

five collected rates to a total value of £68,713 during the year. Representations have been made to me at various times that the Department should reduce the price charged for current, particularly to the smaller Power Boards operating in country areas. An examination of the accounts of the various Boards and also of the accounts of the Department indicates that as a general rule the local authorities' accounts are in a better financial position than is the Government electric-supply account. There is no question, also, but that the rate at present charged the country Power Boards gives a considerably smaller return per kilowatt to the Department than does the somewhat lower rate charged the larger cities and Power Boards for much larger amounts of power.

RIVER-IMPROVEMENTS AND LAND-PROTECTION WORKS.

Wairoa River.—In this case only a small amount of work has been done, this consisting of an extension of the stone protection work on the foreshore of the Wairoa River.

Waihou and Ohinemuri Rivers.—The heavy stop-bank construction work on the Lower Waihou River was practically completed during the year, the erection of several small flood-gates and other small miscellaneous items only remaining to be finished. As a result of the heavy flood of July last year, rather extensive seepages showed in the Upper Waihou system of stop-banks, so that further strengthening and raising of the bank in places is required. This work, though heavy, is now being expeditiously gone on with, and with its conclusion the construction works involved in the scheme may then be regarded as completed.

Taiari River.—The main stop-bank system has been completed. The pumping-station for dewatering the plain is also complete, and the pumps have been satisfactorily tested. The main canal, $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles long, from the pumping-station to connect with the main system of drains on the plain is in hand. The Railway Department has completed the extension of 400 ft. to the Otokia Railway Bridge, and the old railway-embankment which it replaces is being removed. With the exception of some work required to the contour channel, the plain is now in the position of being able to receive full benefit from this protective scheme.

HARBOURS.

At Westport during the past year the Department has been considerably concerned over the persistent shoaling which took place on the bar during the earlier portion of the year. This has been dealt with by adopting an accelerated dredging programme, three dredges being in constant operation. Arrangements are now in hand, however, to extend the breakwaters, and it is anticipated that this will lessen the amount of dredging required. The protective works at Organs Island have been completed, and the harbour facilities generally have been well maintained. The recent earthquake did a considerable amount of damage to the wharves but this is well under repair.

At Karamea the reconstruction of the training-wall is being steadily proceeded with. All preliminary work was completed, and a start has been made with the depositing of stone. The recent earthquake has considerably damaged the staging and some of the work already done, but efforts are being made to repair this and push ahead as speedily as possible.

At Waikokopu a contract was let for the construction of a stone breakwater, and the contractor is making good progress, two miles and a half of tramway having been built, quarry opened up, and a quantity of stone placed in position.

A number of wharves have been erected and small harbour improvements carried out in various parts of the Dominion, for which funds have been provided either in whole or part by the Government.