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The completion of the Beam stations by the Marconi Company, under the contract of 1924 has, unfortunately, been delayed through causes beyond the control of the contractors of which the most important was the illness at one and the same time of Senatore Marconi and his chief assistant, but the stations at Bodmin and Bridgwater for communication with Canada and South Africa are now practically finished. Some time will be occupied in completing the final adjustments, but the Marconi Company tell me that they hope to begin at Bodmin their preliminary tests with the Canadian station at the end of this week, and to be ready for us to make our official tests towards the end of the present month, and the station for the South African service a little later, about mid-August. The stations at Grimsby and Skegness for communication with Australia and India will probably be ready in October. When due allowance is made for the difficulties which must inevitably arise in connection with the development of a new system of wireless communication, which is being tried under practical commercial conditions for the first time, I think it is a reasonable expectation that the four Beam stations will be in full operation before the end of the present year.

The rates and the contract conditions for working have been settled in all cases except in the case of Australia, by a Committee sitting under the chairmanship of my Noble Friend the Assistant Postmaster-General (Viscount Welmer). Roughly speaking, the rates will be, except in the case of Canada, two-thirds of the cable rates existing in July, 1924. In the case of the Canadian service the rates will be identical with the corresponding cable rates. The effect will be that in the case of South Africa there will be a reduction in respect of cable rates of 8d. a word, in the case of India 7d. a word, and proportionate reduction for cheaper class of traffic. I have done my best in the time at my disposal to make myself clear. If there is any point on which I have not been clear or on which the Committee wishes further information, either I or my Noble Friend will be glad to answer any detailed questions, to the best of our ability.

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