

RURAL ELECTRICAL RETICULATION

Although electricity has been made available to 96 per cent. of the people of New Zealand, it is the Government's desire that more of the settlers in sparsely populated areas enjoy this service. It was appreciated that the annual cost of keeping some rural lines in operation was beyond the economic limit of many Electric-power Boards. Opportunity was accordingly taken to make provision in the Electricity Act, 1945, for the establishment of a Rural Electrical Reticulation Council. This Council is empowered to levy Supply Authorities up to a maximum of 5s. per cent. of the gross revenues from the sales of electrical energy, and to pay annual subsidies up to a maximum of 7½ per cent. of the capital cost of any approved line built to give supply to a sparsely populated area. The Council consists of three elected members of electrical Supply Authorities, the General Manager, and another officer of this Department.

The inaugural meeting of the Council has just been held, and steps have been taken to collect from Power Boards detailed information upon which to frame a policy for assisting settlers in remote areas.

APPENDIX

Further information relating to the past year's working is included in the attached report by the General Manager.

APPENDIX

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1946

The GENERAL MANAGER to the Honourable MINISTER IN CHARGE.

Sir,—Wellington, 26th June, 1946.

I have the honour to present herewith, pursuant to section 15 of the State Supply of Electrical Energy Act, 1917, the annual report of all operations of the State Hydro-electric Department for the year ended 31st March, 1946.

In the interests of paper economy, the report is condensed and various statistical data have been omitted.

ELECTRICITY CONTROL

The provisions of the Electricity Control Order, so far as they concern permits and connections and load control in the North Island, were amended in November, 1945, to ensure that the essential electricity requirements of housing and industry, as well as farming, would be met. Otherwise the restrictions upon the use of electricity referred to in previous reports, are still in force.

During April and May the demand for electricity in the North Island was consistently heavier than in the corresponding months of 1944. By 24th May the system peak load had risen to 306,400 kW., and a cold spell of weather which set in on 28th May increased the demand for power to such an extent that load had to be shed to prevent serious and dangerous overloading of the generating-stations. Throughout June and early July load rationing