

RADIO-RAROTONGA.

Mast.—To increase further its stability, steps are being taken to erect stays to support the mast at Rarotonga. In addition, the mast will be chipped and repainted. The work will be put in hand at an early date.

Replating of Battery.—Measures are being taken for the replating of the entire battery at this station. The battery is at present in a very poor condition, and has been responsible for a deterioration in signal-strength, which has frequently hindered the clearance of traffic. It is hoped to have the renewal effected before the coming busy season.

Short-wave Working.—Short-wave communication was established with Apia and Papeete in September. Although the transmitter is of low power, it is found to be superior to the 600-metre spark set for disposing of this traffic.

Having proved the practicability and economy of short-wave working, this station is about to be provided with short-wave apparatus capable of communicating direct with New Zealand, thus dispensing with the need for the intervention of Radio-Apia for relaying purposes.

Overhaul of Engine.—The engine was overhauled and repainted during September, since when satisfactory service has been given.

NIUE.

Apart from an intermittent fault which rendered the apparatus inoperative for brief periods during November, the station has observed regular and satisfactory service.

Minor repairs have been necessary to the oil-engine and motor-generator.

WHITE ISLAND: RADIO-TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

A radio-telegraph office was opened at White Island on the 1st August, 1927. Telegrams are exchanged by means of privately-owned radio-telegraph stations at the island and at Tauranga. Suitable arrangements for the control of the service have been made with the owners of the radio-telegraph stations. Ordinary inland-telegram rates are charged.

This is the first instance of a privately-owned service being utilized as an extension of the Department's telegraph system. Having regard to the small volume of business, the expense of laying a special submarine cable between White Island and the mainland would not be justified. The use of privately-owned radio-telegraph stations, however, provides a public service that could not otherwise be given.

CAPE MARIA VAN DIEMEN RADIO BEACON STATION.

Requests from masters of vessels for the transmission of fog-signals from the radio beacon station at Cape Maria Van Diemen during the hours that Radio-Awanui is closed (11 p.m. – 8 a.m.) are now attended to by Radio-Auckland.

SHORT-WAVE SERVICE BETWEEN NEW ZEALAND AND SAMOA.

An important development during the year in connection with radio operations was the inception, on the 30th August, of commercial short-wave signalling between New Zealand and Samoa. This service, for which Wellington and Apia are the terminal stations, is a marked improvement on the previous one, a notable feature being a diminution in power-consumption.

Consideration is now being given to the inclusion of other Pacific islands in the scheme, which, when complete, should ensure a quick and reliable service between the Dominion and the islands in which New Zealand has trade and other interests.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COAST AND SHIP STATIONS.

An alteration has been made in regard to the transmission of radio-telegrams between New Zealand coast stations and ships at sea. Outgoing ships now communicate with New Zealand coast stations up to the latest possible moment, and incoming ships from the earliest possible moment, the work being handled by any coast station capable of establishing communication. Previously the coast station with which communication was permitted was determined by the position of the ship, the traffic being normally required to circulate to the nearest coast station. The new arrangement permits direct working between ship stations and coast stations, irrespective of the proximity of any island station or coast station of another administration.

BROADCAST OF WEATHER REPORTS AND NEWS MESSAGES.

The length of the daily news press message broadcast from Radio-Awanui to ships at sea was increased in June, 1927, from two hundred to five hundred words.

The duty of performing the nightly broadcast was transferred from Radio-Awanui on the 1st November, 1927, to Radio-Auckland and Radio-Wellington. Radio-Auckland transmits the weather report at 10.10 p.m. on a wave-length of 600 metres, and Radio-Wellington transmits the press message at 10.15 p.m. on wave-lengths of 800 and 53 metres simultaneously.

AUTOMATIC ALARM INSTRUMENTS ON BRITISH SHIPS.

In the interests of protection of life at sea, His Majesty's Government in Great Britain has authorized the installation on vessels registered in Great Britain of approved automatic apparatus which will respond to a special signal known as the "alarm signal." This signal, which is used in conjunction with the ordinary S.O.S. distress signal, causes the automatic apparatus to sound a "call-bell" summoning the operator. Ships fitted with the device will be able to maintain a constant watch at sea, even though they may carry but one operator. The Department has undertaken to inspect on behalf of the British Government any such installations on British vessels at Dominion ports.