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IDEALS OF THE TELEPHONE SERVICE¹

A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL

THIS is the ninth annual meeting of the Telephone Pioneers of America, although our association is now entering upon its twelfth year. On account of the war, during three years no annual meetings were held. The pioneers were then engaged in the great struggle to save civilization.

The membership of our association is made up not only from those who took part in the first development of the telephone, but also from those who have been in the telephone service for a period of twenty-one years. We have in the service tens of thousands of zealous men and women doing pioneer work now, but because they lack in years, though not in achievement, they have not been enrolled. We and they are looking forward to the day of their formal admission. To these our fellow-workers we extend our greetings and our appreciations. In their hands lies not only the future of our society but the future of our art.

Our first meeting took place eleven years ago, at Boston, the birthplace of the telephone. At that meeting, the inventor of the telephone, Alexander Graham Bell, was present and delivered to us an address which must always be memorable in the history of our society. Today, we recall with peculiar sadness these words which he then spoke to us:

"This is a great day for me, the first meeting of the Telephone Pioneers of America and of the world. It gives me great pleasure to meet with you all to-day, and yet there is a feeling of sadness about it. I am the first telephone pioneer and my memory goes back to the very beginning, and I miss the faces I remember so well, the faces of the old pioneers who I wish were here to-day. . . . I feel it a little presumptuous on my part to try to speak of the telephone

¹ Presidential address delivered at the ninth annual meeting of the Telephone Pioneers of America, at Cleveland, Ohio, September 29, 1922.

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