By David Trevett '65

Personal telephones have long been a dream for Tech men, and now at last they are becoming a reality. In fact, the West Campus phones have already been installed (East Campus has for many years had non-dial personal phones)—there remains only the minor detail of connecting the new cables to the switchboard.

The officially announced date for the completion of the Burton and Graduate House connections was October 15; now it is with optimism that officials hope the system will be completed by Nov. 1.

Splicing Problems

This delay has been caused by numerous factors, the chief one being difficulty in splicing the main cables. It seems that an expert cable splicer was hired to do the job. Once time for the cables to be spliced and it was discovered that the cable splice was ill.

Thus it became necessary to find another cable splicer. This was done soon and the date for cable splicing was set. However, to get to the cable he had to work in a manhole which, due to the influence of someone named Esther, was filled with water.

Saturdays Off

The manhole was soon pumped dry (on a Friday) and the next day the cable splicer descended to splice cables naturally, the manhole was again full of water. This time no pump was available (pump got Saturday off) and a pull had to be employed. Needless to say, very little cable splicing was accomplished that day.

Minor incident such as this have greatly hindered work on the phone system. Nevertheless, a great deal of progress has been made. The switchboard for Burton and Grad House has been installed in Grad, and the phone numbers are already working in regard to outside calls.

New System

At this point, a description of the new system is in order. Eventually, when the new cables have been installed in all dorms, any dorm resident will be able to call any other dorm resident from his room. As of November 1, this will be true for West Campus.

The new system is an internal one, being installed by MIT itself, and cannot be connected with the outside New England phone system. This means that, a student will not be able to talk from his room to someone not on the internal system.

No Need Scrambles

However, the internal system can be used to locate a student and tell him that he has a call. This will eliminate to a certain extent the trouble of people having to answer the hall phone for a student and find the desired party.

When the operator receives a call from a resident, she will put it on one of several free extensions and then, having contacted the desired party in his room, will tell him to go to the system phone (UN 4-6000) and call that extension number which will be 5112 or the like.

This next step is very important: As soon as the person receiving the call has dialed the appropriate extension number, he will be connected with the caller. The person receiving the call should start talking as soon as he has dialed the extension.

Last week this system was inaugurated in Grad House. Little House, an expert splicer, has probably heard — from telephone people — already has a working phone system; the Burton phones are still inoperable (at press time).

Here's the difficulty of the system: The incoming call is waiting while the operator is contacting the desired party; this person is making a call and naturally expects someone to answer.

On the other hand, the desired party has dialed the extension and, having dialed the number, he also tends to expect someone to answer. Thus it is hoped that the parties will be successfully connected, but neither one will initiate the conversation. House has requested that the person being called start talking immediately.

This system will be introduced in Burton beginning in November, and eventually on the whole campus. The switchboard for East Campus and Senior House has been set up in the basement of Walley Memorial, and it is hoped that this system will be ready by next summer.

As Professor Carlisle R. Turner, adviser to the treasurer's office on the telephone system, expressed it, "It's all a matter of money."

In fact, money has been the lack of it, been the cause of the ruling factor in progress of the system.

At first the Institute was to put up money for the project, with the cost of installation in excess of $50,000, as subsequent costs estimated to average five cents per call. Nevertheless, there were enough people (including Prof. Turner and the dorm residents) who wanted the system installed to see that it was.

New Groups Included

As mentioned previously, an internal phone system will include all on-campus living quarters. Plans are being made for including the new women's dorm and the new married students' house, both of which are new in the planning stage, upon their completion. If the facilities move on campus, they will be included in the system.

There is a possibility that the fragmentation on Memorial Day will be cut in on the system if they are willing to pay for part of the cost of installation.

Tera-Digital Approach

When the new system is put into use it will operate as follows: The number will consist of four digits, with the first digit indicating the station. Rooms will remain Station 0, Burton and Grad will be Station 5, and East Campus and Senior House will be Station 6.

Grades House will use numbers 60 through 66. However, when calling another party on the same station, one will not be able to dial the first digit.

CAMPUS INTERVIEWS

October 19 and 20 — Contact University Placement Office for Appointment