

CHATHAM ISLANDS-RADIO.

For many years a regular press service by radio-telegraph was provided by the Department for the benefit of shipping and the residents of the islands. In view of the popularity of radio-broadcast listening, such a service was not considered to be necessary any longer at Chatham Islands, and it was therefore discontinued there from the 31st March. This action has been taken in conjunction with a general review and rearrangement of the activities of the Chatham Islands station, which, with the improved range consequent upon the modernizing of the New Zealand coast stations on the mainland, is no longer required to function as a relay station for shipping. The station at Chatham Islands is now being used primarily for a point-to-point service with the mainland, its contract with the mercantile marine being, in the main, limited to the handling of traffic with the few vessels which visit the islands.

The improvements made in the station apparatus during the year included the provision of a valve transmitter of 50 watts aerial rating in substitution for the spark apparatus which, however, has been retained for emergency use. Experiments have also been made in the utilization of wind-power for driving the battery-charging apparatus, and the indications to date are that in suitable localities economies may be effected by the adoption of this means of power-generation.

PROVISION OF IMPROVED RADIO EQUIPMENT AT CHRISTCHURCH AND DUNEDIN.

Until recently the only radio transmitting facilities at Christchurch and Dunedin consisted of low-power emergency apparatus sufficient only to enable contact to be made with neighbouring towns at which similar equipment is installed.

Improved equipment has now been supplied to Christchurch to provide an independent station in case of any major dislocation of the land-line services. In addition to facilities for operating on the usual emergency waves, this centre has been provided with a 600-metre transmitter capable of maintaining contact with shipping in the vicinity should this be necessary at any time. The equipment is complete with power-generating apparatus for use in the event of the loss of the normal city power-supply.

Additional equipment has been provided at Christchurch to enable experiments to be conducted with Wellington-Radio with a view to the utilization of a radio link for the conduct of the printing-telegraph service between the North and South Islands as may be required, thus assuring the normal efficient despatch of telegraph traffic even when the land lines are interrupted or when major faults occur in the submarine cable link.

Improved equipment is also being supplied to Dunedin by means of which a service may be conducted with shipping should occasion demand. It will also facilitate the handling of traffic under emergency conditions between Dunedin and other centres.

DIRECT RADIO-TELEGRAPH SERVICE WITH PACIFIC ISLANDS.

In continuation of the policy of extending and developing radio communication with islands in the Pacific, two new services have been inaugurated.

On the 7th August direct radio-telegraph working was commenced between Tahiti (Papeete-Radio) and New Zealand (Wellington-Radio). The direct service made possible a reduction of 6d. per word in respect of radio-telegrams between the two places. On the 7th December a "deferred rate" service at half the full rate of 1s. 4d. per word was introduced.

Direct radio-telegraph working between the Tongan Islands (Nukualofa-Radio) and New Zealand (Wellington-Radio) was inaugurated on the 1st April, 1935. In conjunction with this development, the rate per word between the two places was reduced from 1s. 6d. to 1s.

FREE RADIO-TELEGRAPH MEDICAL SERVICE FOR SHIPPING.

On the 9th August a service was instituted whereby medical advice by means of radio-telegrams is obtainable free of charge through New Zealand coast stations by ships of any nationality. The message from the ship states briefly the symptoms of the illness of the sick person, together with a description of the medicine chest carried by the vessel. Upon receipt of the message at the coast radio-station, the contents are telephoned to the District Health Officer; and the reply of that official is promptly telegraphed to the vessel concerned.

BROADCASTING SERVICE.

The satisfactory manner in which the broadcasting service in the Dominion continues to be operated under the provisions of the Broadcasting Act, 1931, is indicated in the Third Annual Report of the Broadcasting Board, presented to the House separately.

AMENDMENT OF BROADCASTING ACT.

During the three years in which broadcasting in New Zealand has been under the control of a Board, there has been ample evidence that the system inaugurated by the Broadcasting Act, 1931, was based upon sound principles and is admirably suited to the Dominion's requirements. The experience gained during that time, however, indicated that improvements could be effected in some directions,