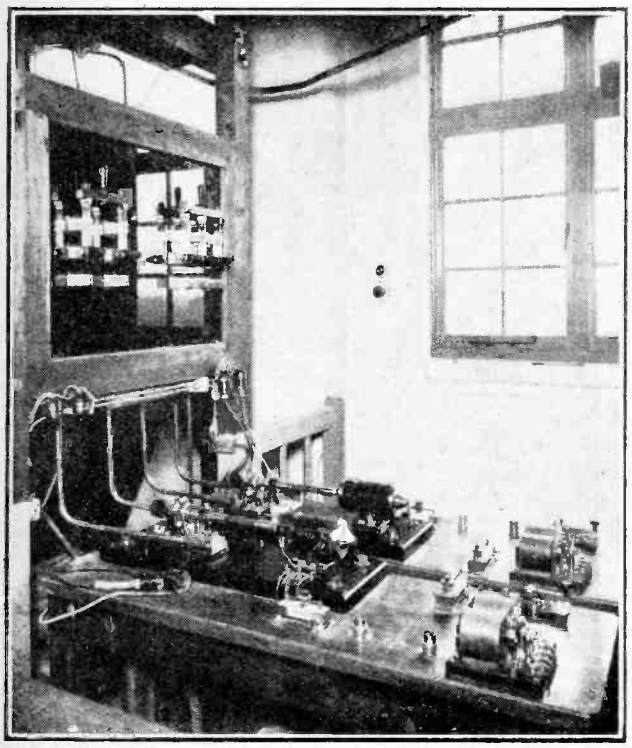
A Year's Progress in Commercial Wireless.—

The advantage of having wireless equipment in aircraft has been made more apparent this last year than ever before, for the simple reason that more aircraft have been flying. The disadvantages remain as before, weight and difficulty of operating, but it is only a matter of time before a way round is found and it becomes acknowledged that wireless equipment is an essential part of the machine.



High-speed signalling keys at the Northolt station.

The new equipment at Croydon aerodrome has been brought into action during the year. The four transmitters are at Mitcham, a couple of miles distant, operation and reception being carried out at the aerodrome at Croydon. Directional apparatus is fitted, and the process of finding the position of an aircraft takes less than a minute. Simultaneous bearings are taken from Croydon, Pulham, and Lympne, the intersection of the bearings giving the position of the machine in flight.

Beam Telephone Possibilities.

Developments in point-to-point wireless communication have centred on short-wave working, but very few long-range commercial services are yet in operation so far as telephony is concerned. The most notable of these telephone services is that opened by the Post Office last summer between this country and America, as an auxiliary to the long-wave service which has been in operation for some time.

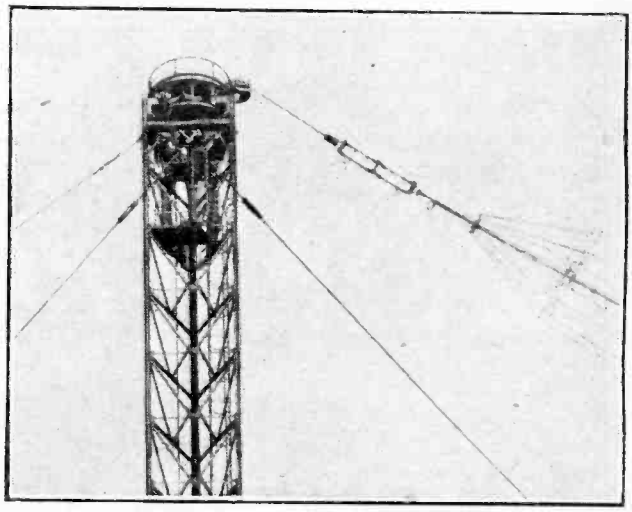
There is no doubt, however, that we are on the eve of full commercial application of short-wave telephony for communication over great distances, but 1928 cannot be registered as the year when this result was achieved.

The main reason why short-wave communication is so desirable is, of course, that for great distances short-wave working is much more economical than long-wave working.

The Cable-Radio Merger.

As regards telegraphy, short-wave services have developed rapidly during the year. Many commercial services over great distances have sprung up all over the world, including a service opened last summer by the Post Office between this country and Kenya Colony.

The amount of traffic sent over the short-wave telegraph circuits between this country and Canada, Australia, South Africa and India has shown a steady increase. These circuits are worked by wireless telegraphy on the beam system. Hitherto they have been operated at this end by the Post Office, but other arrangements are now being made in accordance with the recommendations of the Imperial Wireless and Cable Conference which met during the year. This conference, which was appointed by the Government, included representatives of Great Britain, the Dominions, the Irish Free State, and the colonies and protectorates. The conference recommended that a Communications Company be formed to take over all the communication assets of the cable companies and the Marconi companies concerned in exchange for shares, and to acquire the Government cables and the lease of the Post Office beam stations, the capital of the company not to exceed at its inception £30,000,000. The chairman and one other director are to be persons approved by the Government on the suggestion of the cable campanies, and British control of all the companies must be guaranteed. In addition, there is



Eight hundred feet up. The top of one of Rugby's masts.

to be an advisory committee, including representatives of the Governments concerned, which must be consulted on questions of policy, including any alteration of rates. The external telephone services of Great Britain are, however, to be left in the hands of the Post Office, which will come to terms with the company regarding the right to use the company's wireless stations for telephone purposes.