

at Hastings to replace the manually-operated central-battery system. By the addition of equipment specially ordered, the equipment from Christchurch is being modified and modernized in order to provide an up-to-date type of service. The installation of this automatic equipment at Hastings is now being proceeded with. A Strowger automatic exchange is already in operation at Napier, and the installation of a similar exchange at Hastings will make it practicable to introduce between the two exchanges various innovations and auxiliary services which would otherwise be prohibitive on the score of cost. Economies in maintenance charges will also be effected. The central-battery manual equipment released from Hastings will be utilized to provide needed extensions to the existing central-battery switchboards at Invercargill and Timaru.

PROPOSED NEW AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE EXCHANGES.

In accordance with the policy of converting the larger telephone exchanges to automatic working as renewals become necessary, specifications were prepared and quotations invited in August, 1928, for automatic switching equipment for the Marton and Whangarei Exchanges. Tenders were received in March, 1929, and, after due consideration from both economic and engineering aspects, orders were placed in July, 1929, for the required equipment. The equipment to be provided at each of the exchanges is as follows :—

— —				Individual Lines.	Private Branch Exchange Lines.	Two-party Lines.	Rural Lines.
Marton	..	..	..	600	100	100	100
Whangarei	..	..	..	800	100	100	100

The apparatus for the Marton Exchange is due to arrive within the next few months, and upon receipt no time will be lost in installing it. It is anticipated that the delivery of the equipment for Whangarei will follow closely on that for Marton. With the new installations the two exchanges mentioned will possess up-to-date automatic telephone exchange systems of high grade, capable, with minor extension, of providing service for many years.

Tenders have been received for the installation of an automatic-telephone exchange at Gisborne. Action on the proposal is deferred, however, until further examination is made of the position.

LOWER HUTT TELEPHONE EXCHANGE : CONVERSION TO AUTOMATIC WORKING.

From time to time during recent years subscribers to the Lower Hutt Telephone Exchange have made representations urging the conversion of the exchange to automatic working, with provision for direct connection to subscribers in the Wellington area. It was definitely decided some time ago that an automatic exchange should be provided at Lower Hutt, but the requirements of the area were unusual, and the matter required a considerable amount of investigation. During the year a specification was prepared setting out the requirements and providing for two classes of service as follows :—

- (a) Combined Service.—Connection to or from any subscriber in the Wellington area, as well as to or from any subscriber in the Lower Hutt area.

The number of lines to be provided under this heading is—

				Initial.	Ultimate.
Individual lines	..	..	..	1,000	2,000

- (b) Local Service.—Connection to or from any subscriber in the Lower Hutt area but not to or from Wellington subscribers outside the Lower Hutt area except through the medium of the toll service.

The number of lines to be provided under this heading is—

				Initial.	Ultimate.
Individual lines	..	..	..	1,000	4,000
P.B.X. lines	..	..	..	100	100
Two-party lines	..	..	..	100	200

A tender for the equipment required at Lower Hutt was recently received, and, after due investigation, an order for it was placed. The date upon which delivery of the apparatus will be made is not yet certain.