

The number of toll or bureau communications increased from 5,520,768 to 6,718,526, an increase of 1,197,758, and, in addition to showing an increase in number, produced a greater revenue by £42,358; while at the same time the average value of each communication increased from 7·37d. to 7·5d. The total for 1919-20 represents 5·49 calls per unit of population.

The number of ordinary paid telegrams increased from 5,549,107 to 7,295,992, an increase of 1,746,885. This represents 5·96 per unit of population, and an increase in revenue of £103,383.

Urgent ordinary telegrams show a decrease in number of 30,036, and in revenue of £6,793. This decrease is accounted for by the large number of urgent telegrams sent during the influenza epidemic of the previous year.

The number of Press telegrams increased from 305,226 to 358,352, and the revenue from £27,433 to £30,748.

Government messages for which no payment was received totalled during the year 116,452. Their value at ordinary rates would amount to £5,830.

The various telegraph tables give full particulars of the telegrams handled. The total of all codes (including toll or bureau messages) was 15,074,067, being an increase of 2,983,050. The proportion of paid messages per unit of population was 12·32 against 10·35 for the previous year.

From the 631 private wires and subsidized lines, the amount of rent and maintenance received was £4,234.

The total number of offices open on the 31st March, 1920, was 2,339, being a decrease of 15. 327 are Morse telegraph-offices and 2,012 are telephone-offices.

The number of paid telegrams forwarded amounted to 6 messages for every 100 letters posted in New Zealand.

Ten offices were converted from Morse to telephone working, and 16 from telephone to Morse.

The total number of telegraph-instrument sets of all classes in use in the Dominion is 839, involving the use of 45,200 cells for battery power.

The length of telegraph and telephone line and wire on the 31st March, 1919 and 1920 respectively, was as follows:—

	Miles of Pole Line.			Miles of Wire.		
	Year ended 31st March, 1919.	Year ended 31st March, 1920.	Increase or Decrease.	Year ended 31st March, 1919.	Year ended 31st March, 1920.	Increase.
Telegraph and inter-urban telephone	13,813	13,722	*91	50,742	50,751	9
Telephone-exchange plant ...	4,789	5,111	†322	165,962	177,509	11,547
Totals	18,602	18,833	†231	216,704	228,284	11,556

* Decrease.

† Increase.

The decrease in the length of pole line may be accounted for by the fact that in the cities the overhead lines are being dismantled in favour of underground, and also that during the year several small lines in the country, no longer required by the Department, have been sold to the settlers.

Phantom telephone circuits were increased by 271 miles, and superimposed Morse circuits by 183 miles.

The total length of phantom telephone circuits now is 2,278 miles, and of superimposed Morse 8,746 miles.

During a long and severe winter the Otago Central lines withstood the strains placed upon them by snowstorms and floods, and, save in a few isolated instances where bureau lines in outlying districts were temporarily out of action, an uninterrupted service was maintained.

The Canterbury lines were not so fortunate. At the beginning of November an exceptionally heavy snowstorm did great damage between Rolleston and Timaru, resulting in the complete dislocation of traffic from stations south of Rolleston. Several hundreds of miles of pole line and wire were affected; but extra gangs of workmen were put to work, and in three days all lines were again in working-order.

NEW ZEALAND SUBMARINE-CABLE SERVICE.

The length of submarine cable in use in the Dominion is 416 knots. A fault occurred in one of the Cook Strait cables, but it was quickly repaired.

OCEAN CABLE SERVICES.

The cable business during the year shows an increase in the number sent to all places from New Zealand and in those received from Australia, and a decrease in the number received from international offices.

The number of cable messages sent from New Zealand to international offices during the year shows an increase of 3·73 per cent. on the number sent during 1918-19, and the number sent to Australian offices shows an increase of 36·45 per cent., or over one-third.

Messages from Australia increased by 37·16 per cent., and messages received from international offices decreased by 23·63 per cent.

The proportion of cable messages sent "via Pacific" was greater than that sent by the same route the previous year, the percentages being 67 and 59 respectively.