

Notwithstanding the large number of connections which have been made during the last few years, there is still a keen demand for telephone facilities. This, together with the assumption that possibly every telephone installed induces some non-subscriber to join up, indicates that a steady development can be expected for many years. The moderate rates charged in the centres and the extremely low rates charged rural subscribers are an inducement to every one to connect with the telephone service.

The present scale of charges in the Dominion compares more than favourably with that of any other country, with the exception, perhaps, of Canada, where the rates are somewhat similar to those in New Zealand.

It is particularly gratifying that the disappointment that has been experienced in the past through the existence of waiting-lists of prospective telephone subscribers has disappeared. The waiting-list is now a thing of the past, and it is hoped that it will not be necessary to reintroduce it.

#### NUMBER OF TELEPHONES PER HUNDRED OF POPULATION.

New Zealand stands high in the world's list of telephones per hundred of population. On the 31st March, 1926, there were in New Zealand 9·2 telephones per hundred of population, against 14·8 in the United States of America and 12·2 in Canada. New Zealand, with Denmark, then held third position among the countries of the world.

An interesting graph showing the number of telephones per hundred of population in the cities and principal towns of New Zealand on the 31st March, 1927, appears at page 43. Gisborne, with nearly seventeen telephones per hundred of population, then led the Dominion, with Hastings, Hamilton, and Wellington next in order, with between fifteen and sixteen telephones per hundred of population.

#### COIN-IN-THE-SLOT TELEPHONES.

There is still a demand for additional slot telephones, despite the fact that 113 more of such telephones have been provided. The two new types of cabinet referred to in last year's report have been installed in various centres. From an æsthetic point of view, the steel cabinets which were imported from Great Britain are an improvement on both the wooden type and the new concrete type. The steel cabinets are being installed in the larger centres at points at which the footpaths allow sufficient room.

#### COIN-IN-THE-SLOT TELEPHONES IN SHOPS.

It is a matter for regret that hitherto it has not always been possible to give public-telephone service where it is most needed—*i.e.*, in the busier streets of the central shopping-areas of the larger cities. In some areas, owing to the congestion of pedestrian traffic, and the undesirability of encroaching on footpath space, it is not possible to erect public-telephone cabinets. In Wellington an attempt is being made to overcome the difficulty by installing slot telephones in shops, the presence of the telephones being indicated by prominent notices suspended from the shop-verandas. Such stations are known as "pay stations." As the first were installed only in February, 1928, it is too early to determine whether they will prove a success. If results in Wellington justify the step the system will be extended both in Wellington and to other cities.

#### ERECTION OF TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE LINES BY CONTRACT.

The suggestion has been made that telegraph and telephone lines could be constructed more cheaply under contract than by the Department's officers and day labour. The truth of this is about to be tested, for it has been arranged to call for tenders for the erection of new lines in suitable cases.