

### EMPIRE BROADCASTING STATION.

A matter of extreme interest in the development of broadcasting and of particular import to the Empire has been the establishment by the British Broadcasting Corporation of the Empire short-wave broadcasting service. It need hardly be said that a regular service of broadcasting for the benefit of Empire citizens must have incalculable results in promoting and maintaining sentimental and other ties between the Mother-country and the Dominions and colonies. Unfortunately, satisfactory reception of this service is not yet assured in New Zealand; but the British Broadcasting Corporation is making every effort by way of experiment and research to achieve this laudable end. Mr. Malcolm A. Frost, of the staff of the Corporation, recently paid a special visit to New Zealand for the purpose of furthering the reception of the Empire transmissions.

### WIRELESS PATENT RIGHTS.

In May last the Government decided to give twelve months' notice of termination of its agreement with Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia), Ltd., in respect of patent rights. The agreement will terminate on the 31st May, 1934.

The agreement was signed on the 30th October, 1928, to subsist for a period of five years (and thereafter to be subject to twelve months' notice of renunciation by either party), and provided for the payment to Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia), Ltd., of 3s. in respect of each radio-receiving license (to cover the use of the company's patent rights for broadcasting apparatus) and of a percentage of the revenue accruing from portion of the commercial radio traffic handled by New Zealand radio-telegraph stations. The agreement followed protracted negotiations between the Government and the company; and its effect was to absolve users and manufacturers of radio apparatus from any liability for claims in respect of the use of registered patents.

An agreement on practically the same basis between the company and the Australian Government has likewise been terminated by the Commonwealth.

The whole question of patent rights is at present being carefully considered.

### TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE SERVICES.

On the 1st October, 1932, the new automatic telephone exchange at Lower Hutt was cut into service. The conversion from manual working was accomplished with a minimum of trouble, and shortly after the change-over a high-grade service was being furnished.

The expansion of the telephone-exchange service within the Dominion, which was so marked a feature of the years of prosperity, has in common with other similar services received a temporary set-back. At present, for the first time in many years, there are no exchanges in process of being converted from manual to automatic working. This is a sign of the times, but it is hoped that as industry improves there will be a resumption of the development formerly in evidence.

Having regard to all the factors, the loss during the year of approximately 4 per cent. of the telephone subscribers in the Dominion cannot be regarded as serious. The percentage loss indicated bears comparison with the decrease in turnover of other businesses in what can probably be regarded as the worst year of the depression. Since the peak of telephone development in this country in December, 1930, the total loss of telephone subscribers has been approximately 7 per cent.: this small loss reflects the reasonableness, even in times of stress, of the rentals charged in relation to the service given. In comparison with the rates charged in other countries, New Zealand is fortunately placed, notwithstanding that the majority of telephone services in the world are controlled by private companies.