

The following table shows, for each class of exchange, the respective percentages of business and residential stations, also the respective percentages of individual- and party-line stations, on the 31st March, 1931:—

Percentage of	Class I Exchanges.	Class II Exchanges.	Class III Exchanges.	Class IV Exchanges.	Dominion Percentages.
Business stations	36	32	27	19	30
Residential stations	64	68	73	81	70
	100	100	100	100	100
Individual-line stations	90	75	53	32	65
Party- and rural-line stations	10	25	47	68	35
	100	100	100	100	100

AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE - EXCHANGES.

CHRISTCHURCH METROPOLITAN AREA.

The new automatic telephone-exchange system installed at Christchurch has now been in operation for some eighteen months, and during that time has met all the demands made upon it. The new system is a decided improvement on the old mixed manual and automatic system, and is much appreciated by the Christchurch public, particularly the business community. During the year the switching equipment at Christchurch was extended by two thousand lines, and with this addition the plant should be capable of meeting normal demands for telephone service for some years.

AUCKLAND, WELLINGTON, AND DUNEDIN DISTRICTS.

The automatic telephone exchanges in the Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin districts have given satisfactory service during the year, and no special comment is called for. Extensions, representing a total of 2,280 lines, were added to exchanges in these districts in the twelve months.

CONVERSION TO AUTOMATIC WORKING OF THE BIRKENHEAD TELEPHONE EXCHANGE AREA BY CONNECTION TO AUCKLAND AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE SYSTEM.

The residents of Birkenhead and Northcote have been provided with automatic telephone-exchange service by connecting them to the Ponsonby Automatic Exchange by means of a submarine cable crossing the harbour. This cable will enable up to three hundred subscribers in the Birkenhead-Northcote area to be connected with the Ponsonby Automatic Exchange, which will give them access to the whole of the subscribers in the Auckland metropolitan area.

CONVERSION TO AUTOMATIC WORKING OF MARTON AND WHANGAREI TELEPHONE EXCHANGES.

The switching-apparatus for the new automatic telephone exchanges at Marton and Whangarei has been received in the Dominion, and good progress is being made with the installation of the Marton equipment. After the installation at Marton is completed the work at Whangarei will be undertaken. When the two exchanges mentioned are converted to full automatic working, both towns will possess high-grade automatic telephone-exchange systems, capable, with extensions from time to time, of providing service for many years. Details of the equipment to be provided at Marton and Whangarei were given in last year's report.

CONVERSION TO AUTOMATIC WORKING OF HASTINGS TELEPHONE EXCHANGE.

As a result of the partial destruction of the manually-operated central-battery telephone exchange at Hastings the installation of the 2,300 lines of step-by-step automatic equipment which was in progress at the time of the Hawke's Bay earthquake is being accelerated. Although efficient service is being obtained from the present temporary switching arrangements at Hastings, the early completion of the automatic system is desirable, and it is anticipated that the work will be completed and the conversion to automatic working effected at an early date.

CONVERSION TO AUTOMATIC WORKING OF LOWER HUTT TELEPHONE EXCHANGE.

A contract for the equipment required to convert the Lower Hutt Telephone Exchange to automatic working was placed in 1930. The equipment is now coming to hand, and the installation will be proceeded with as soon as the building is available. Details of the equipment to be provided at Lower Hutt were given in last year's report.

DESTRUCTION OF NAPIER AUTOMATIC-SWITCHING SYSTEM.

The Napier automatic telephone exchange, which comprised 2,200 individual lines and one hundred two-party lines, and which was brought into service on the 28th August, 1927, was totally destroyed by the fire which followed the Hawke's Bay earthquake on the 3rd February. The steps taken to restore the telephone-exchange service are detailed in this report at page 13.