

An innovation, so far as the Dominion is concerned, has been the inauguration of aeradio service with aircraft engaged in regular passenger services. Throughout their journeys between Dunedin and Palmerston North the aeroplanes of Union Airways, Ltd., are enabled to keep in touch with one or more of the land stations established for the purpose. As a temporary measure the Department is providing this service by arrangement with the company concerned.

The system of departmental emergency stations throughout the Dominion amply demonstrated its effectiveness on several occasions during the year, when storms, &c., caused interruption to the main telegraph and telephone lines.

OVERSEAS RADIO-TELEPHONE SERVICE.

From the 1st June, 1935, a reduction of 25 per cent. was made in the charges for overseas radio-telephone calls. As a result, the charges for calls from New Zealand to Australia are now 15s. a minute, with a minimum of £2 5s., and to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland £1 14s. a minute, with a minimum of £5 2s.

Temporary reductions of charges were made on two occasions during the year. From the 6th to the 31st May, during the Silver Jubilee celebrations of his late Majesty King George V, the charges were reduced by 50 per cent., while during the Christmas and New Year period, 24th December to 4th January, the charges were reduced to 10s. a minute for calls to Australia, and to £1 6s. 8d. a minute for calls to England, in each case subject to a minimum charge as for three minutes.

There has been a marked increase in the use of the overseas radio-telephone service, the number of calls to and from the Dominion for the year being 780, an increase of 85 per cent. over the number recorded during the previous year. In the first four months of the present year the number of calls was 333, compared with 244 in the corresponding period last year.

BROADCASTING SERVICE.

The operations of the New Zealand Broadcasting Board during the year 1935 are set out in detail in the Board's fourth annual report, which has already been presented to the House.

The number of licensed listeners at the 31st March was 192,265, an increase of 39,457 over the previous year's total. The number of licenses has doubled during the last three years, and the number now in force represents 55·7 per cent. of the total households, or 12·4 licenses per hundred of the population. By the 30th June the number of licenses had increased to 206,562.

Under the Broadcasting Act, 1936, passed during the first portion of this session, the Broadcasting Board was abolished and the control of broadcasting transferred to the Minister of Broadcasting appointed under that Act. The change took effect from the 1st July, 1936.

OFFICE OF POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

The Hon. Adam Hamilton relinquished control of the Department on the 6th December, 1935, from which date the offices of Postmaster-General and Minister of Telegraphs were assumed by me.

DETAILED REPORT.

A detailed report of the Department's activities during the year ended on the 31st March, 1936, follows.

I have the honour to be,
Your Excellency's most obedient servant,

F. JONES.

General Post Office, Wellington, C. 1.
18th August, 1936.