File No. 4732 Continued.

CORRESPONDENCE.

355**5**

3556

under which it was built. When the contract for the municipal exchange was first awarded to the Maryland Telephone Company, in 1901, this company used the line in its then condition to connect up the stations mentioned with the municipal exchange. The line has had very little, if any, repairs made to it, with the result that it is now in such condition that it is not possible for us to have uninterrupted communication with the important stations on it. In fact, about one-half the time we cannot communicate with the stations on the loop. The Maryland Telephone Company claim that it is under no obligation to rebuild the line, and the line must be rebuilt before a satisfactory service between the stations can be had. If the department is required to do this under the terms of the contract between the Maryland Telephone Company and the City, it will be impossible for want of sufficient means to reconstruct the line. The appropriations made for the expenses of the Water Department are barely sufficient to enable us to do the work which we are absolutely required to do. priations originally asked for were so cut down by the Board of Estimates as to create a prospect of a deficiency at the very beginning of the year, so that we have no allowance whatever to meet any extraordinary expenditure, and to rebuild the line would cost approximately four thousand dollars, and the expenditure of such an amount by the The Maryland and Pennsylvania department is out of the question. Railroad officials have threatened, if the line is not rebuilt, to cut it away entirely, which will leave us entirely without service between the stations. Of course, such a condition as this is impossible, as it is necessary for the safety of the service that communication between these stations be kept open.

We have had a proposition from the Chesapeake and Potomac Company to give us a satisfactory telephone service between the four stations, over its own lines and to maintain the lines for \$696.00 a year, to connect with its exchange in the city hall.

I send herewith a copy of the contract between the Maryland
Telephone Company and the City, and the Water Board requests that you
will advise us in your opinion whether:-

- Under the contract the Maryland Telephone Company is obligated to rebuild the line mentioned, or to maintain service between the City and the department's stations;
- 2. If the Maryland Telephone Company is not so obligate & ed can the City take the service from the Chesapeuke & Potomac Telephone Company for the four stations mentioned, which are now on the Maryland Telephone musicipal