

## TELEPHONE CONNECTIONS FOR BACKBLOCK SETTLERS.

Backblock settlers and others continue to avail themselves of the very favourable terms under which materials may be purchased from the Department for the erection of private telephone-lines to connect with departmental exchanges and toll offices. During the year 335 licenses were issued for the erection of private telephone-lines, and by making use of the party-line system these private lines provided telephone communication for 694 settlers.

## TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE RECEIPTS.

The telephone-exchange receipts for the year ended 31st March, 1924, were £830,470, an increase of £234,503 on the previous year's figures, due largely to the reinstatement of the system of collecting rentals half-yearly in advance, the growth of the telephone-exchange system, and the institution of increased charges for business stations.

## PUBLIC CALL OFFICES.

Public call offices (coin-in-the-slot telephones) continue to prove remunerative in business and densely populated residential areas. During the year twenty new public call offices were established, bringing the total number in use up to 371. The number of offices of this class connected with each of the four principal city exchanges has now reached the maximum, and further provision cannot be made for additional connections until these exchanges are converted to full automatic working.

The revenue from public call offices during the year amounted to £23,734, being an increase of £1,713 over the previous year.

## PRIVATE-LINE CIRCUITS BETWEEN PLACES OF BUSINESS.

The receipts for the year in respect of rental and maintenance fees for private-line circuits between places of business &c., amounted to £5,292.

## TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE PLANT.

The length in miles of the various items of telephone-exchange plant in existence on the 31st March, 1923 and 1924 respectively was as follows:—

	Pole line.	U.G. Cable.	Aerial Cable.	Wire in U.G. Cable.	Wire in Aerial Cable.	Open Aerial Wire.	Wire under all Headings.
	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.
In existence on 31st March, 1923	6,872	310	558	109,215	66,612	48,671	229,882
Erected during year ..	479	100	43	33,118	4,349	5,985	43,598
Dismantled during year	16	4	12	1,368	1,619	329	4,059
In existence on 31st March, 1924	7,605	406	589	140,965	69,342	54,327	269,421

The percentage of the total wire-mileage in underground cables grows steadily from year to year, thus adding to the stability of the plant through the lessening liability to storm damage. The percentages in this respect for the years 1919 and 1924 respectively are shown hereunder:—

	1919. Per Cent.	1924. Per Cent.
Telephone-exchange wire in underground cables .. ..	41	52
Telephone-exchange wire in aerial cable .. ..	37	26
Telephone-exchange wire in open aerial wire .. ..	22	22
	100	100

## AUTOMATIC-TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE INSTALLATIONS.

## AUCKLAND METROPOLITAN AREA.

In view of the early completion of the full automatic system, no additions were made to the auxiliary automatic switching-apparatus installed in the Auckland Exchange area during the year. The number of waiting subscribers is approximately the same as at the 31st March last year, and, as stated in last year's report, no appreciable number of additional subscribers can be connected until the full automatic plant is brought into operation.

Three-hundred pair trunk cables have been laid from the new main automatic exchange at Wellesley Street to the Remuera, Mount Eden, and Ponsonby Exchanges, and a 200-pair trunk cable has been laid to the Devonport Exchange. The subscribers' cable distribution from all but the last-mentioned of these exchanges is now practically complete, and will be ready for use when the full automatic apparatus is cut into service.