

REDUCTION IN RADIO-TELEGRAM RATES TO SHIPS AT SEA.

From the 1st January the New Zealand coast-station charge on radio-telegrams to ships was reduced in those cases in which the shipowners co-operated by reducing the ship-station charge. As a result, the following reductions have been effected in the charges to the public for radio-telegrams to ships at sea :—

	Original Word Rate.	New Word Rate.
(1) To and from vessels engaged in the Wellington-Lyttelton and Wellington-Picton passenger services	2½d. a word ..	2d. a word.
(2) To and from vessels owned or registered in New Zealand, or trading exclusively between New Zealand ports (except those included in (1) above)	6d. a word ..	4d. a word.
(3) To and from most other overseas vessels*	11d. a word ..	8d. a word.

* The rate for radio-telegrams to and from Australian-registered vessels remains at 6d. a word, the ship-station charge in respect of such vessels not having been reduced.

ABOLITION OF POSTE RADIO-TELEGRAM SERVICE, AND SUBSTITUTION OF SHIP LETTER-TELEGRAM SERVICE.

On the 1st September a letter-telegram service *from* ships at sea was introduced. Ship letter-telegrams are transmitted to New Zealand coast radio-stations and are delivered by post on the morning following the date of lodgment on the ship.

The charge for ship letter-telegrams is 2s. 6d. for ten words and 3d. for each additional word in respect of vessels to which the ordinary telegram rate is 4d. or 6d. a word, and 5s. for twenty words and 3d. for each additional word in respect of vessels to which the ordinary rate is more than 6d. a word.

Coincident with the inauguration of the ship letter-telegram service, the poste radio-telegram service was withdrawn and the posting in New Zealand of "ocean letters" and "poste radio messages" was discontinued.

ADDITIONAL PRESS TELEGRAM FACILITIES ON SUNDAYS.

Arrangements have been made for the acceptance on Sundays between 11 p.m. and 11.15 p.m. of press telegrams relating to events that happen after the normal closing-hour of telegraph-offices on Sunday evenings. Such messages are restricted in length. The rate for press messages of the kind—previously 2s. for 100 words or fraction thereof—has been altered to 1s. 6d. for 50 words or 2s. for 51 to 100 words.

PRESS TELEGRAM SERVICE BETWEEN TONGA AND NEW ZEALAND.

A press telegram service was inaugurated between Tonga and New Zealand on the 16th May, the charge being 3d. a word, with a minimum charge of 5s. As there is no newspaper in Tonga, the service is available at present for messages lodged at Tonga only.

OPENING OF PUBLIC RADIO-STATIONS IN PACIFIC ISLANDS.

Commercial radio telegraph stations were opened at Atafu (Union Islands) and Manihiki (Cook Islands) on the 29th September, 1936, and 10th March, 1937, respectively. Atafu communicates with Apia, and Manihiki with Rarotonga.

TELEPHONE TOLL SERVICE.

With the increasing number of telephone-exchange subscribers and increased business activity generally the use of the toll service during the year naturally showed a substantial advance over previous figures. The total number of calls for the year was 13,143,171, an increase over the previous year's traffic of 1,707,117, or 14.9 per cent. The toll revenue for the year amounted to £562,543, an increase of £62,718, or 12.5 per cent.

The marked increase in toll traffic in recent years is illustrated by the following figures :—

Year ended		Number.	Value. £
31st March, 1907		985,900	21,213
31st March, 1917		5,040,672	136,540
31st March, 1927		9,329,017	372,612
31st March, 1935		9,862,627	448,562
31st March, 1936		11,436,054	499,825
31st March, 1937		13,143,171	562,543

The great majority of toll calls are of the ordinary or "station-to-station" classification, but the additional forms of toll service introduced in 1934 and 1935 are being availed of to an increasing extent, approximately 75,000 "person-to-person," 60,000 "Collect," 12,000 "Appointment," and 4,000 "Fixed-time" calls being handled during the year.