

Heavy floods on the west coast of the South Island in October, 1926, caused complete isolation by telegraph and telephone of Westport and the surrounding district. Notwithstanding the fact that poles and lines were carried away over an extensive area, and bridges and roads were destroyed, the Engineering Branch performed, under extremely arduous conditions, most creditable work in promptly restoring communication. During the height of the flood the s.s. "Kaiwarra," which was anchored in the Westport roadstead, communicated particulars of the flood to a departmental radio coast station. This is noteworthy as being the first occasion upon which a wireless installation on board a vessel has been used to report particulars of interruptions to New Zealand land lines.

In November, as a result of a severe gale in North Canterbury, accompanied by heavy rain, telegraphic communication between Wellington and Christchurch was totally interrupted.

On the 2nd December, owing to the mine disaster at Dobson, all the main lines north of Greymouth were interrupted for a short period.

On the night of the 25th March all lines on the east coast of the South Island were interrupted six miles north of Kaikoura. The interruption was due to an iron roof being blown on to the wires. On the west coast also exceptionally stormy conditions caused dislocation of all wires east and south of Greymouth.

In no case was there any avoidable delay in restoring communication; and in most cases the work was carried out under extremely arduous conditions.

POLES AND WIRE.

During the year 75 miles of pole-line and 2,174 miles of wire were erected or acquired for telegraph and telephone (toll) purposes, while 72 miles of pole-line and 344 miles of wire were dismantled, or, in localities where no longer required by the Department, sold to settlers for use as private telephone-lines.

The lengths of pole-line and wire in use for telegraph and telephone toll purposes on the 31st March, 1926 and 1927, respectively, were as follow :—

Pole-line and Wire.							Year ended 31st March, 1926.	Year ended 31st March, 1927.
Miles of pole-line	..	..	..	..	..	..	13,155*	13,158
Miles of wire	..	..	..	..	..	..	59,902*	61,732

* Revised figures.

The telegraph and telephone wire in use on the 31st March, 1927—viz., 61,732 miles—is classified as under :—

	Miles.
Used exclusively for telephone toll traffic	4,713
Used exclusively for telegraph traffic	10,995
Used simultaneously and (or) conjointly for telegraph and telephone toll traffic	46,024

The total length of wire that may be used for telephone toll traffic is therefore 50,737 miles; the total length that may be used for the transmission of telegrams, 57,019 miles; and the length of telephone toll-lines over which telegrams may be transmitted by telephone, 23,385 miles. The total length of Morse circuit derived from the superimposing of telephone circuits is 12,259 miles, and the total length of additional telephone toll circuit improvised from the existing wire circuits by the use of subsidiary apparatus associated therewith (so-called phantom working) is 4,740 miles.

The following table shows the class and number of telegraph instruments and batteries in use at telegraph-offices for the year ended 31st March, 1927 :—