

having incurred monthly accounts up to £380, including a call to Auckland costing £21. The Departments explained to Treasury that the calls related to urgent business, but two of them intimated that they would tighten the control which had hitherto been exercised on this service.

Air Travel Passages

During the last two years there has been a substantial increase in the use of both local and overseas air travel by public servants. The Department of Tourist and Health Resorts acts as an agent for the booking of air passages, and in that capacity earns commission for the work handled by it.

A Treasury instruction requires that bookings for air flights must, wherever possible, be made through Government channels, but a check carried out by the Audit Office during the year showed that a number of Departments were not observing this requirement, and that the loss of commission on vouchers examined over a period of four weeks averaged more than £50 a week.

As a result of discussions between Treasury and Audit, Departments have been reminded of previous instructions, and an increase in commission earned should result from this action.

Broadcasting Service

In the annual report of the Service for the year ended 31st March, 1947 (parliamentary paper F.-3), mention was made of its policy of broadcasting public concerts and recitals of artists of world standing. The report stated that "these broadcasts could not have been provided without the inducement of public concert work to bring the artists to this country. The cost of such broadcasts would be prohibitive unless available broadcasting revenue were to be supplemented by revenue from public concerts."

This principle has been departed from in the arrangements made during the year 1947-48 for the production of the opera "Carmen." The Service is to meet the costs of two principal artists from overseas, and also those of certain other personnel and of the services of the National Orchestra, but all financial return from the performances will remain in the hands of local musical societies.

Department of Scientific and Industrial Research

Certain manufacturing work for the general public, for which a charge is made, is done in the laboratories of the above-mentioned Department, and the Audit Office inquired the statutory authority for it to be undertaken. The Department replied that it did not undertake manufacturing, which, in the sense usually given to the word, involves repetitive production of articles on a commercial basis. It said that "the work done was highly specialized and, in the great majority of cases, involved preliminary investigation before it was brought to a successful conclusion." The Department quoted several