

In conformity with the second of the above functions, the Department has during the year issued a complete new set of rules and regulations governing electric supply. In the past the regulations issued direct by the Government covered only the erection of electric lines, and the question of wiring of premises and installation of apparatus was left more to the Fire Underwriters Association, whose rules were adopted by the Government for that particular purpose. In the last revision the whole of the rules, both in respect to overhead lines and in respect to interior wiring, have been completely revised, and reissued as Government regulations. As the Department in framing these regulations has been assisted by all the various interests concerned, it is felt that the new regulations will result in harmonious working and in a general improvement in the standard and uniformity of work done.

The Board set up to register electrical wiremen has been functioning throughout the year, and, having now caught up with the initial rush of work in bringing in all existing wiremen, is hoping to again improve the standard of workmanship, and to give the ordinary consumer who is not acquainted with all the technicalities of electrical-wiring work some more definite insurance that work done for him will be done by thoroughly competent workmen.

Although the new regulations and those issued by the Wiremen's Registration Board both call for a greater amount of control over electrical work done in the Dominion, they do not mean that the Government will have to maintain an extra staff of Electrical Inspectors. Both the Wiremen's Registration Act and the Regulations under the Public Works Act require that the Inspectors appointed by the local supply authorities shall in the main carry out the inspections required for the successful administration of these Acts. As the supply authorities have to do a certain amount of inspection in their own interests while work is being carried out in their particular districts, it appears that they should be able to carry out all the inspections required of work other than what is done for themselves more cheaply than it could be done by any central inspecting authority. In one or two districts there seems to be evidence that supply authorities are not fully co-operating in this work, but it is hoped that this attitude is only a temporary one and will be remedied now that attention has been called to it.

RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION.

The Joint Committee of the Railway and Public Works Department which has had in hand the electrification of the Christchurch-Lyttelton section of railways has made its recommendations in regard to the tenders for different sections of this work, and contracts have been made for the supply of the necessary materials. The work of providing the necessary substation and supply of power will be controlled by the Public Works Department, and the balance of the work by the Railway Department.

The Department, through its officers on the Electrical Advisory Committee, has also co-operated with the Railway Department in connection with the electrification of that Department's new workshops.

MAIN HIGHWAYS BOARD.

The Main Highways Board has completed its third year of active operation, and it must be acknowledged by all who use the highways of the Dominion that very substantial progress has been made both in maintenance of the existing roads and in the way of new construction.

A number of local authorities with the Board's assistance have embarked on comprehensive programmes extending over several years, some of which are already well advanced. Many other counties have undertaken roading improvements on a more moderate scale, commensurate with their resources and the requirements of traffic, with the result that the motoring community generally has reaped very appreciable benefits. However, in one or two localities where reconstruction of the