

Consideration is also being given to the possibility of a power development from the Rangitata in conjunction with the irrigation project there. Such power would be available chiefly, and ultimately, only during the winter season when it is most needed.

Waikaremoana.—In consequence of the decision not to proceed with the lake-control work and upper development, boring and testing are proceeding with a view to pushing on with the lower development.

Contracts have been let for the penstock, generating-plant, and other equipment for the third and final unit in the main station, and a start has been made in the erection of anchor and supports for the penstock.

Lake Coleridge.—With, for the time being, a surplus of power at Waitaki the opportunity has been taken to replace the Harper River diversion-gates which were first built in 1921, extensively repaired in 1928, and now completely worn out. The new gates are being built to a different alignment and to a somewhat novel design. It is anticipated that with the new alignment and robust construction the wear caused by travelling shingle will be greatly reduced.

ELECTRIC-POWER BOARDS.

During the year the Southland Electric power District was taken over by the Government as from 13th October, 1936, and the constitution of the Bay of Islands Electric-power District was gazetted on 4th March, 1937, but the Board which has been elected is not yet functioning as an electric supply authority. There are now forty-five electric-power districts constituted, and forty-one Electric-power Boards (including Westland Power, Ltd., operating under delegated license) are actually carrying out the distribution and sale of electrical energy (August, 1937). The total area covered is 71,746 square miles, or 69·4 per cent. of the total area of the Dominion (103,415 square miles); the total population concerned is 1,045,841, or 66·3 per cent. of the total population (1,577,109) of the Dominion; and the unimproved value of the land included in the electric-power districts and outer areas is £232,038,236, or 77 per cent. of the total unimproved value of the Dominion (£301,137,513).

So far only one of the four main cities—viz., Auckland—has been included in the inner area of an electric-power district, but of the secondary centres the cities of Wanganui, Palmerston North, and Invercargill (up till 12th October, 1936), and the Boroughs of Timaru, Napier, Hastings, Blenheim, Greymouth, Gisborne, and Oamaru are included. The advantage of Power Board organization is more obvious to rural than to urban ratepayers, and yet the above position indicates that some of the more important centres have realized that it is to their advantage generally to be associated with the country in undertaking the work of reticulation of electric power on a comprehensive scale.

Table VIII gives details of the gazetted date of constitution, the area, population, and rateable value of each of forty-five power districts already formed, also the amounts of the loans already authorized, and the voting on polls taken. The total amount of the loans authorized by the forty districts which have taken their polls is £13,040,770. The population of the districts concerned is 917,147, so that the loans authorized amount to £14·22 per head of population, as compared with £14·76 last year. The unimproved valuation of the districts is £209,806,297, the loans authorized amounting to 6·2 per cent. of the unimproved rateable value of the lands pledged as security for the loans. The aggregate voting at the polls totalled 76,816 for and 14,206 against the respective loan proposals.

Table XI shows the capital outlay incurred by each Board up to the end of the financial year 1936–37, together with the revenue and annual expenditure.

The total capital outlay by the forty Boards which are in operation is £12,999,177, practically all of which is on works in service. The gross revenue from the sale of electricity by these Boards was £2,327,959. The general result is a profit over the whole business of the Power Boards of £131,599 for appropriation to reserve funds, &c., after paying working-expenses and capital charges for interest, sinking fund, and depreciation.

During the last year three of the Boards struck a general rate, which was collected in all cases, and the following table gives details of the rates levied and collected :—

RATES COLLECTED BY ELECTRIC-POWER BOARDS FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1937.

Name of Board.	General Rate.		Availability Rate.		Special Rates.		Total Amount collected.
	Levied.	Collected.	Levied.	Collected.	Levied.	Collected.	
	d.	£		£	d.	£	£
Banks Peninsula ..	0·202 and 0·02	2,844*	..	..	..	..	2,844*
Malvern ..	$\frac{7}{32}$	2,376	..	..	..	..	2,376
Marlborough ..	..	..	..	74*	..	..	74*
Manawatu-Oroua ..	$\frac{1}{4}$	4*	..	..	..	..	4*
Otago ..	..	893*	..	..	..	..	893*
Southland† ..	..	5,409†*	..	..	..	..	5,409*
Taranaki ..	..	..	..	56*	..	..	56*
Waimea ..	..	..	..	..	0·75	25*	25*
Wairoa ..	$\frac{1}{16}$	1,832*	..	..	..	..	1,832*
Totals, 1937 ..	..	13,358	..	130	..	25	13,513
„ 1936 ..	..	39,645	..	109	..	3,736	43,490

* Includes arrears for previous years. † Southland taken over by Government on 13th October, 1936.