

Great Britain and Australia, Great Britain and South Africa, and Great Britain and India. A further extension is projected between Canada and Australia. Each of these services is offered to the public at rates lower than the cable rates. Although the beam services have proved so successful, the experience gained in respect of any one of the services has proved to be no safe guide in making plans for another. The South African service is largely immune from "fading," but each of the other services has its fading periods, which vary sometimes according to the time of the year, and at other times which cannot be predicted. The efficiency of the beam service between any two countries, therefore, is not an infallible indicator of its value in other countries.

In the Dominion, there has been substantial progress in the extension and improvement of electrical communications. These are referred to in detail elsewhere.

In common with other countries, New Zealand is finding that the great advance in telephonic communication is having a prejudicial effect upon the revenue of the Telegraph Branch. From a purely superficial point of view, this world-wide trend would appear to indicate that the future of telegraphy as a popular means of communication is not bright. But it is necessary to view the subject in a proper perspective. While for short-distance communications the telephone is steadily superseding the telegraph, there can be no doubt that for longer distances the telegraph will maintain a predominant position as a reliable means of communication.

#### RELATIVE VALUES OF WIRELESS AND CABLE COMMUNICATIONS.

Since the development of the beam wireless system the position of cable services has become a somewhat acute problem, which is likely to become more serious should the beam wireless system advance in future to the extent that it has during the past year. As a partner in the Pacific cable system, New Zealand is concerned in any possible superseding of the cable as an essential means of communication. From the point of view of defence alone the maintenance of the cable system is of great importance. Healthy rivalry between the two means of communication may, of course, prove to be of ultimate public benefit. According to the view of the best authorities, however, the cable and wireless systems are complementary, and neither should be made the means of wrecking the other. The limitations of each should be recognized; also that these limitations practically disappear when the systems are made to supplement one another. The ideal appears to be a sensible and useful co-operation between the two systems. The competition of the beam system with established cable services has been regarded so seriously that His Majesty's Government in Great Britain deemed it expedient to invite a committee of representatives of all Governments concerned to meet in Great Britain to examine the whole question. Although details of the results of the Conference are not yet known, it is hoped that the discussion will have provided a useful basis of co-operation in place of purely wasteful competition.

It is understood that an agreement has been reached between the Eastern and Associated Cable Companies and the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co. for a fusion of interests through the medium of a proposed "holding" company, subject to a satisfactory agreement being made with His Majesty's Governments in Great Britain and the dominions, and to the proposal meeting with the approval of the stockholders and shareholders of the companies concerned. It is not yet known how the proposed merger will affect the competition between the two systems, or what the effect will be on the Pacific cable.

#### NEW COMBINED TELEGRAM FORM AND ENVELOPE.

With a view to reducing costs in the Telegraph Branch the use of a combined telegram form and envelope has been reverted to. The new form is an adaptation of one in use some years ago, which was discarded in favour of the telegram form and envelope. The new form requires less manipulation in folding than the old