

An estimated 1,400 people appeared for the public meeting.

Rate hearing draws 1,400

Even before he finished his 40 minute straight-talking tirade on Michigan Bell's "squandering," TV's Lou Gordon had hit the level of folk hero.

The jammed audience at the rate hike hearing in Farmington Hills cheered him on shouting, "You tell 'em, Lou," "right on" and "let 'em have it."

The vicarious pleasure of telling off the powerful—high paid executives and state appointed public service commissioners—was sweet.

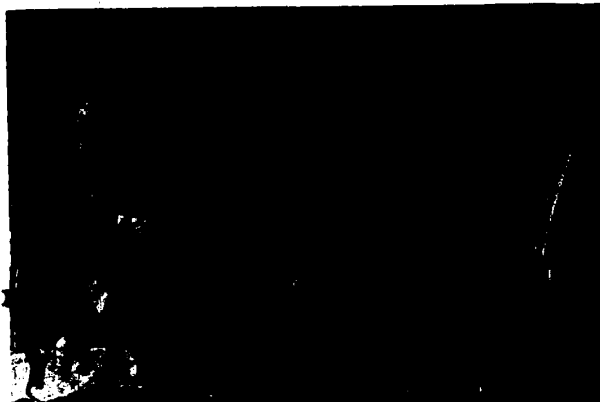
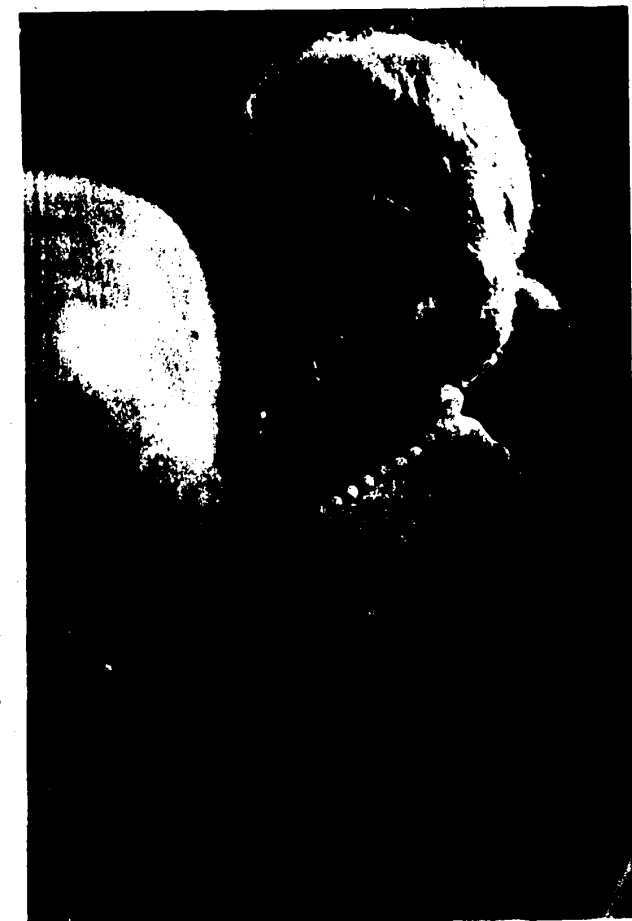
Words like "millionaires," "I demand," and "wheeling and dealing," produced loud choruses of "yeah, yeahs."

Before the evening was over, all of the frustrations from not being able to get an unlisted number, to not being able to understand the phone bills, had been aired before the three man panel.

Petitions signed by 2,000 senior citizens who opposed the rate hike were presented.

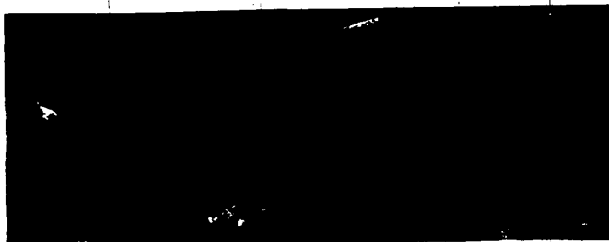
Several who spoke were phone company employees who favored the raise.

The hearing was satisfying. From the tearful to the terse, they had come to the microphone and been heard. A new hero, his wife and sons beside him, had challenged the powerful utility and threatened to continue to do battle.



Michigan Public Service Commissioner Lenton Scuthorp, Administrative Law Judge Wil-

Ham Austin and Commissioner William Rell listened to complaints.



Photos by Craig Newman