

BROADCASTING SERVICE.

Under the Broadcasting Act, 1936, which came into operation on the 1st July, the Broadcasting Board was abolished and a National Broadcasting Service established under a Minister of Broadcasting. The licensing of the use of wireless apparatus, however, continues to come within the provisions of the Post and Telegraph Act, so that the issue of the several classes of licenses available under the Radio Regulations remains the function of the Department. The investigation of interference with broadcast reception is also a matter that continues to be dealt with by the Department.

PRIVATE BROADCASTING-STATIONS.

The number of private broadcasting stations in operation at the 31st March was twenty-one. This is a reduction of one in the number operating at the end of last year, Station 1ZB, Auckland, having been taken over by Government for use as a commercial (advertising) station.

RECEIVING-STATION LICENSES.

Receiving-station licenses continue to increase at a remarkable rate. The number of license-holders at the 31st March was 241,308, an increase of 49,043, or 25.5 per cent., over the number of license-holders at the corresponding date of the previous year. The gain in licenses during the year was the largest increase yet recorded in any licensing year.

The following table indicates the progressive growth in the number of licenses since the inception of an organized broadcasting service:—

Number of licenses at—							
31st March, 1924 ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,830
31st March, 1929 ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	44,810
31st March, 1934 ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	118,086
31st March, 1935 ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	152,808
31st March, 1936 ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	192,265
31st March, 1937 ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	241,308

It is interesting to note that the number of licenses per hundred of population at the 31st March, 1937, was 15.2, and that receiving-sets are now installed in 68.4 per cent. of the households in the Dominion.

As from the 1st August the privilege of free radio-receiving licenses was extended to public hospitals, benevolent and orphan asylums, and charitable institutions in respect of radio sets installed in such institutions for the benefit of patients generally. The same privilege has also been granted to schools and colleges in respect of radio sets installed in class-rooms for educational purposes. Including licenses issued to blind persons who are the heads of households, the total number of free licenses at the 31st March was 564.

The number of prosecutions for the operation of unlicensed receiving-sets during the year was 945, the total amount of fines inflicted being £560 13s. 10d.

RADIO-DEALERS' LICENSES.

At the 31st March the number of radio-dealers' licenses was 1,315, an increase of 135 over the number in operation at the end of the previous year.

PRIVATE EXPERIMENTAL STATIONS.

A slight decrease is recorded in the number of private experimental stations (amateur transmitting-stations). The number at the 31st March last was 996, as compared with 1,009 for the previous year.

INTERFERENCE WITH BROADCAST RECEPTION.

The elimination of electrical interference with the reception of broadcasting programmes continues to engage the services of a number of officers. In order to facilitate the application of remedial measures the personnel employed on this class of work was increased during the year and additional motor vehicles for the use of these officers were provided.

As a result of experience gained over a period of years it has been found practicable to design improved equipment for the purpose of tracing sources of interference, and the construction of several units of improved apparatus has been undertaken. It is anticipated that the use of this new type of equipment will greatly facilitate the expeditious location of causes of interference.

The Department's policy of impressing upon importers of interfering electrical equipment the need for arranging for suppression devices to be fitted as standard equipment to such machines before their despatch from the manufacturers' works was actively pursued during the year, with the result that much of the equipment now arriving from overseas is "interference-free."

The total number of complaints received and investigated during the year was approximately 3,300.