

A National Duty.

The Committee is firmly of opinion that the harnessing of the great sources of water-power is a national duty, to be undertaken by the Government for the benefit of the whole community and carried out as a national enterprise. Local authorities are proposing to develop schemes of their own, doubtless due to the length of time they have been led to believe will elapse before power from the national undertaking will be available in their respective districts.

Mr. Parry's Scheme.

On the subject of the national scheme the Committee has had the benefit of the evidence of Mr. Evan Parry, the late Government Electrical Engineer, who outlined his scheme for the North Island and anticipated completing his investigations so as to enable him to formulate his South Island scheme before leaving New Zealand, and this has no doubt been done. Mr. Parry made it clear to the Committee that the estimated period for the carrying-out of the work could be greatly shortened, and that not only might various works in different portions of one Island be undertaken at the same time, but the work in both Islands could be simultaneously carried out. He declared that, given the money and the labour, he could within a period of three years install at each of the three main sources in the North Island sufficient plant to meet present requirements. It will be admitted that the State is in a better position to find both the money and the labour than are the local authorities.

Labour and Distribution.

Regarding the requisite labour, the Committee is convinced that much may be accomplished by earnestness and determination. A good deal of skilled labour is required in the shape of tunnel-workers, and it may be pointed out that many of those who did mining-work at the front may be contemplating emigration from Britain to the overseas dominions. No time should be lost in bringing under the notice of mining and other workers the advantages that this Dominion affords.

The Committee's Recommendation.

The Committee recommends that the Government should at once carry out a comprehensive scheme for the supply of electrical energy to the whole country, and simultaneously in both Islands. The Government should supply the current in bulk, leaving the distribution to the local authorities.

BOARD OF INDUSTRIES AND COMMERCE.

Your Committee has met with an almost universal demand for the setting-up of a Board of Industries and Commerce, which shall provide the directive ability for the national organization of our industries in general.

Commercial and Industrial Development.

The conclusion of the war brings to the forefront the necessity for the immediate consideration of the most effective methods of dealing with the great questions of commercial and industrial development, for it is quite certain that New Zealand must make unprecedented efforts to deal with the whole question from the national standpoint; indeed, the State must in the future take a closer interest in the development of industry and be prepared to actively assist. In this connection the Committee desires to point out that up to the present little (if any) assistance has been given to secondary industries, while in the case of land-development generous encouragement has been afforded for many years past.

Setting up the Board.

At the present time and for some years several Ministers have been directing State activities in the commercial field. It is recommended that these duties should be concentrated in one Department and under the direction of one Minister.