

BROADCASTING.

On the 31st March, 1931, there was a total of 62,713 radio-receiving licenses on issue throughout the Dominion. Of this total, 26,023 licenses were held in the Wellington District, 19,016 in the Auckland District, 10,543 in Canterbury, and 7,131 in Otago. Included in the totals are 246 licenses issued free to blind persons.

The continued increase in the number of licenses is adequate proof of the increasing popularity of radio broadcast entertainment.

The silent night previously observed at Station 2YA, Wellington, has been abolished, and a daily schedule of transmissions is now observed from that station.

Eleven low-power private broadcasting-stations were opened during the year, three being at Auckland, two at Hastings, and one each at Dannevirke, Gisborne, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wairoa, and Wanganui. Permission was also given for the opening of a private broadcasting-station at Apia, Samoa.

The radio-inspection staff has continued its activities, and considerable success has been attained in the elimination of the various types of interference.

Many persons still fail to realize their obligations in regard to obtaining licenses for radio-receiving apparatus. During the year 391 persons were proceeded against for operating unlicensed stations, the fines inflicted totalling £427.

The contract with the Radio Broadcasting Co. expires at the end of 1931. The whole question of broadcasting will now be reviewed.

The Department's special facilities are still, wherever possible, made available to the Broadcasting Co. for the purpose of relaying programmes between centres. A notable overseas rebroadcast was effected on the 15th March, when, at 5.30 a.m., the Prince of Wales's speech at the opening of the British Empire Exhibition at Buenos Aires was rebroadcast throughout New Zealand. The radio link on this occasion was the longest yet utilized for such a purpose in New Zealand. The medium consisted of an 8,000-mile section of a commercial radio channel between Buenos Aires and Rugby, England, whence the signals were retransmitted to New Zealand, a total distance of approximately 19,000 miles. Reception at Wellington was effected by means of the Department's overseas short-wave receiving-station at Mount Crawford, which passed on the signals to the Wellington Broadcasting-station.

A notable use of radio telephony was made on the evening of 5th February, when, by the aid of the Department's commercial short-wave radio-telephone channel to Australia, an account of the earthquake which took place two days previously was transmitted to Australia and to the United States of America. In the case of the Australian broadcast, the speech was conveyed by land-line from the A.W.A. Station 2ME, Sydney (the terminal of the trans-Tasman radio service) to the A class stations in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide, which broadcast the account to Australian listeners. The second transmission was relayed on short waves by station 2ME, Sydney, to station W2XAF, Schenectady, N.Y., U.S.A., which passed it on to a broadcasting network in the United States. This transmission was of a two-way character, consisting partly of questions and answers between the American and the Wellington announcers. Both transmissions were reported as being excellently received by the terminal broadcasting-stations.

WIRELESS SHIP-STATION LICENSES.

The number of wireless ship-station licenses issued for the year 1930 was 74.

TELEPHONE EXCHANGE SERVICES.

DEVELOPMENT OF TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE SYSTEMS.

The development of the local-exchange systems during the year has been somewhat less than in the past few years. The number of new connections (subscribers' main stations) joined up was 12,779, which is almost the same as the previous year; but the number of relinquishments of subscribers' main stations was 8,575, or over two thousand more than in the previous year. In view of all the circumstances, however, the growth of the systems, as evidenced by a net gain of approximately four thousand subscribers' main stations, can be regarded as satisfactory. Taking into consideration the telephones of all kinds relinquished as well as new telephone-stations connected, the total number of telephone-stations at the end of the year was 157,767. If to this number is added the private-line telephones connected with toll stations and non-departmental exchanges (3,972) the number of telephones in service on the 31st March, 1931, was 161,739. The total number of telephone-stations has been adversely influenced by the temporary loss of approximately three thousand subscribers in the Napier and Hastings areas. Provision is being made for an anticipated early resumption of normal telephone-exchange service in the Hawke's Bay District.

Amongst other facilities introduced during the year was a new design of automatic telephone fitted with a hand-microphone. The new type of telephone is improved in both design and operation, and, although a small additional rental will be payable for its use, the general style and increased utility of the instrument should commend it to telephone-users.

A brief summary of the year's operations in regard to the development and maintenance of the telephone-exchange systems in the Dominion is as follows:—

The opening of new magneto exchanges at Colville, Te Angra, and Waiotira.

The conversion to automatic working of the Birkenhead telephone-exchange area.

The extension of the switching equipment at ten automatic exchanges and nineteen manual exchanges.