

On the 7th August, 1926, the date on which the new station at Auckland commenced operations, the number of receiving licenses was 4,400. This number had increased to over 5,000 on the 1st September, when the new station at Christchurch was opened. At the end of December, the number was over 12,000 and a gradual increase took place until the 31st March. With the installation of the new high-power station at Wellington it is anticipated that the number of licenses for the year 1927-28 will be double the number for 1926-27.

#### FAILURE TO RENEW RADIO LICENSES.

The efforts of the Department in bringing to book individuals operating radio sets without a license met with an unexpected hindrance in the shape of a magisterial decision that failure to renew a license after the 31st March of any year was not an offence under the Post and Telegraph Act. The situation was met by an amendment to the regulations in the direction of providing that every owner of apparatus for wireless telegraphy who fails to renew a license after the 31st March shall be obliged to dismantle the apparatus within a stipulated period to be notified in the *New Zealand Gazette*. It will be necessary to amend the Post and Telegraph Act in the direction of providing a penalty for persons who fail to renew licenses on the due date.

#### ERECTION OF WIRELESS AERIALS.

The danger arising from the erection of wireless aerials in proximity to electric-power circuits has led to the making of regulations stipulating that wireless aerials may not, without the consent of the Power Board or other authority concerned, be erected above or below wires used for the supply of electricity, or sufficiently near to cause contact in case of a break in any line. It has also been found necessary to provide that wireless aerials shall not, without the consent of the Minister, be erected above or below any departmental line.

#### DUNEDIN EXHIBITION BROADCASTING STATION.

At the close of the Dunedin Exhibition, the broadcasting station in operation there was removed to a site near the centre of the city.

#### RADIO RECEIVING-APPARATUS FOR THE USE OF THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF YORK.

A radio receiving station with two loud-speaker extensions was established at Their Highnesses' fishing camp at Kowhai Flat, Lake Tokaanu. The apparatus was erected and operated by departmental officers.

#### TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE SERVICE.

In connection with the development of the telephone-exchange service it is interesting to note that, while the population of the Dominion has increased by 54 per cent. during the last twenty years, the number of telephone-exchange subscribers has increased by 550 per cent. during the same period. Although it is not expected that this phenomenal rate of development will be maintained, there is no definite indication that the point of saturation has yet been reached. The facilities afforded settlers in country districts for forming rural lines comprising up to ten subscribers for connection with telephone exchanges are undoubtedly of great benefit to the settlers, and have the tendency of removing much of the isolation of living in sparsely populated areas. It is the policy of the Department to make telephone-exchange service increasingly attractive, and to bring it within the reach of the bulk of the population not only in the cities, but in the rural areas as well.

Evidence of the popularity of the telephone in rural areas is the fact that in the latest telephone statistics of the world, compiled on the 1st January, 1925, New Zealand is shown as having a greater number of telephones per 100 of population in rural communities than any other country in the world, with the exception of the United States of America and Canada.

The conversion of the cabling system in the Christchurch area from aerial to underground, and the complete reconstruction of the other outside distributing plant which is being undertaken preparatory to the conversion of the local switching system from the manual method of operation to automatic, was proceeded with steadily throughout the year, twenty-six miles of ducts and ten miles of cable being laid. As the jointing of the cable was completed, the new cable-wires were brought into operation, thus enabling an improved service to be given to many existing subscribers.

A number of exchanges in areas in which Electric-power Boards are now operating were fitted with new devices for ensuring greater protection against the damage likely to be caused to exchange apparatus by contacts between telephone and power lines.

At a number of small exchanges, the ringing-facilities of the operators were improved by the installation of power ringers in place of pole-changers, the ringing-current for which was obtained from primary batteries.

A brief summary of the year's operations in regard to the development and maintenance of the telephone-exchange system in the Dominion is as follows :—

The opening of new magneto exchanges at Kaukapakapa, Poolburn, Omakau, Oturchua, and Upper Moutere.

The conversion to automatic working of the magneto exchanges at Hawera and Takapuna.