

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DOLE'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT:

SENATORS SAY "NO" TO DIAL TELEPHONES!

WASHINGTON -- In his daily "Bicentennial Minutes" commemorating the 100th anniversary of Congress, Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole (R-KS) today told his colleagues that 57 years ago, Senators were waging all-out war against -- believe it or not -- dial telephones:

FIFTY-SEVEN YEARS AGO TODAY, ON JUNE 25, 1930, THE SENATE RESOLVED A MONTH-LONG CONTROVERSY OVER THE INSTALLATION OF DIAL-OPERATED TELEPHONES. EARLIER THE CHESAPEAKE AND POTOMAC TELEPHONE COMPANY HAD INSTALLED 450 DIAL PHONES ON THE SENATE SIDE OF THE CAPITOL AND IN THE SENATE OFFICE BUILDING. MANY MEMBERS IMMEDIATELY TOOK A DISLIKE TO THESE INSTRUMENTS, WHICH HAD BEEN FRUSTRATING USERS SINCE THEIR INVENTION SEVERAL DECADES EARLIER. PRESIDENT HERBERT HOOVER HAD BANNED THEM FROM THE WHITE HOUSE AFTER HE TOOK OFFICE IN 1929.

SENATORIAL OPPONENTS OF DIAL PHONES, OFTEN VEILING THEIR ARGUMENTS IN HUMOR, CHARGED THAT THEY WERE MECHANICALLY UNRELIABLE, THAT THEY "REQUIRED SENATORS TO PERFORM THE DUTIES OF TELEPHONE OPERATORS IN ORDER TO ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF TELEPHONE SERVICE," THAT THEY CONTRIBUTED TO THE NATIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY THROWING TELEPHONE OPERATORS OUT OF WORK, AND THAT THEY REQUIRED A GOOD DEAL OF LIGHT TO SEE HOW TO OPERATE.

ON MAY 22, VIRGINIA'S SENATOR CARTER GLASS CALLED UP HIS RESOLUTION TO "HAVE THESE ABOMINABLE DIAL TELEPHONES TAKEN OUT OF USE ON THE SENATE SIDE." ARIZONA'S HENRY FOUNTAIN ASHURST THANKED GLASS FOR HIS MODERATE LANGUAGE. THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, " HE OBSERVED, "WOULD NOT BE MAILABLE IF IT CONTAINED IN PRINT WHAT SENATORS THINK OF THE DIAL-TELEPHONE SYSTEM." SENATOR CLARENCE DILL OF WASHINGTON STATE SUGGESTED THAT GLASS EXPAND HIS MEASURE TO OUTLAW DIAL PHONES FROM THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AS WELL.

THE SENATE QUICKLY ADOPTED THE GLASS RESOLUTION, WHICH PROVIDED FOR RESTORATION OF OPERATOR ASSISTED PHONES WITHIN THIRTY DAYS. OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TELEPHONE COMPANY VIGOROUSLY LOBBIED SENATORS AND STAFF TO REVERSE THIS DECISION. FINALLY, ON MAY 25, THE SENATE ACCEPTED A COMPROMISE MEASURE THAT PERMITTED MEMBERS TO CHOOSE THE TYPE OF INSTRUMENT THAT BEST SUITED THEM.

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