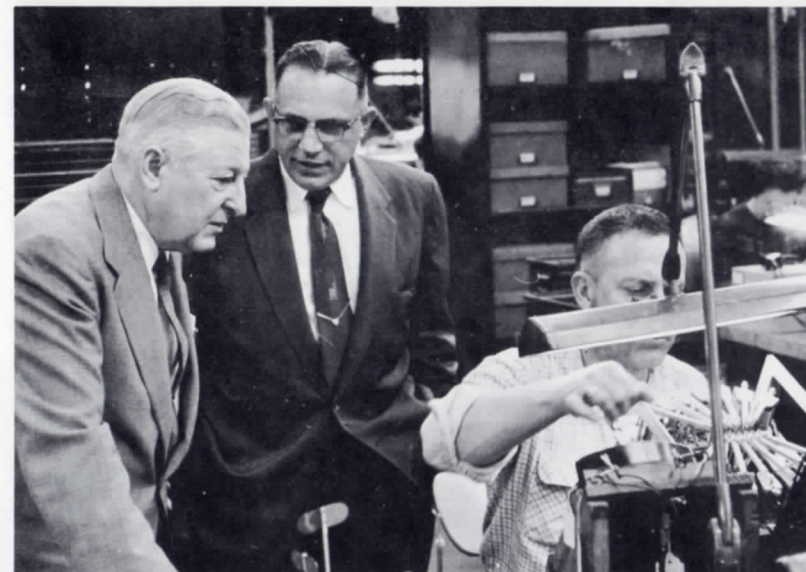
*Western Electric Company*

INCORPORATED

Donald Shafer, Editor

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## Merchandise Manager Visits Omaha Shops



Harold E. Irish, merchandise manager of the Company's telephone and installation division, visited the Omaha Shops on November 6, and, at a dinner that evening, he gave a talk to supervisors on the Company's long-range plans. H. V. Schmidt, vice president of plant design and construction accompanied Mr. Irish on his visit to the Shops and the new plant site. In photo above, plant manager H. P. Heath and Mr. Irish discuss the testing operations performed by Elmer Hanson on a perforator, list 2, used in automatic message accounting systems for long distance toll dialing. Mr. Irish retired from the Company on December 1 after putting in 38 years as one of W.E.'s most tireless workers. He was succeeded by Vearl S. McAdam with the new title of program planning manager.

## Eight Shops Employees Donate Blood

Americans set up their tannen, that is Christmas trees, much earlier than families do in Germany. Also, in their former country it is Mother's task to decorate the tree and she does so behind locked doors so the children cannot steal a look until the appointed time. This time is usually after evening Church service. Then Mother lights the candles and the doors are flung open so the children can run in and stare with wonder on the shining ornaments and the glittering tinsel.

Surprising, at least to this editor, is the custom of using wax candles, about 5 inches long, on a pine tree rather than electric Christmas lights. The fact that the candle custom is almost universal in Germany is attested to by Alfred Wolf and Walter Wolff, bench and machine operators. They explain the use of lighted candles to three factors: there are few wooden houses, mostly stone; electric lights are expensive, a day's wages for one string; and the trees are bought later and are fresher and not as dry as those in American homes. And another pleasure of candles, besides their beauty, reflects Walter Wolff, is that, when a few pine needles are gently scorched by the candle flames, they give off a beautiful smell.

Walter did bring candle holders with him from Germany, but he will

## SWITCHBOARD LAMPS FIRST XMAS TREE LIGHTS

Did you know it was a safety-minded, New England telephone man who first pulled a switch and made a Christmas tree light up like a busy switchboard? Here's the story:

Years ago, many families used wax candles to decorate their Yuletide evergreens. The burning tapers cast a beautiful—but dangerous—glow among the tinder-dry needles.

smells—the traditional Christmas goose cooking, and the Christmas



Alfred Wolf and Walter Wolff—St. Nickolaus and the big stick.

cookies called pfefferkuchen. Almost everyone made pfefferkuchen, says Lilly. Most women wouldn't think of buying these cookies at a bakery. Does she do this cooking in America? No, she says, "We're too busy over here."

Another custom of Christmas, they all remember, is the kranz or advent garland. It is a table decoration made of fir or spruce and which surrounds four red candles. On the fourth week before Christmas the first candle is lit, and on the third week before, the second, and this continues until the final candle is lit on Christmas.

Alfred Wolf, who has not experienced a Christmas in this country, did miss one tradition on December 6.

The search for safer substitute began when a little boy crawled under his Christmas tree and upset a candle. Luckily, it only singed his hair. Still, his father at once decreed: "Candles have got to go."

As an employee of the New England Telephone Company, the father was able to buy several dozen switchboard lamps. To prepare for a safer Christ-

mas, he soldered them to wires and covered them with colored paper. The new decorations were admired by all.

This Christmas he may practice some of the customs of his former land, but his relatives, two brothers and three sisters, will be working over Christmas as ordered. There is only one holiday for them—celebration of the revolution.



Peter Zuk—Christmas forbidden.

Though little known, the story is true. It was reported by Leavitt Morris, now travel editor for the *Christian Science Monitor*. The inventive telephone man was Ralph E. Morris, his father.

mas, he soldered them to wires and covered them with colored paper. The new decorations were admired by all.

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## Eight Shops Employees Donate Blood To Red Cross Regional Program

Eight Omaha Shops employees donated blood to the American Red Cross regional blood program during October.

They are Richard Christensen, Robert Forst, Harold Goodyear, Norman Lundberg, Gayle Parker, Lloyd Reed, James Trenery and Joe Wilson.

The regional blood program collected 1212 pints of blood—819 from the center and 393 from Douglas County mobile operations—during October.

The regional blood program collects and distributes blood for 69 counties in its Nebraska-Iowa region. Ten of the eleven Omaha hospitals depend

entirely on the blood program for their supply. With the growing community, there is a greater need for a blood supply. The Red Cross needs your support in this life-saving program.

The personnel department will assist you in making appointments with the center. Call extension 253, or if you prefer, call the center direct.

## 137 Signed Up For Basketball

One hundred and thirty-seven men signed up for the basketball league being organized by H. A. "Pete" Peterman, section chief in the frame wiring and cable forming department.

Tentative plans have been made, according to Pete, to hold the league games at Benson Community Center on Saturday afternoons from 1 to 5. The Saturday afternoon schedule allows the night shift workers to also enjoy the sport.

With such a heavy response to his call for players, Pete expects to organize ten teams with at least ten players each team. He thought that the first game would be scheduled either on December 28 or January 4.

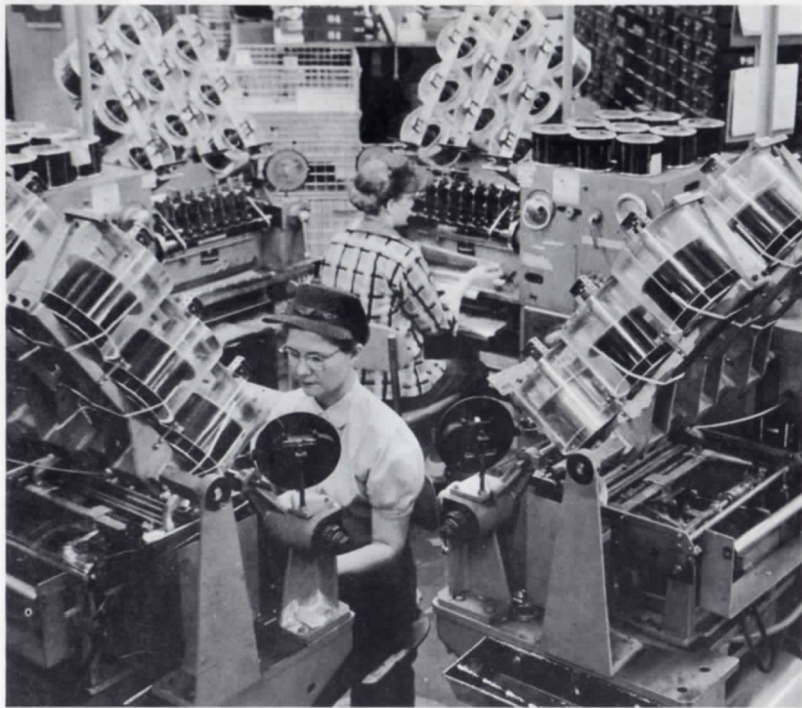
## TRANSFERS

E. J. Wigg, apparatus mounting and stamping section from the Duluth Shops, transferred to coordinating section.

F. Major, time study man from the Lincoln Shops, transferred to wage incentives.

B. J. Keppers, from the Duluth Shops, transferred to department chief, merchandising, with the Duluth Shops reporting to him.

H. N. Harvey, section chief, from the Montgomery Shops, transferred to section chief, supervisory procurement and development.



Basic components of the crossbar switch are the coils, fabricated on coil winding machines, as shown above, operated by Shirley Bevington, front, and Mary Brooner. Coils consist of windings of very fine enameled copper wire over a core with layers of cellulose acetate between adjacent layers of wire.



## A Pattern of Progression

Today on the third floor of building A over a hundred people work on the production and testing of one of the principal switching elements of modern telephone dial equipment—the crossbar switch. A little over a year ago this department did not exist.

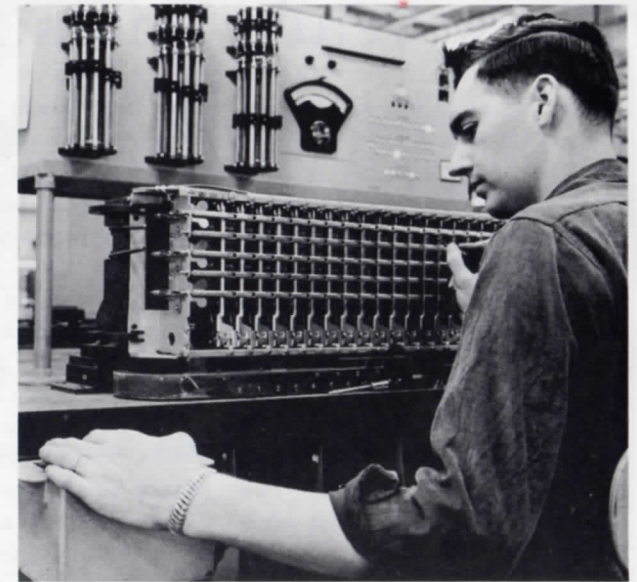
It was in the beginning of November, 1956, that the first men and women from the Omaha area took their positions before the newly installed machinery and benches on A-3 and started the initial operations under the direct supervision of a department chief from Indianapolis, Leo Kotarek.

Of course, not all the department's operations were begun on that date. The intricate crossbar switch requires 30 or so manufacturing and testing jobs before it is fully assembled and ready for shipment from the Omaha Shops. These jobs were added section by section. The contact welding and coil winding were the first sections in

accomplished in eight months.

The prime task in this buildup was job instruction and learning. For critical operations such as testing, adjusting, coil winding, experienced personnel from the Hawthorne Works and Duluth Shops were brought in temporarily to instruct and guide new employees in the manufacturing and testing work. But by far the greatest burden of instruction and guidance fell on the shoulders of the section chiefs permanently transferred from Hawthorne, St. Paul and Allentown. They are in order of arrival: Peter Prest, Phillip Nalow, Edward Maas, George Parkerson, John Foucek and Lyle Barton. Testimony of the quality of these "instructors" and the quality of their "pupils" is shown graphically in the rapid increase in production.

The first crossbar switch was out by the first week of May. It was followed by 127 others during that month. To-



Larry Nelson puts a completed crossbar switch through a continuity test before it is to be mounted in a frame.

department will have delivered in December 1500 switches. And before the new year, 1958, is half over, production will be increased by another 50 per cent.

Furthermore, the overall quality of crossbar switches fabricated in the Omaha Shops has been well above the accepted quality standards.

For a further and deeper plunge into the department's accomplishments, let's review the contact spring welding section's record. This section welds precious metal alloy contacts to 142,000 contact spring assemblies, or "cards", per week. Multiply the 142,000 spring assemblies by the 20 welds per assembly and you will have the huge figure of welds made in a single week. Of this production, about 17,000 spring assemblies are used by the Omaha Shops and 125,000 spring assemblies are shipped to Hawthorne.



More than 2.8 million precious metal contacts are welded to wire spring assemblies each week. Shown above are some of the men and women, and machines, responsible for this big job. They are, front to rear, Darlene Schriefer, Paul Hosch, Aletha Ferguson and Juanita Bailey.

on the shoulders of the section since the initial operations under the direct supervision of a department chief from Indianapolis, Leo Kotarek.

Of course, not all the department's operations were begun on that date. The intricate crossbar switch requires 30 or so manufacturing and testing jobs before it is fully assembled and ready for shipment from the Omaha Shops. These jobs were added section by section. The contact welding and coil winding were the first sections in operation. Then the assembly of the vertical units was begun, followed by the coil finishing, assembly of select bars, spring winding and the armature assembly.

The buildup of this department was

permanently transferred from Hawthorne, St. Paul and Allentown. They are in order of arrival: Peter Prest, Phillip Nalow, Edward Maas, George Parkerson, John Foucek and Lyle Barton. Testimony of the quality of these "instructors" and the quality of their "pupils" is shown graphically in the rapid increase in production.

The first crossbar switch was out by the first week of May. It was followed by 127 others during that month. Today, only six months later, the department produces almost triple that original monthly figures in one week and this production steadily climbs up. Before the clocks strike the beginning of the new year the crossbar switch

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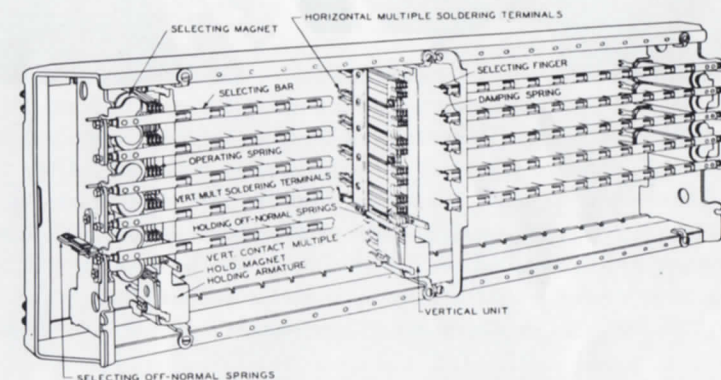
At present, most of the heavy machinery fabricated parts of the crossbar switch are made at Hawthorne Works for the Omaha Shops. In the future, the new plant will be equipped to do this work.



Adjusting and inspecting vertical units for the crossbar switch are, left to right, Rosalie Ross, Cecilia Wilcox, Gwen Zimmerman, inspector Rodney Olson, Hertha Bishop and Fred Herre. The crossbar switch is a principal switching element in modern telephone dial equipment.



Phyllis Ocander and Betty Chesnut solder connections of terminal ends of springs in the horizontal strapping operation, one of some 30 manufacturing and testing jobs performed before an intricate crossbar switch is fully assembled and ready for shipment.



The crossbar switch is used in central office telephone exchange to establish connections between subscribers whose numbers appear on the twenty verticals of each switch with anyone of fifty-one million telephone subscribers in the United States. Each switch is made up of horizontal select magnets and vertical holding magnets which are used to establish contact between voice carrying circuits and the control circuits. Each subscriber has a choice of anyone of ten links, which connect one switch to another switch. These switches are in turn connected to trunks, which go to other central offices.

# They Walk Miles for Sake of Safety

If you happen to see a man in a trim business suit pulling a lid off one of the Shops' trash containers and inspecting its contents like a scavenger in a lonely alley, do not be disturbed.

Should you look about at that time, you may also see another man peering at a card attached to a fire extinguisher as if it were a price tag, and still another critically examining a broken window pane or a loose railing. If so, then these men are probably members of the Shops' safety committee, which assembles once a month for a safety tour of both buildings, looking over every section of floor and working area for hazardous conditions, violations of safety regulations and poor housekeeping that may exist.

There are six members on the safety committee—two operating supervisors (one a department chief), one works service supervisor, one engineer, one inspection supervisor, and the safety

supervisor, Harold Wheelock. The committee's membership is filled on a rotation basis. The department chiefs rotate every two months and the section chiefs every month.

On a scheduled day, the selected committee members get together for a safety tour. On the tour they walk through every floor in a leisurely pace, following no beaten track, but wandering off here and there to peer behind lockers, check electrical cords, and inspect safety guards on machines. They are quick to note any employee who foolishly removes his or her safety glasses while in an area where safety glasses are required wearing. They also look for negligent situations which may cause accidents such as boxes extending into the aisles, ladders and trucks left in aisles, and pans stacked incorrectly.

All their observations of hazards, safety violations and untidiness are

recorded by a member of the committee on an inspection report. The report, listing the conditions to be corrected and where they exist, is made out in triplicate. One copy of the report is immediately handed over to the floor "landlord", a representative of the department having the most employees on any floor, and a copy to the supervisor concerned. The final copy is retained by the safety supervisor.

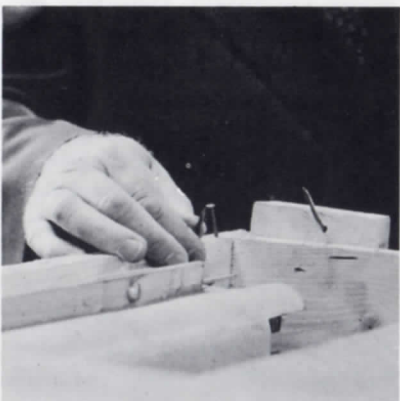
The supervisor concerned is required to take action to remedy the conditions noted, and to advise the safety supervisor of the action taken.

The safety committee's purpose is not to get people in trouble but to keep them out of it. Their desire is to make the Shops a safe place for you to work.

The day that would be most satisfying to the safety committee members is the day they have nothing to report.



A man with his eyes on safety is Harold Wheelock, above, the Shops' safety supervisor. At right, Harold sees to it that a battered saw horse is removed before it causes an accident. Photographs below show some of the hazardous conditions and poor housekeeping which the safety committee observed on their monthly tour and had corrected.



## Hughes Receives Nat'l Guard Award



### ENGAGEMENTS - - -

Sharon Zike to Eugene H. Wahl, repairman, December 6.

### MARRIAGES - - -

Shirley Mae Marcellus to Duane Owens, cable former, November 9.

## 3 Complete Course

Theron Bolton, plant engineer, Lowell Dankof, plant engineer, and Robert Rees, product engineer, completed the introductory phase of W.E.'s

## PRICE PROMOTED TO SECTION CHIEF

James H. Price, formerly engineer, wage practices, was promoted, effective

November 1, to



## Hughes Receives Nat'l Guard Award



Omaha Shops' Charles J. Hughes is truly a sergeant *first class*. Above, Major General W. C. Wood (left), commander of the Iowa-Nebraska National Guard Thirty-fourth Infantry Division, presents Hughes with the Alfred E. Thomsen Memorial Trophy. The award, given in honor of an Omaha World War II hero, is given to the guardsman who shows most outstanding achievement in Omaha's division headquarters unit. Chuck, who is stock maintenance clerk in the production control department, joined the National Guard in January 1951. This year, like 23 other Omaha Shops' men, Chuck went on two-week active duty.

## STOCK OFFERING—CONT'D FROM FRONT PAGE

purchase rights will be mailed to stockholders early in February, and that the subscription period during which rights may be exercised will run until about March 12, 1958. Terms of the issue, including the conversion price at which the debenture will be convertible into stock, will be fixed by the AT&T directors shortly before the rights are issued.

It has long been the policy of AT&T to raise a large portion of the money needed to finance its construction requirements through offerings of securities to its stockholders and also to employees.

Further information on the stock plan will appear in future issues of the *Westerner*.

### ENGAGEMENTS - - -

Sharon Zike to Eugene H. Wahl, repairman, December 6.

### MARRIAGES - - -

Shirley Mae Marcellus to Duane Owens, cable former, November 9.

Sharon Kathmin to Gerald Dobson wireman, November 9.

### BIRTHS - - -

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Harper, analyst, a daughter, Patrica Marie, November 9.

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Kelly, assembler, a daughter, Colleen, November 8.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hogg, assembler, a son, Ronald Dean, November 2.

## 3 Complete Course

Theron Bolton, plant engineer, Lowell Dankof, plant engineer, and Robert Rees, product engineer, completed the introductory phase of W.E.'s graduate engineering training program conducted in Chicago from September 30 to November 27.

### SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES - - -

**5** Arthur W. Pendray, section chief in quality control department—November 19.

**2** Eugene A. Sandmann, engineer, quality control—November 10.

**2** Wallace J. Heath, checker, product quality—December 5.

## PRICE PROMOTED TO SECTION CHIEF

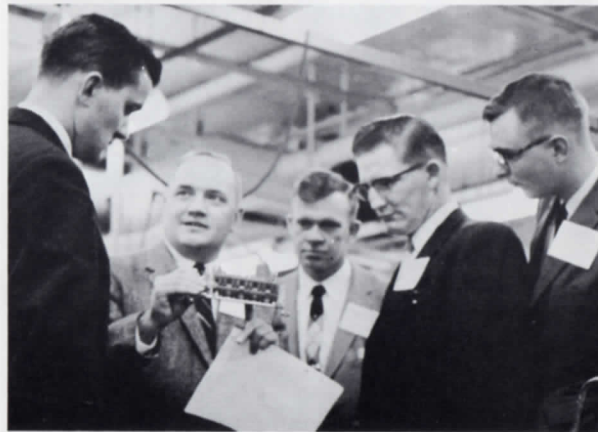
James H. Price, formerly engineer, wage practices, was promoted, effective



November 1, to section chief, hourly job grades, for the Omaha, Lincoln and Duluth Shops.

Mr. Price joined Western Electric in 1951 as an engineer, hourly job grades at the Hawthorne Works. He transferred to the Omaha Shops in December of last year to the position from which he was promoted.

## College Seniors - Western Electric Installers Visit Shops



During November the Omaha Shops were hosts to local college seniors and to Western Electric installation supervisors from the Omaha district.

On the 19th, ten seniors from the University of Omaha and nine from Creighton University visited the Shops. Shown above, plant comptroller Wyllys E. Rheingrover explains the assembly of a vertical unit of the crossbar switch to a



group of visiting seniors.

On the 19th and 21th, the Shops were hosts to Company installation supervisors from North and South Dakota and Nebraska, who were in Omaha for a conference. Shown above, Leo Kotarek (center) of the Omaha Shops escorts, l. to r., A. B. Mills, D. H. Brunken, and V. H. Shafer through the quality assurance section on A-4.