

RADIO BROADCASTING.

In order to put broadcasting on a more satisfactory financial and developmental basis, a scheme is being developed under which an agreement covering the whole of the Dominion will be entered into with a broadcasting organization representative of the "listeners-in" and the electrical trade. Under this scheme four modern broadcasting-stations will be erected at the main centres, and operated in accordance with suitable regulations. Subject to certain conditions, this organization will be given an exclusive right to erect and operate broadcasting-stations. As soon as the necessary legislation is enacted, a Board of representative personnel will be set up to advise the Government upon the development and operation of the broadcasting service. The revenue of the broadcasting organization will comprise a portion of the license fees paid in respect of private radio receiving-stations. It is anticipated that when broadcasting is established on the lines indicated above and a high standard of transmission is reached the number of receiving-stations will greatly increase.

COOK STRAIT TELEPHONE-CABLE.

Provision will be made in this year's estimates for the purchasing and laying across Cook Strait of a submarine cable for the purpose of providing telephone communication between the North and South Islands. The cable that the Department has in view is of the four-core continuously-loaded type, so designed as to provide three telephone and four telegraph channels. Arrangements are also being made to obtain the latest type of thermionic-valve repeaters for use in conjunction with the submarine cable. The installation of this cable and the extended use of repeaters will make it practicable for telephonic communication to be provided between any two parts of the Dominion. Advantage was taken of the visit to New Zealand in March last of the Eastern Extension Cable Company's cable steamer "Patrol" to survey the route of the proposed Cook Strait telephone-cable. Provided no unforeseen circumstances arise, the new cable should be laid early in 1925.

LABOUR BUREAUX AT POST-OFFICES.

By arrangement with the Labour Department, labour bureaux were established from the 1st October, 1923, at about four hundred permanent post-offices at places other than those at which the Labour Department has its own representatives. Employers of labour and persons seeking work are now able to ascertain at these post-offices whether their needs can be met locally.

Under the scheme, Postmasters register applications for employment and applications for workers. In the event of the Postmaster being unable to offer employment to the applicant, or should there be no worker available when application for one is made by an employer, the Labour Department is communicated with. The fees charged are in accordance with those authorized under the Servants' Registry Office Act. The benefits of the innovation are already evident.

INSPECTION OF POST-OFFICES.

In the course of the year Inspectors visited 2,341 offices. The duties of an Inspector are to audit the accounts, to check irregularities in office management, and to promote the efficiency of the service generally. Reports furnished by Inspectors disclose that the manner in which the Department's business is performed is becoming more efficient from year to year. It is appreciated that all that is possible in this connection has not yet been achieved, but a very marked advance was observed during 1923.

STAFF EFFICIENCY.

The efficiency of the Department has been well maintained during the year; and, with a view to its improvement, a conference of controlling officers from the cities and provincial towns was held in Wellington in November last. Methods of improving the service to the public and reducing expenditure were discussed at length, and the results are now apparent in the smoother working of the many branches comprising the Department. It is the aspiration of the Department to carry out promptly and efficiently its duty to the public, and every effort is being made to adequately fulfil this aspiration. I have frequently had to compliment officers on the initiative displayed in meeting emergencies, and I have no doubt the general public fully appreciate the enthusiasm shown by my officers. Obviously, with a total staff of approximately eleven thousand officers, there will sometimes be instances of indifference to the claims of the public; but, generally, officers can be