

PRIVATE EXPERIMENTAL (AMATEUR) STATIONS

The number of amateur radio operators, who do much good work in providing radio communication in connection with emergencies such as river floods, mountain rescues, searching for missing aircraft, &c., continues to grow. At the 31st March the number of private experimental (amateur) stations licensed was 1,985, compared with 1,853 at the end of March the previous year.

RADIO-DEALERS' LICENCES

Radio-dealers' licences in force at the 31st March numbered 1,871, an increase of 112 over the previous year.

BROADCAST-RECEIVING LICENCES

At the 31st March there were 449,453 broadcast-receiving licences current in New Zealand, an increase of 17,278 or 3.99 per cent. for the year.

TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES (OVERSEAS)

Because of geographic isolation, New Zealand is particularly dependent upon good overseas communications. The overseas cables continued to give good service during the year, but the radio-telephone and radio photo-telegram services outward from New Zealand suffered from the lack of a high-powered radio-transmitting station with a sufficiency of aerial arrays. The need was well illustrated during interruption to the overseas cables, when radio was used to handle traffic. Also, during the Empire Games radio channels were opened to assist in handling the extra volume. On each of these occasions the existing facilities handled inward traffic satisfactorily, but proved insufficient for outward traffic. The projected new transmitting-station at Himatangi is needed to correct the position.

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION CONFERENCES

International agreement in the telecommunication sphere is negotiated within the framework of the International Telecommunication Union which was founded in 1865 and has a record of eighty-five years successful international negotiation. The Union's original concern was with telegraph services, and later telephone and radio services. No difficulty has been encountered in maintaining world co-operation in the telegraph and telephone spheres, but the position with radio is different. Radio has gradually assumed a preponderating importance, particularly with the impetus given by the war to the development of many radio services. These include not only utility services—for example, maritime, aeronautical, and correspondence services—but also broadcasting services which may be used as a medium of expression of national consciousness. Many nations are only newly awakened to such possibilities. As a result, the radio spectrum space has become overcrowded, and international agreement is urgently needed to prevent the development of a chaotic state of mutual interference among radio stations.

Plenipotentiary Conferences of the International Telecommunication Union are normally held every five years, the last being held at Atlantic City in 1947. However, such a long time had elapsed since the previous Conference (on account of the war), with so much development in the meantime, that a number of special Conferences outside the regular five-yearly sequences have been necessary, particularly in the radio sphere where the process of reaching world agreement concerning frequency allocations is not yet complete.

The following international telecommunication Conferences held overseas during the year were attended by delegates from New Zealand.