

Thames Exchange.

There is little progress to report. About four miles of new wire have been erected. The total number of subscribers is seventy-three.

This Exchange and its lines have been overhauled.

WELLINGTON.

Construction.

The following additions to wires were completed during the year:—

	Miles of Poles.	Miles of Wire.
Napier to Wanganui ... ..	...	161
Dannevirke to Ti-tree Point	29	29
Eketahuna to Hukanui ... ..	...	7
Fowler's to Rangiwhia	16	16
Wanganui to New Plymouth ... ..	...	115
Toko to Strathmore	14	14
Inglewood to Tarata	12	12
Hutt to Rona	2	6
Wellington to Oterangi Bay ... ..	...	14
For Railway Department—		
Hastings to Kaikora North ... ..	...	24
Palmerston North to Wanganui Railway ... ..	...	55
Palmerston North to Ashurst Railway ... ..	...	9
Woodville to Ashurst Railway ... ..	...	9
Hawera to Manutahi Railway	10	10
Wellington to Woodville Railway	18	105
Total	101	586

The reconstruction and diversion of the Paikakariki–Marton Junction section resulted, after dismantling a portion of the old line, in decreasing the miles of poles by 14, and increasing the miles of wire by 122, making a total increase of 87 miles of poles and 708 miles of wire.

This removal of the main line from the beach has been followed by improved working.

Maintenance.

The section Upper Hutt–Masterton has been overhauled and strengthened.

Considerable damage was done to the lines in the Napier District during the Easter floods of 1897, but the repairs were effected with despatch.

The bush fires in the beginning of this year caused some damage to the lines between Masterton and Dannevirke and destroyed the Tawataia office.

Offices.

Eighteen telephone offices were opened during the year.

Alterations were made to the following offices:—

Wellington Railway	Morse to telephone.
Ohingaiti	Telephone to Morse.

The telephone offices at Island Bay, Plimmerton, and Tawataia were closed.

Cables.

Between the 23rd and the 31st March last a new cable of 32·4 knots was laid from Oterangi Bay to White's Bay, and a fault in the Lyell Bay cable was cut out and 2·3 knots of sound cable inserted.

This is the first cable-work undertaken by the Government cable-steamer "Tutanekai," which proved herself to be suitable in every way.

Telephone-exchanges.

No new exchanges were opened in this district during the year, but the sub-exchange at Hutt was closed.

The bridging multiple switchboard was fitted in Wellington and opened for public work early in November, and has given the satisfaction that was expected of it.

There are now 1,163 subscribers to the Wellington Exchange.

There were 143 miles of wire and 12 miles of poles added to the exchanges in Wellington District during the year.

NELSON.

Construction.

The following new wires have been erected:—

No. 8 copper completed between Blenheim and Kaikoura	90 miles.
A fourth wire from Wakapuaka to Belgrove	37 "
Reefton to Reefton Railway-station	1½ "
Havelock to Cullensville	10 "
Ngahere to Blackball	3¼ "

Total length of wire erected 141½ miles.