

Certain complaints were received that the Department was not getting an adequate return in labour from some of its line construction and maintenance workmen. In a number of cases investigation disclosed that persons engaged in poling work for other than the Post and Telegraph Department had been mistaken for employees of the Department, and in consequence the Department's men had been blamed for the shortcomings of others. In other cases apparent slackness was found to have been due to traffic interference with the carrying-on of work, to the breakdown of transport, to the delayed arrival of material, and to other unavoidable hitches common to Government and private undertakings alike.

It is not unusual to receive by letter and through the medium of newspapers commendation of the businesslike manner and expedition with which the Department's construction works are prosecuted.

EXTENSIONS TO TOLL AND TELEGRAPH SYSTEMS.

Auckland Engineering District.—The southern Hokianga County was brought into constant telephone communication with the North Auckland trunk system on the 21st January by the completion of three additional toll circuits between Kaikohe and Rawene. Not only have these additional circuits substantially augmented the number of toll outlets in the North Auckland district, but they have considerably improved the efficiency of telephone transmission.

Good progress has been made with the reconstruction of the Cambridge-Taupo section of the Hamilton-Napier circuit. This reconstruction forms part of the scheme for providing improved telephone facilities between Hamilton and Taupo. Ultimately improvements will be effected between Taupo and Napier which will greatly improve the telephone facilities between the Hamilton, Rotorua, Taupo, and Napier districts.

The toll circuit between Pukeatua and Arapuni was converted to metallic, and by a slight rearrangement of wires a new toll circuit was provided between Ngaruawahia and Huntly.

Wellington Engineering District.—Owing to inductive interference from power lines in the Taranaki district and to the congestion at some points in the network of toll lines, the toll service between the Wellington, Wanganui, and Taranaki districts was, until recently, not entirely satisfactory. The inductive interference has been eliminated by the installation by the power authorities of special apparatus, while the congestion has been relieved by the erection of new circuits between New Plymouth and Hawera, Hawera and Wanganui, and Wanganui and Wellington. The congestion between Wellington and Wanganui had been particularly noticeable. As a result of the alterations and improvements the toll-line system linking the Wellington, Wanganui, and Taranaki districts is now equal to the best in the Dominion.

An additional toll circuit between Marton and Taihape was completed on the 19th August, and the existing circuits between those places were so reconstructed and rearranged as to provide additional phantom telephone circuits between Marton and Hunterville, and between Marton and Taihape. There are now four toll circuits between Taihape and Marton, including one with Manga-weka, Ohingaiti, Mangaonoho, and Hunterville intermediate, and three between Hunterville and Marton. The toll and telegraph circuits between Marton and Taihape are now more than adequate for present traffic requirements, and should provide for development for several years.

An important extension to the toll-line system in the Wanganui district was the erection of two additional metallic circuits between Wanganui and Hawera and the provision of improved telephone facilities for the interconnection of the Waverley, Patea, and Waitotara Exchanges and also for the connection of those exchanges with Wanganui and Hawera. The congestion of traffic which previously existed between Wanganui and Hawera has now been removed and provision made for a fairly large increase in traffic, which will, no doubt, be forthcoming when telephone-users find that toll service is available without delay.

Improved telephone facilities have also been provided between Hawera and New Plymouth by means of a complete rearrangement of circuits. New Plymouth now has three circuits to Hawera, while Inglewood's outlets have been increased both north and south.

In 1915 Waipawa was constituted a switching-station for all toll lines in central Hawke's Bay. The reason for creating a "zone" centre for switching purposes was that the toll traffic then offering was not sufficient to fill a circuit between any two of the telephone exchanges concerned. Toll business has now grown to such an extent that there is sufficient business to occupy, almost exclusively, separate toll circuits between most of the individual exchanges in the Hawke's Bay area. New circuits were, therefore, erected and a rearrangement of existing lines was effected which made it possible to eliminate Waipawa as a switching-station and at the same time to provide a much improved toll service for the district.

The diversion of No. 5 morse wire from Nuhaka to Wharerata was completed on the 6th February, 1928. The old telegraph-line Opoutama to Wharerata was sold to settlers for use as a private telephone-line.

A considerable saving in primary batteries for telegraph purposes has been effected at Napier by the utilization of the 48-volt exchange battery for telegraph local circuits and certain line circuits, as well as for exchange purposes.