

TELEGRAPH AND TOLL SERVICES.

INTERNATIONAL TELEGRAPH CONVENTION, BRUSSELS, 1928: CODE LANGUAGE.

At the International Telegraph Conference held in Paris in 1925 it was decided that the next Conference should be held at Brussels in 1930. At the Paris Conference a special committee was set up for the study of the conditions of admission in international telegraph correspondence of code language. The Conference was impelled to such action because the rule regarding pronounceability of code language had become a dead-letter, and a practical solution of the problem was urgently desired. In reporting the result of its deliberations the Committee stated that, notwithstanding a spirit of conciliation and mutual concessions, agreement could not be reached on the matter. Under Article 88 of the regulations annexed to the International Telegraph Convention, which provided that the date selected for an International Telegraph Conference might be advanced upon demand by at least ten of the contracting administrations, initiative was taken by the French Administration, resulting in the holding of the Conference in September, 1928, instead of in 1930. The scope of the Conference was limited to consideration of the question of code language. New Zealand was represented by Mr. F. Strong, of the British Post Office.

At the Conference there were two opposing points of view—one that the existing regulations should be maintained, and the other that code language should be reduced from ten to five letters, without regard to pronounceability. By way of compromise it was decided to maintain the ten-letter code system with the exceptions that (a) the rule requiring code words to be pronounceable is abandoned; (b) a new rule is made requiring code words of six, seven, or eight letters to embody at least two vowels, and code words containing nine or ten letters to contain three vowels. A five-letter code system is to be instituted at reduced rates without conditions as to vowels or pronounceability. The date fixed for the coming into operation of the new order is the 1st October, 1929. It is considered that the new provisions represent a satisfactory compromise on the subject of code language, and will solve what has been an exceedingly difficult problem in connection with international telegraph correspondence.

GENERAL ELECTION, 1928.

The general election held on the 14th November, 1928, caused as usual a great amount of extra work for the Department. Arrangements were made throughout the Dominion for the speedy handling of election returns and of the multitude of other telegrams incidental to the occasion. It is gratifying to record that the work was handled with accuracy and promptitude. The staff responded cheerfully despite the long hours of duty and the arduous conditions which are inevitable upon such occasions.

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY FOOTBALL TEAM: TOUR OF SOUTH AFRICA.

During the tour of South Africa by the New Zealand Rugby football team arrangements were made for the results of the matches to be communicated to all telegraph and telephone offices and telephone exchanges in the Dominion. Result notices were exhibited at all offices immediately upon receipt of the news, and the information was also made available to telephone-exchange subscribers upon request. Result news received on Sundays was disseminated by telephone exchanges, while result news received on week-days was circulated by telegraph. Evidence of public appreciation of the Department's action in thus keeping the public apprised of the results was not lacking. The Department is indebted to the United Press Association, Ltd., for permission to utilize messages from the Association's correspondent with the team.

TELEGRAPH ARRANGEMENTS AT PLACES AT WHICH RACE MEETINGS ARE IN PROGRESS ON SATURDAYS.

At places at which race meetings are held on Saturday afternoons, and at which the telegraph-offices normally close at 5 p.m., it has been arranged for the telegraph-offices to remain open until the result of the last race is reported by the agent of the Press Association. This course was adopted to meet the wishes of the Press Association.

PRESS TELEGRAPH ATTENDANCE AT FOUR CHIEF CENTRES ON DEPARTMENTAL HOLIDAYS.

Attendance from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for press purposes is now observed on departmental holidays at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin. The cost of the additional attendance is made a charge against the Press Association.

TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE OFFICES OPEN FOR BUSINESS.

During the year eighteen offices were opened and forty-seven closed. The number of offices remaining open at the 31st March, 1929, was 2,139, classified as follows:—

Telephone-offices and toll stations combined	1,760
Morse telegraph-offices and toll stations combined	350*
Telephone-offices (no toll station)	7
Morse telegraph-offices (no toll station)	4†
Toll-station (no telephone-office)	9
Radio-telegraph stations (including coast stations, Auckland, Awanui, Awarua, Chatham Islands, and Wellington)	9
	2,139

* Six converted from telephone to morse, and two from morse to telephone.

† Mangahao-Hydro closed.