

The whole question of Power Board finance and the prospect of success is now carefully reviewed by the Government, and only such Boards allowed to proceed as are considered to have reasonable prospect of success and such as are designed and constructed to fall into the general scheme of development decided upon by the Government.

The annual conferences of electric-supply authorities and of their clerical and technical staffs are doing much to clear up many of the difficulties that have existed in the past, and must do much good for the business generally. They are tending to produce more uniformity in the operation, and undoubtedly the interchange of ideas will do much to strengthen the weaker Boards. Such conferences are also welcomed by the Government, whose officers have much to gain by a frank discussion of difficulties that may have arisen in dealing with the many problems that arise between Government as supplier and supply authorities as customers throughout the year.

RULES AND REGULATIONS.

With the enormous increase that has taken place during recent years a revision of the rules and regulations governing installation and supply is urgently needed. Though the administration of the regulations is the function of the Government, through the Public Works Department, there is no doubt but that other sections connected with the electrical industry are vitally interested. With this fact in view I have set up an honorary advisory committee, with the Chief Electrical Engineer of the Department as chairman, to go through all rules, and get out a complete revision of rules relating to overhead lines and installations on consumers' premises. This committee is composed of two representatives from the Public Works Department, two from the electric-supply authorities, and one each from the Post and Telegraph and Railway Departments, Electrical Federation, Fire Underwriters' Association, and the Electrical Workers' Union. The committee has met regularly throughout the year, and hopes to issue the new regulations at an early date.

WIREMEN'S REGISTRATION.

The Wiremen's Registration Act passed during last session is now being administered by the Board set up under the provisions of that Act. It is considered that the standard and uniformity of wiring-work throughout the Dominion will be much improved as a result of the control and regulation given by this Act.

RAILWAYS.

ADDITIONS TO OPEN LINES.

The expenditure out of the Public Works Fund amounted to £842,322, under the heads of provision of additional rolling-stock, tarpaulins, Westinghouse brakes, steam heating and electric lighting for cars, workshop machinery, improvements and additions to station buildings, extension of sidings, bridge-work, cranes, weighbridges, additions to tablet, telegraph, and telephone facilities, additional dwellings, signals and interlocking, and purchase of land.

RAILWAYS IMPROVEMENT AUTHORIZATION ACT, 1914.

The expenditure under the Railways Improvement Authorization Act, 1914, amounted to £534,662, including the sum of £37,812, the Department's proportion of the cost of raising the loan. The works provided by this expenditure were—new stations and station-yards, goods-sheds, and terminal facilities at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Addington, Lyttelton, Paeroa, and New Plymouth; duplications, Newmarket—New Lynn, Penrose—Papakura; grade easements, Penrose—Mercer; new lines, Auckland—Westfield; workshops and locomotive-workshops equipment; deviation, Pelichet Bay—Ravensbourne—Burke's; interlocking and safety appliances, and electric lighting.