

TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE ATTENDANCE: EXTENSION OF SUNDAY AND HOLIDAY ATTENDANCE AT SMALLER EXCHANGES.

By way of experiment to ascertain whether the Department would be warranted in permanently extending the hours, the attendance on Sundays and holidays at the Akaroa, Eastbourne, Helensville, Kaikoura, Ngāruawahia, Otaki, Queenstown, and Raglan Telephone Exchanges was extended, from the 23rd March, to run from 9 a.m. to noon and from 2 to 6 p.m. A similar extension was made at Picton, except that on Easter Monday an 8 a.m.–10 p.m. telephone-exchange service is proposed, the day being a regatta day. It is intended to continue the extended service for a period of five weeks, and then to review the question of Sunday hours of telephone-exchange attendance at such offices.

APPLICATION OF RESIDENTIAL TELEPHONE RATE TO PRIMARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The telephone regulations have been altered to provide that primary public schools should be eligible for telephone-exchange connections at the residential rate. Previously such schools had been required to pay at business rates.

TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE SERVICE: AMPLIFYING TELEPHONES AND APPARATUS FOR USE BY PARTIALLY-DEAF SUBSCRIBERS.

Special amplifying telephones and apparatus for use by persons of imperfect hearing are now supplied by the Department. The charge for the apparatus is fixed at £1 for installing, and an annual rental of £3 in excess of the rental charge ordinarily applicable.

TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES: SALE IN SETS.

To meet the needs of the business community, and in sympathy with the increased use that is being made of telephone-lines for toll communications, particularly long-distance calls, it has been arranged to sell complete sets of telephone directories for the Dominion at a charge of 15s., free of postage. In addition, separate sets of directories for exchanges in the North Island and for exchanges in the South Island are now available to the public at a charge of 10s. and 5s. respectively.

INTRODUCTION OF IMPROVED FORM OF TELEPHONE DIRECTORY.

An improvement has been introduced in the form of the telephone directory issued to subscribers. Hitherto the publications have been in the form of single columns of listings upon each sheet. The form now adopted makes provision for two columns of subscribers' names upon each sheet. The new style directory, which is easier than the old style to refer to, has been very favourably received by subscribers. The new form has also lessened the cost of production, and is in keeping with the style of directory favoured by other countries.

GENERAL.

UTILIZATION OF NEW ZEALAND SOFT WOODS AS TELEGRAPH-POLES.

Owing to the scarcity of suitable New-Zealand-grown hardwoods, a very large percentage of the poles used by this Department is necessarily imported, chiefly from Australia. With a view to determining whether New Zealand soft woods can, by preservative treatment, be rendered suitable for use as poles, tests are now being carried out in collaboration with the State Forest Service. The tests will necessarily require to extend over a period sufficient to enable reliable information regarding the life of such timbers under various climatic and geological conditions to be obtained.

DEPARTMENTAL REPRESENTATION ON RADIO RESEARCH COMMITTEE AND STANDARDS LABORATORY ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

During the year a Radio Research Committee and a Standards Laboratory Advisory Committee have been set up by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. The Post and Telegraph Department is represented on the former Committee by Mr. A. Gibbs, Chief Telegraph Engineer, and on the latter Committee by Mr. J. R. Smith, Engineer-in-Charge of the departmental laboratory.

DEPARTMENTAL LABORATORY.

The larger and better-equipped premises provided last year for the departmental laboratory have enabled the work of this section to be performed more expeditiously and under more favourable conditions. The scope of the laboratory is being steadily extended and now covers a large variety of subjects.