

operation at the present time. An experience of but little over a year satisfied Tunbridge Wells that it had made a mistake and it sold its telephone business, lock, stock and barrel, to the National Telephone Company.

### THE NET RESULT.

The net result of five years of municipal telephony in Great Britain, of five years existence of the Parliamentary permission to municipalities to employ the money of their ratepayers in providing that competition for which the Committee of 1898 yearned so strenuously, has been the installation in five cities of the United Kingdom of 20,000 telephones. Half of these telephones are duplicates of those of the National Company, that is to say that that many of the subscribers of the Company have been compelled in the interest of their businesses to pay the rental of two telephones where one formerly sufficed. That and the annoyance and inconvenience of a duplicate telephone system has been the only result of the agitation so far as one-half of the subscribers of the municipal systems are concerned.

The fact that all telephone systems in Great Britain are compelled to pay ten per cent. of their gross earnings to the Post Office Department as a license fee, affords an opportunity of learning exactly the proportion of business the municipal telephone systems do. In the last financial year the National Telephone Company paid the Government in this way £169,853 and the municipalities £6,206. These figures would indicate that so far only four per cent. of the telephone business of the country has been municipalized. Yet to secure this insignificant result there has been a capital expenditure of about £500,000.