

NEW ZEALAND SUBMARINE CABLES.

A fault developed in one of the Cook Strait cables (No. 4 L.B.) on the 30th April last. A few weeks later the cable parted, the break being located at a point two and a quarter nautical miles from the Lyall Bay cable hut. No action to effect repairs has yet been taken, as the remaining cables suffice to carry the traffic and a considerable saving in expenditure is effected by delaying the charter of the cable-repair steamer until two or more cables require attention.

In December, 1927, it was reported that a fault had developed in the Bluff—Stewart Island cable; but the fault, which took the form of an intermittent disconnection, did not cause any serious inconvenience until early in January, when it was located at a point 2.75 nautical miles from the cable-hut in Boat Harbour. Repairs involving the replacement of three-quarters of a mile of cable, were completed on the 26th January, 1928. The work was carried out with the aid of the s.s. "Despatch." While the "Despatch" was under charter the opportunity was taken of overhauling the Lee Bay (Stewart Island) shore-end section of the cable. The armouring was reinforced at two places off Bobs Point where it had become badly chafed and corroded; and a new length of trench cable was laid between the Lee Bay cable-hut and high-water mark to replace a piece in which the insulating covering of the conductor had become perished.

Minor repairs.—A fault reported in the Motuihi—Waiheke cable on the 30th May was repaired a fortnight later.

A break in the Homewood—Te Rawa cable was reported and repaired in January, 1928.

A survey of White Bay was undertaken by Captain Whiteford, of the Marine Department, during January and February, 1928. There are five cables leading into the Bay; and the new chart will enable the routes of the cables to be plotted more accurately and permit the repair-steamer to work closer ashore than has hitherto been permissible.

CABLE SERVICES.

THE PACIFIC CABLE ACT, 1927. AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION AND CONSOLIDATION OF PREVIOUS ACTS.

The Pacific Cable Act, 1927, amending the constitution and powers of the Pacific Cable Board, as agreed upon at the Imperial Conference of 1926, received Royal assent on the 29th June, 1927. The new Act has the effect of reducing from three to two the number of representatives of His Majesty's Government in Great Britain on the Board, thus giving Great Britain the same representation as Canada and Australia. The appointment of the Chairman of the Board is no longer a prerogative of the British Government, but is subject to agreement between the partner Governments. The Act outlines new arrangements concerning the amounts to be applied to the Reserve Fund for the purpose of meeting the cost of maintenance and extension of the system. Provision is made also for the equitable division of profits among the partner Governments, and for the meeting of any deficiency in the operation of the system. The new Act consolidates the Pacific Cable Act, 1901, and its amendments.

ACCEPTANCE OF CABLE MESSAGES WITHOUT PREPAYMENT: RECOVERY OF CHARGES FROM CABLE ADMINISTRATIONS.

It has been agreed, in consideration of a payment of £75 per annum each from the Pacific Cable Board and from the Eastern Extension Telegraph Co. to accept, from the 1st October, 1927, at Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Wellington, cable messages from authorized persons and firms without prepayment, and to recover the charges from the Board or the Company, as the case may be.

EASTERN EXTENSION TELEGRAPH CO.: PREPARATION OF CABLE ABSTRACTS

The Department has undertaken, from the 1st February, 1928, for the Eastern Extension Telegraph Co., the preparation of cable abstracts in respect of outward New Zealand messages transmitted over the company's system between Wellington and Sydney. For this service the company pays the Department at the rate of £75 per annum.

DAMAGE TO CABLE OF EASTERN EXTENSION TELEGRAPH CO.

A workman of the Wellington City Council damaged the cable of the Eastern Extension Telegraph Co. between Wellington and Titahi Bay in 1925. The City Council at first repudiated responsibility, maintaining that the relative Act of Parliament did not enable responsibility for the damage definitely to be fixed. The amount claimed was eventually paid. But in view of the happening it was deemed expedient to introduce amended legislation with a view to affording the company adequate and reasonable protection against any possible future injury. To this end, section 54 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal and Public Bodies Empowering Act, 1916, was suitably amended by section 36 of the Finance Act (No. 2), 1927.