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## Computer link for Christchurch

The opening in Christchurch today of new branch offices of Electronic Data Systems, Ltd, heralds a new development in the computer industry in New Zealand, and in particular the development of independent computer bureaux. The company's new Christchurch offices are situated in the new Metropolitan Life Building in Liverpool Street, and during the last three weeks there has been frantic activity to complete the premises before the official opening today, at which the terminal equipment linked to the company's large-scale computer in Wellington will be demonstrated.

The terminal equipment, which is simply a series of units similar to those normally found in any computer installation, but with a direct connection through Post Office lines to the company's Wellington computer, so that the power of a large computer can be used directly from Christchurch. This equipment comprises a paper tape reader, magnetic tape, and a line printer. The equipment is the first of its type installed in New Zealand by Burroughs, Ltd, and E.D.S. is the first bureau in the country to run terminal equipment of this kind.

Mr R. J. Dunn, the general manager of E.D.S. said: "Since the establishment of our Christchurch office two years ago, we have found considerable acceptance and interest amongst the busi-

ness, community here of computer services. It would be true to say that the level of acceptance found here has been greater than centres in the North Island in which the company has opened offices. This awareness of computers is no doubt largely due to the active computer operations at the Canterbury University which has assisted in instructing students and graduates of computer systems, and equipping them to meet the challenges of computers in the business world."

The new Christchurch office provides a further link in a national-based computer bureau with full-scale processing facilities in both Auckland and Wellington. The company is the longest-established independent computer bureau in New Zealand and was incorporated in 1963, with its initial operations confined to Wellington. The company's history is unique in that it started its New Zealand operations primarily as a computer supplier of English Electric Computers. In 1968, on the rationalisation of the computer industry in the United Kingdom, the computer-marketing function of the company was merged with that of International Computers N.Z., Ltd, and E.D.S. continued as a purely independent computer bureau with processing centres in both Wellington and Auckland.

Since the Christchurch branch of the company was established two years ago, and more than 35 organisations are using the company's facilities in the South Island. The introduction of terminal equipment is a major departure from conventional methods of computer processing for a computer bureau, and further similar centres are planned for other areas in New Zealand.

**Standard packaged systems**

The company's success

since its establishment in New Zealand has been significantly assisted by its approach to the development of standard systems. In the initial days of the computer industry all customers required and demanded special systems for their own particular needs. This contributed to much duplication of effort and a high rate of financial failures within the industry. This approach is now changing through the availability of sophisticated computer systems of a standard nature which are so designed to be applicable to all classes of industry. The growth of computer use in the South Island has been greatly increased through the use of the standard systems offered by the company since its first Christchurch office was opened.

More than 70 per cent of the company's business is now derived from standard systems, which it has developed specifically for New Zealand requirements.

The Christchurch manager of E.D.S. is Mr D. D. Nisbet, who has been with the company for more than five years. Aged 27, Mr Nisbet was transferred from the company's Auckland office after the Christchurch office was established, and he now has nine years experience in the data processing industry.

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