

The New Zealand Government steamer " Matai " was chartered on behalf of Cable and Wireless, Ltd., and, after being suitably fitted up, left Wellington on the 23rd March. After initial delay due to weather conditions, the fault off Cape Brett was repaired on the 4th April. In the meantime it had been ascertained by tests that another break had occurred three and a half miles out from Doubtless Bay in the Norfolk Island - Doubtless Bay section. The " Matai " thereupon proceeded to Doubtless Bay, where it was decided to pick up both the Auckland and Norfolk Island ends and to splice the two cables a few miles out from the shore, thus eliminating the Doubtless Bay landing point with its rocky reefs. This operation was successfully completed by the 8th April.

After loading further cable at Auckland, the " Matai " proceeded to Norfolk Island to lay a new shore end at Anson Bay for the Norfolk Island - Suva cable. The ship arrived at Norfolk Island on the 16th April. The Suva end of the cable was raised on the 21st, but subsequent operations were delayed by bad weather, and the repairs were not finally completed until the 1st May. The " Matai " returned to Wellington on the 10th May.

As on previous occasions, the " Matai " proved to be very suitable for this class of work, and the use of the ship undoubtedly enabled repairs to be made much more promptly than would have been the case had it been necessary to adopt the only other alternative of obtaining the services of a regular cable ship from overseas.

The ready co-operation of the Marine Department in making the ship and experienced officers available materially assisted with the successful undertaking of the work.

REDUCTION IN TELEGRAPH CHARGES

As from the 1st September the charges for cablegrams to European countries were reduced, where necessary, to the level applicable to messages from Australia to those countries. In many cases no adjustment was necessary as the rates were already identical, but in other cases the reductions varied from $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to as much as 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a full-rate word.

Following upon the alteration to the New Zealand exchange-rate appropriate reductions were effected in the rates for telegrams to the United States of America and its possessions, The Netherlands, and Indonesia. Reductions were also applied to the charges for photo-telegrams to the United Kingdom and the United States of America and to radio-telephone calls to those countries and also other countries for which calls with New Zealand are switched through London or San Francisco.

Some slight reductions in charges for telegrams between Chatham Islands and Raoul Island on the one hand and Australia and Fiji on the other were also arranged during the year.

ABOLITION OF CONCESSIONS IN RESPECT OF TELEGRAMS TO AND FROM MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

The special standard-text (EFM) service for telegrams to and from members of the Armed Forces, which was introduced throughout the British Empire and the United States of America during the war, was abolished as from the 1st January, 1949. The special address concession operating in respect of telegrams to members of J Force was withdrawn at the same time.