

Behind The Scenes For The JFK Visit

President Kennedy's trip to Milford yesterday went off with the timing and all the split second efficiency of a major TV spectacular. It had the glamour, the suspense, the emotional appeal and the big finish that producers dream about. The story of the President's visit, in words and pictures, was on the way to newspapers, radio and television stations throughout the country while it was happening.

Much of the credit for such fast and accurate news coverage must go to the telephone company.

A spokesman for the General Telephone Company of Upstate New York said last evening that more than three miles of telephone cable was installed on the Pinchot grounds. Most of the cable was buried under ground. Ten field telephones were installed throughout the area for use by Forest Service men. Five telephones were installed in the Grey Towers. One Western Union Circuit carrying teletype machines sped wire stories to the press across the country. Eight pay stations, one radio loop and two private lines made it possible for reporters to call stories to their radio stations and newspapers. In Milford, a telephoto circuit was set up so that wire photos could be transmitted.

There were more than twenty eight telephones in all and of these, three were perhaps the most important of all. They were the President's special hot line phones. One of these phones was set up at the helicopter landing field. A second was at the President's service in the Grey Towers. The third instrument was located just below the television camera stand in front of the speaker's platform. An extension from that last phone was placed just a few feet from the President at the platform's edge.

These hot line phones were a direct link to Stewart Air Force Base in Newburgh and were tied in with a direct connection with the White House.

The cost? "In the thousands," said the spokesman. The news media would pay for their own. The government would pay for those phones provided for government use.

The text of the President's speech was carried in the Union Gazette and was being set in type before the President began his trip back to Washington, thanks to teletype facilities.

It takes more than red tape to set up a visit by the President. It takes a few miles of telephone cable too.