

PHONE COMPANIES TERMED SNOOPERS

Senate Panel Is Told They
Eavesdrop on Employes

By CABELL PHILLIPS
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 5—
Local telephone companies, using electronic monitoring equipment, regularly eavesdrop on conversations between their employes and their subscribers, a labor union official told Senators today.

Joseph A. Beirne, president of the Communications Workers of America, described a number of such incidents and devices in testimony today before a Senate Judiciary subcommittee on administrative practices and procedures. The subcommittee, under the chairmanship of Senator Edward V. Long, Democrat of Missouri, has been conducting hearings into invasions of privacy and constitutional rights through such devices.

'Don't Ask for a Date'

Mr. Beirne gave the committee a small plastic desk calendar that contained a hidden microphone. He said similar "bugged" calendars were to be found on the customer counter at the main office of the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company here to monitor conversations between employes and persons who went to the telephone office on business.

"If she's pretty, gentlemen, don't ask her for a date," the witness warned. "The supervisor who is monitoring her may object."

A spokesman for Chesapeake and Potomac acknowledged that



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ALLEGES MONITORING:
Joseph A. Beirne, president of Communications Workers of America, told a Senate committee local telephone companies use eavesdropping devices on their employes.

such devices were used. "They are a service aid to make sure the customer's problems are being taken care of," he said.

Lee Loewinger, a member of the Federal Communications Commission, who also appeared today, told the committee that existing laws and regulations were inadequate to cope with the many abuses of privacy that were possible with the electronic equipment now on the open market.

Many such devices, he said, are of such low power that their use falls outside the licensing authority of the commis-

sion. In addition, he said, his agency has no control over the manufacturing and marketing of eavesdropping devices and can take action only when their use violates a particular regulation or statute.

Senator Long, terming this a weakness in the communication laws, said that a bill to remedy this defect was introduced in the Senate earlier in the year.

Mr. Beirne told the committee that many telephone companies had installed various types of monitoring devices, primarily as an aid in training new workers and to check on the performance of employes.

While this may be a legitimate practice, it must be remembered that the customer is being monitored at the same time and without his knowledge, Mr. Beirne said. He asserted that the results of such secret surveillance had also been used on occasion as grounds for disciplining and even dismissing telephone company employes.

The telephone companies, he said, have been the leaders in developing secret listening and transmitting devices that can be purchased either by law enforcement agencies or by private individuals. He urged that more stringent controls be imposed on the sale and use of such equipment.

"As Americans," Mr. Beirne said, "we in C. W. A. are deeply concerned about the dangers to individual freedom which are inherent in the tools and

techniques of the snoopers. And as trade unionists we are not only troubled about such spying being inflicted on the men and women we represent, but we are also concerned about the dangers posed by the bribers and corrupters who may attempt to use our members to accomplish their eavesdropping and prying."

Skateboard Hazards Cited

CHICAGO, May 5 (UPI)—
The National Safety Council reported today that injuries ranging from "minor abrasions" to "deaths" had resulted from the current skateboard craze among youngsters. "Enough reports have convinced us that skateboards do constitute a hazard unless the riders exercise considerable caution," said.