

OVERSEAS RADIO - TELEPHONE SERVICE.

The overseas radio-telephone service is increasing in popularity, and it is apparent that the service is fast emerging from the novelty and luxury stage. For the year ended the 31st March last, the total number of calls was 1,406, an increase of 79 per cent. over the number handled the previous year.

The service was extended to the t.s.s. "Awatea" when that vessel entered the New Zealand - Australia service in September, 1936, the rate for calls being fixed at 3s. 4d. a minute, with a minimum charge of 10s. Including calls exchanged with the "Awatea," the total number of radio-telephone calls handled during the financial year was 2,124, an increase of 172 per cent. Calls averaged 257 a month, this monthly average being higher than the total number for any financial year prior to the 31st March, 1934.

During the year secrecy equipment was installed by the Australian Post Office at the Sydney terminal of the Wellington-Sydney radio telephone channel. The installation of this apparatus has enabled the Department to make full use of the corresponding Wellington equipment, thus ensuring that secrecy is available for all overseas conversations, including those with the "Awatea." This marks a definite improvement in the service, which can now be used by the public for the discussion of business and personal matters without fear that conversations will be heard by radio listeners using short-wave broadcast receiving-sets.

AERADIO SERVICES.

The temporary radio services provided by the Department by means of aeradio-stations at Christchurch, Dunedin, Blenheim, Wellington, and Palmerston North for communication with aeroplanes operated by Union Airways of New Zealand, Ltd., and Cook Strait Airways, Ltd., have now been placed on a permanent basis by the establishment, in most instances, of permanent radio-stations located at the aerodromes. The air services inaugurated between Nelson and Hokitika, and between Auckland, New Plymouth, Palmerston North, and Wellington have necessitated the establishment of further stations. At present aeradio-stations are established at the following places:—

Christchurch (City). (Still temporary.)

Dunedin (Taieri Aerodrome).

Blenheim (Woodbourne Aerodrome).

Palmerston North (Milson Aerodrome).

Hokitika (Aerodrome).

Greymouth (Aerodrome).

Auckland (Mangere Aerodrome).

New Plymouth (Bell Block Aerodrome).

A temporary radio-station owned by Cook Strait Airways, Ltd., has been licensed for operation at Nelson pending the completion of the Government station at the Tahunanui Aerodrome, Nelson, where the permanent equipment is now in course of installation.

AERADIO STANDING COMMITTEE.

During the year an Engineer from my Department has been associated with officers of the Air, Public Works, and Scientific and Industrial Research Departments in planning a scheme for the provision of adequate radio facilities for civilian aircraft in New Zealand. After they had submitted their initial report, the officers concerned were constituted by Cabinet the "Aeradio Standing Committee" and were charged, under me as Minister of Defence, with the implementing of their recommendations, which will involve the installation of radio-stations and direction-finding equipment at the key aerodromes throughout the Dominion.