

I am now in a position to state that the Lake Coleridge development is already an assured success from a financial point of view. I may confess that I had some misgivings when I first faced the problem, because of the comparative sparseness of the population to be served. As a general rule, water-power has to be developed on a large scale in order to be a financial success. The usual order at the present day is over 100,000 h.p., compared with our 12,000 h.p. at Lake Coleridge. Of course, there is the other point of view that the development of water-power, like railways, helps to develop the country, which is a justifiable end in itself; but I have not, however, taken advantage of this aspect of the case, but endeavoured to conduct the development on strictly economical lines. As regards development of industries, there are definite indications of new activities in the direction of electro-chemical industries in the neighbourhood of Christchurch. The staff has instructions to co-operate with the promoters of such industries, and I am recommending that power for experimental purposes should be given free, provided that the supply does not interfere with the operation of the plant.

I am in communication with the Board of Agriculture with a view to providing power for grinding phosphate rock on a large scale, so as to take the place of basic slag, the supply of which has been cut off owing to the war.

ELECTRICITY-SUPPLY IN THE NORTH ISLAND.

Inquiry into the best means of adequately providing the North Island with a supply of cheap electricity is now actively proceeding. Very little has hitherto been done owing to a lack of organization and staff. Mr. Kissel was, however, transferred to the Head Office on completion of his duties at Lake Coleridge at the beginning of April, and he is now engaged on surveys and estimates. No adequate progress, however, can be made without the assistance of a larger staff devoted entirely to this work. A good deal of work already done has to be revised in view of the observations made of the flow of the rivers during the present year. These are lower than any record hitherto obtained, due to a succession of phenomenally dry seasons, and previous estimates of power, &c., must be considerably discounted.

WATER-POWER LICENSES.

Water-power licenses have been issued to the following: Tauranga Borough Council; Waverley Town Board; Kaponga Town Board; C. F. Murray, Wharanui; E. Parker, Blenheim; J. Barnett, Leeston.

ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER LICENSES.

Licenses under the Public Works Act have been issued to the following local authorities and companies: Gisborne Borough Council (amending license); Heathcote County Council; Wellington City Corporation; New Plymouth Borough Council (amending regulations); Christchurch Tramway Board; Tauranga Borough Council; Wanganui Borough Council; Whangarei Borough Council; Waverley Town Board (amendments); Tokomaru Farmers' Co-operative Company; Tokomaru Sheep-farmers' Freezing Company; Tamaki West Road Board; J. F. Pettie, Waipiro Bay; Stevenson and Cook (Limited), Port Chalmers; F. J. Mansell, Bull's; Napier Borough Council (extensions); Invercargill Borough Council (extensions); Kaponga Town Board; J. O'Dowd, Tapanui; C. F. Murray, Wharanui; Miramar Borough Council; Auckland City Council (amendments); E. Parker, Blenheim; Ellis and Burnand, Mananui; J. Barnett, Leeston.

The following are under consideration: Patea Borough Council; Stratford Electric Light Company; Robert Ellis, Brightwater (extensions); Ross Goldfields (Limited); A. J. Cameron, Makuri; J. M. Gilbert, Hundalee; New Zealand Coal and Oil Company and Otago Charitable Aid Board, Kaitangata; Tai Tapu Dairy Company; H. J. Hodgson, Murchison; Christchurch Tramway Board (two); Redwood Bros., Blenheim; Wellington City Corporation.

The following installations have been inspected during the year: Opotiki Borough Council; Napier Borough Council; Wellington City Council (Denhard Bakeries and Public Hospital); Wanganui Borough Council (George and Kersley); Silverstream Mines, Maratoto; Ohakune Borough Council; Wellington City Council; Feilding Borough Council; Winton Borough Council; Waipiro Bay; Hastings Borough Council; Invercargill Borough Council; Bluff Borough Council; New Plymouth Borough Council; Waitara Borough Council; Inglewood Borough Council; Stratford Electric Light Company; Eltham Bacon Company; Hawera Electric Light Company; Patea Borough Council; Havelock North Town Board; Devonport Borough Council.

The standard of work carried out under licenses issued to local authorities and others for overhead lines is steadily improving, whilst the departmental regulations have also contributed to assist towards uniformity in electrical apparatus, which has the effect of cheapening the apparatus throughout the country and enabling licensees to assist each other with material when required.

General regulations were issued and gazetted on the 29th April, 1915, which are applicable to the whole of the Dominion, and cover every class of electrical work. A standard form of license has also been adopted, and this, together with the issue of the regulations, has expedited the issue of licenses and greatly reduced the labour and work connected with the same.

I have, &c.,
E. PARRY,
Chief Electrical Engineer.