

The Government messages for which no payment was received totalled during the year 101,135. Their value at ordinary rates amounted to £5,036.

The number of paid telegrams forwarded amounted to 9.7 messages for every 100 letters posted in New Zealand.

Ten offices were converted from Morse to telephone working, and one office from telephone to Morse.

The total number of telegraph-instrument sets of all classes in use in the Dominion is 830, involving the use of 43,500 cells for battery power.

The length of telegraph and telephone line and wire on the 31st March, 1918 and 1919 respectively, was as follows:—

—	Miles of Pole Line.			Miles of Wire.		
	Year ended 31st March, 1918.	Year ended 31st March, 1919.	Increase.	Year ended 31st March, 1918.	Year ended 31st March, 1919.	Increase.
Telegraph and inter-urban telephone	13,687	13,813	126	50,291	50,742	451
Telephone-exchange plant ...	4,403	4,789	386	154,799	165,962	11,163
Totals	18,090	18,602	512	205,090	216,704	11,614

Phantom telephone circuits were increased by 129 miles, and superimposed Morse circuits by 885 miles. The total length of phantom telephone circuit now is 2,007 miles, and of superimposed Morse 8,563 miles.

Direct telegraph working between distant centres was extended further by the installation of repeaters at Greymouth, enabling Westport to work direct with Christchurch.

During the winter the Otago Central lines were interrupted by heavy snowstorms. The snow lay for some time, and repairs were carried out only with great difficulty.

In North Canterbury the line was destroyed completely for a distance of about twenty miles by an unprecedented snowstorm. Altogether a length of eighty miles was affected.

NEW ZEALAND SUBMARINE-CABLE SERVICE.

The length of submarine cable in use in the Dominion is 416 knots. During the year two faults occurred in the Cook Strait cables, and were repaired. The Centre Island and East Cape cables are out of order.

OCEAN CABLE SERVICES.

The cable business during the year shows a decrease in the outward traffic, and also discloses the fact that the Pacific route, which in the previous year took 63 per cent. of the ordinary outward business, received 59 per cent., while the Eastern Company's proportion of the business increased from 37 per cent. to 41 per cent.

The following table shows the total number of ordinary telegrams forwarded by each route during each of the past five years, and the percentages of the total of such business falling to each:—

PACIFIC.				EASTERN.			
Year.	Messages.	Percentage of Total.		Year.	Messages.	Percentage of Total.	
1914-15	106,018	74		1914-15	37,446	26	
1915-16	114,151	67		1915-16	56,684	33	
1916-17	114,718	71		1916-17	47,790	29	
1917-18	114,046	63		1917-18	66,318	37	
1918-19	103,347	59		1918-19	70,591	41	

The number of international cable messages forwarded during the year shows a decrease of 11.8 per cent. on the number sent during 1917-18, and the number forwarded to Australia shows an increase of 6.59 per cent.

Messages received from international stations decreased by 7.78 per cent., and messages received from Australia increased by 6.32 per cent.

482 Press telegrams were sent via Pacific and 1,278 via Eastern, compared with 230 and 1,316 respectively during the previous year.

The number of cable messages sent as "deferred" during the year shows a decrease of 31.27 per cent. compared with the previous year's figures, the decrease being due partly to the non-acceptance by the Pacific Cable Board and partly to various suspensions by the Eastern Extension Company of this class of message.

The number of Expeditionary Force messages (messages for soldiers at a cheap rate) forwarded from New Zealand shows a decrease of 75.2 per cent. The number of messages for the years 1918-19 and 1917-18 was 5,907 and 23,818 respectively. The suspension of the "EFM" service by both routes for various periods, totalling in all approximately six months, and the heavy delays in transmission, would account for this large decrease.

During the year 1918-19 the number of free remittance messages for soldiers officially reported sick or wounded was 1,156, representing 23,042 words, and the payment by the Department to the Atlantic cable companies for the Atlantic transit amounted to £240 Os. 5d.