

The cables serving New Zealand were subject to interruptions on three occasions, but the use of alternative cable and radio-telegraph outlets enabled traffic to be dealt with expeditiously while repairs were being effected.

The charges for cablegrams from New Zealand to certain European countries were reduced to bring them into line with those for messages from Australia, and appropriate reductions were also made to certain cablegram and radio photo-telegram rates following on the alteration to the New Zealand exchange-rate in August, 1948.

With the return of the Occupation Forces from Japan, the remaining war-time concessions for cablegrams to and from members of the Armed Forces were abolished.

Further progress has been made in the nationalization of the British Commonwealth telecommunication system, and it is expected that the full scheme will be in operation by the 1st April, 1950.

Statistics of overseas messages handled during the year are shown in the Appendix, as follows: cablegrams, Table No. 4; radio telegrams, Table No. 5; radio-telephone calls, Table No. 7.

TRANSMITTING-STATION FOR OVERSEAS SERVICES

As mentioned in last year's report, arrangements are in hand for the provision of a new high-power radio-transmitting station at Himatangi, near Foxton. Until this station is in operation the existing overseas telephone service to the United Kingdom and European countries via Sydney, and the photo-telegram service to the United Kingdom via Melbourne, will have to continue to be operated from Wellington Radio, where the available land is insufficient and unsuitable for the deployment of effective aerial systems. When the new station is in operation it will be possible to work with the United Kingdom direct and thus provide an improved service over extended hours.

It is hoped to commence the erection of the buildings, &c., at Himatangi before the end of 1949.

EXTENSIONS OF RADIO-TELEPHONE SERVICE

Extensions of the radio-telephone service both in respect of the number of countries served and the hours of service were arranged at various times during the year. Service is now available to the United Kingdom and many countries in Europe, to the United States and all other North American countries; to Hawaii; and to Australia, Port Moresby, Rabaul, and Nauru Island.

Radio-telephone service to Australia is now available at any time between 9 a.m. and midnight on week-days and between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Sundays.

On the 18th July a special "conference" call service, whereby more than one party at either end may take part in a conversation, was introduced with both Australia and the United States of America.

A radio-telephone service was opened with the passenger-ship "Monowai" upon her resuming the Australia - New Zealand run on the 28th January.

INTERRUPTION AND REPAIR OF OVERSEAS CABLES

Early in February, 1948, the Department was approached by Cable and Wireless, Ltd., to undertake the repair of the Auckland - Doubtless Bay section of the Auckland - Norfolk Island submarine telegraph cable which had developed an insulation fault near Cape Brett. Before the work was commenced the Norfolk Island - Suva cable was also interrupted close to Norfolk Island, necessitating urgent repairs.