

TELEPHONE FACILITIES FOR BACKBLOCKS SETTLERS.

An appreciable amount of assistance has been granted backblocks settlers in the matter of obtaining telephone facilities by selling to them at stock-list prices and on a deferred-payment system the materials necessary for the erection of private telephone-lines. The erection of private telephone-lines—particularly by local bodies on behalf of settlers—has also been facilitated by an extension of the provisions of the Country Telephone-lines Act.

TOLL-LINE EXTENSIONS.

Inter-Island telephone communication has been provided, and the range of telephone communication greatly extended, by the laying of a telephone-cable across Cook Strait. As a result of this, and the extension of the toll lines generally in each Island, telephone communication has been made practicable between Auckland and Dunedin and almost all intermediate places. In addition to this, provision has been made for the inauguration of the most modern system of telephone communication—the carrier current system—which is now being installed between Auckland and Palmerston North, and between Seddon and Christchurch. Various other modern practices, including direct dialling between exchanges, have also been instituted and developed for the purpose of improving the capacity of toll circuits and speeding up the service generally. The length of wire available for toll traffic has been increased from 36,000 miles in 1920 to 53,000 miles.

WIRELESS.

Wireless communication between New Zealand and the Pacific Islands has been extended by the erection of radio-stations at Aitutaki, Mangaia, and Niue. The wireless service between New Zealand on the one hand and Samoa and Rarotonga on the other has also been considerably improved by the institution of short-wave working. Radio-stations have also been established at Kawau Island, Puysegur Point, and Stephens Island. In the matter of eliminating interference with radio-telephone broadcasting transmissions various effective measures have been instituted, including the replacement by continuous-wave transmitters of spark transmitters at the departmental coast stations at Wellington and Auckland.

Wireless press messages containing the news of the day are broadcast from the radio-station at Wellington daily for the information of passengers on ships.

It was arranged in 1923 for masters of vessels equipped with radio apparatus to obtain from the radio-stations at Awanui or Wellington reports on the weather conditions at desired points.

The British official wireless messages transmitted from the high-power station at Rugby, England, are being successfully received at the Awarua Radio-station, and are being made available to the newspaper press of the Dominion.

RADIO BROADCASTING.

Prior to 1925 the only broadcasting-stations in the Dominion were a few of comparatively low power which were operated by private enterprise. The rapid development of broadcasting led to the making of an agreement with the Radio Broadcasting Co. of New Zealand, Ltd., for the erection of modern and up-to-date broadcasting-stations at the four principal centres. This step was taken after exhaustive consideration of the most satisfactory method of exploiting the new service. On the 7th August, 1926, the first of the new stations was opened at Auckland. The Christchurch station was opened on the 1st September, 1926, and the Wellington station on the 16th April, 1927. On the 31st March last there were approximately forty thousand radio licenses in existence. The Radio Broadcasting Co. operates under Government control, and receives a proportion of the fees paid by licensees.

Particular attention is paid by the Department to the interests of radio licensees; and, in particular, much thought is given to the problem of freeing radio reception from interference. A special staff of Radio Inspectors has been instituted for the purpose of detecting and discovering sources of interference from outside electrical activities. The various types of receiving-sets are subject to examination and approval before their use is authorized, and certain types of sets which cause the condition known as "radiation" are prohibited.