

(2.) Permission is given to use both figure and letter cipher in a single telegram, and to combine figures and letters in a single group of five characters when denoting commercial marks.

(3.) In the case of a reply telegram which fails to effect its purpose in consequence of an irregularity in the treatment of the original telegram, and *vice versa*, the amount prepaid for both telegrams is to be reimbursed.

(4.) A reduction is made in the period of delay justifying reimbursement in the case of paid service telegrams.

(5.) A provision is introduced that registered abbreviated addresses are entitled to pass as plain language in the text and signature as well as in the address.

(6.) The arrangements for redirection are extended to extra European telegrams.

(7.) The Press regulations are extended to extra-European telegrams, and greater freedom of selection is conceded as regards the languages in which Press telegrams may be written. The indication "Presse" used to distinguish Press from other telegrams, is to be transmitted free of charge.

A proposal was made by the British delegates for the reduction of the charges of the European Administrations for extra-European telegrams to the level of the charges for European telegrams; but this failed to obtain the necessary support from the Continental delegates.

The amendments made in the regulations by the Lisbon Conference come into operation from the 1st July, 1909.

The next Conference will meet in Paris in 1915.

WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY.

Notification has been received of the ratification of the Berlin Radio-telegraph Convention, 1906, by the following countries: viz., Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Mexico, Monaco, Norway, Roumania, Spain, Sweden, and Turkey. Great Britain for itself and certain possessions (including New Zealand), and Japan, however, did not ratify the additional agreement. The total number of signatory States at the end of 1908 was 28.

All British possessions and protectorates have notified their adhesion to the Berlin Convention, 1906, with the exception of Newfoundland and Orange River Colony.

The number of radio-telegraph stations notified to the Berne office as open at the end of 1908 was 508, 92 of these being land stations, and 416 ship stations.

Representations were made by the Pacific Islands Radio-telegraph Company with a view to linking up the important islands in the Pacific—Fiji, Samoa, New Hebrides, Caroline, Tahiti, Cook Islands, Fanning Island, New Guinea, and Sandwich Islands—with Australia and New Zealand. It is proposed that Fiji should be the headquarters of the system, and that substations should be installed on the other islands. This would be of great benefit to the Pacific cable, as messages would be sent from Fiji to New Zealand and Australia over the Pacific cable. Wireless telegraphy would not be used between Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia, except in cases of emergency, as radio-telegraphy cannot compete profitably with an already completed cable. The system to be used would be the Poulsen, with a speed of about thirty words a minute. The Government of Fiji, it is understood, has agreed to pay for the installation of the system on the islands under its jurisdiction. Such a scheme would be of great benefit in time of war and to shipping. It is almost certain that the shipping companies would install wireless apparatus on their vessels were such a scheme put into action. The company's proposals, however, did not cover all New Zealand's requirements. This Dominion required that the Chatham and the Auckland Islands should be included in the scheme, and the offer made by the company did not include these Islands. It is hoped, however, that before long such a service—including the Chatham and the Auckland Islands—will be established, and that all passenger steamers will be equipped with wireless apparatus. The Federal Prime Minister is favourably impressed with the idea, and is negotiating with New Zealand. The Pacific Islands Radio-telegraph Company was registered in London in February, 1909, with a capital of £60,000. Mr. Milward, manager in the Pacific for the Pacific Cable Board, expressed himself favourably regarding the scheme.

TELEPHONE EXCHANGES.

Twenty-four new exchanges were opened during the year, and the number of subscribers increased by 2,413, and the total number of connections by 2,952.

The total number of exchanges now is 136, made up of 30 central and 106 subexchanges.

The total number of connections is 26,833, compared with 23,881 in 1908. They may be classified as follows: Paying, 20,138; free, 375; bureaux, 2,302; extensions, 4,018.

New connections numbered 3,552, and those given up 1,139. The increase in connections is equal to 12·36 per cent.

On the 31st March, 1909, there were 1,167 miles of telephone-line and 30,196 miles of wire.

From the 26th June, 1908, the hours of attendance at exchanges where the number of subscribers is over 50 and under 100 were extended to run from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Lists in book-form of telephone-exchange subscribers were issued in January, 1909, and will in future be issued at intervals not exceeding six months, by Mr. G. Victor Beck, of Wellington, under contract with the Department. Book lists are to be printed for the telephone exchanges at Auckland,