

Palmerston North.

The installation of the initial equipment at the automatic exchange at Palmerston North has been completed, the cut-over to the full automatic system being made in November with very satisfactory results. Apparatus for the extension of the equipment by 400 lines is already being installed to meet the growth of the system.

Wanganui.

Apparatus to replace the equipment originally ordered for Wanganui but diverted for urgent use elsewhere was received late in the year. A recommencement of the work of installing this equipment at Wanganui has since been made, and it is anticipated that this exchange will be converted to automatic working before the end of 1923.

Christchurch Metropolitan Area.

During the year the auxiliary automatic apparatus temporarily installed in the Christchurch Exchange area to supplement the manual system was increased by the installation of 500 lines at St. Albans and 300 at Sydenham. The building at Hereford Street to house the Western Electric central-office equipment has also been completed, and arrangements are being made to proceed with the installation of the equipment at the earliest possible date, and, in addition, to replace by an underground system the existing aerial cables which have already outlived their usefulness.

Dunedin Metropolitan Area.

The erection of the automatic exchange building at Upper Dowling Street to house the central-office Western Electric equipment is now proceeding. A commencement will shortly be made with the installing of automatic equipment at suburban exchanges preparatory to the completion of the Central Exchange building and the conversion of the whole telephone network in the Dunedin Exchange area to full automatic working.

Automatic Extensions.

Extensions to the automatic system during the year to meet the increasing demands for telephone service comprised the following: Mount Eden, 600 lines; Hamilton, 100 lines; Courtenay Place, 200 lines; Wellington South, 160 lines; Kelburn, 400 lines; Khandallah, 100 party lines; Blenheim, 50 lines; St. Albans, 500 lines; Sydenham, 300 lines; Palmerston North (new exchange), 1,810 lines.

Hereunder is a return showing automatic-exchange equipment installed and in use in the Dominion on the 31st March, 1923:—

Exchange.	Number of Exclusive Lines installed.	Number of Party Lines installed.	Number of Exclusive Lines in Use.	Number of Party-line Subscribers.	Total Number of Subscribers connected.	Number of Extension Telephones.	Total Number of Automatic Telephone Stations.
Auckland Exchange area—							
Fort Street*	1,900	..	1,891	19	1,910	341	2,251
Remuera*	600	..	599	2	601	100	701
Mount Eden*	500	..	497	6	503	39	542
Christchurch Exchange area—							
Hereford Street* ..	1,500	..	1,269	..	1,269	101	1,370
St. Albans*	500	..	499	..	499	12	511
Sydenham*	300	..	263	..	263	29	292
Wellington Exchange area—							
Courtenay Place.. ..	3,200	100	2,888	..	2,888	723	3,611
Wellington South ..	860	100	698	260	958	75	1,033
Kelburn	800	..	724	..	724	45	769
Khandallah	..	200	54†	171	225	5	230
Single-office Exchanges—							
Blenheim	700	100	652	60	712	95	807
Hamilton	1,400	100	1,391	252	1,643	227	1,870
Masterton	800	100	798	110	908	201	1,109
Oamaru	600	100	600	26	626	76	702
Palmerston North ..	1,600	210	1,480	270	1,750	278	2,028
	15,260	1,010	14,203	1,176	15,479	2,347	17,826

* Auxiliary apparatus.

† 54 lines used for exclusive subscribers.

COIN-IN-THE-SLOT TELEPHONES.

The total number of slot telephones (pay-stations) in use at the end of the year was 351, compared with 339 at the end of the previous year. It has been found that, as a general rule, slot telephones at exchanges with fewer than 350 subscribers and with non-continuous attendance are not self-supporting. When applications are made for slot telephones which in the opinion of the Department will not be self-supporting it is the practice to request the local authority interested to give a guarantee to make good the actual deficiency on the working of the machine, as ascertained from the departmental accounts, until such time as the station becomes self-supporting. Generally, slot telephones in business areas are much more remunerative than similar machines in the residential areas.

The revenue for the year amounted to £22,021, being an increase of £1,683 over the previous year.