

The principal objects of control are,—

- (1.) To maintain the punctual running of booked trains, and to see that special trains are run at suitable times.
- (2.) To ensure the expeditious movement of traffic.
- (3.) To regulate the flow of traffic from point to point, according to the capacity of the yards to receive, and the running-lines to carry it.
- (4.) To obtain the maximum service from the available locomotive power by—
 - (a.) Using the least possible number of locomotives :
 - (b.) Incurring a minimum of unproductive mileage :
 - (c.) Securing the greatest workable loads.
- (5.) To adjust, between the various depots, the power available to ensure that a shortage at one depot is, wherever possible, met by a surplus at another.
- (6.) To regulate the hours of trainmen to ensure the fullest possible use being made of the men available, and that the hours of duty of the men are kept within reasonable limits.
- (7.) To distribute the available rolling-stock promptly and to the best advantage.
- (8.) To make all necessary arrangements in any case of emergency, advising all concerned as to what has occurred and what emergency arrangements must be effected.

The matter is, however, vitally dependent on improvements in our system of communication, and steps are being taken in this connection as outlined hereunder.

TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH FACILITIES.

For some time past the Department's telephonic and telegraphic facilities have been inadequate to meet the steady growth of traffic. With the view of bringing these services into line with modern requirements a special committee of experts was set up to investigate and make recommendations. Their report has now been received, and the following points are given prominence :—

- (1.) Morse telegraph-lines, both local and through circuits, in the North Island are in many cases inadequate to cope with the business to be handled.
- (2.) The telephone circuits, almost without exception, are inadequate.
- (3.) The inadequacy of both methods of communication causes considerable congestion in working, this being most detrimental to the satisfactory handling of transport work, for which rapid and efficient communication is most essential.

The telephone circuits were all originally earth-working, but with the advent of hydro-electric reticulation generally throughout the country it has become necessary to convert them to the metallic system, which necessitates the provision of an additional wire in all cases.

Reference is made to this in the D.—2A statement for 1924, the sum set aside for this particular purpose being £65,000. At the present rate of progress it is estimated that two years will elapse before the metallicing of all earth circuits is completed.

The committee makes it quite clear that an immediate increase in the facilities available, combined with a reorganization of those at present existing, is urgently necessary to relieve congestion and delays and to promote the safe and economic handling of railway transport.

The best solution of the problem appears to be the construction of suitable copper-wire circuits with selective telephones and the institution of train-control from central offices. This matter has already been gone into, and it is estimated that the provision of a train-control selective system for all the main lines will cost approximately £140,000.