

A start has been made on the duplication works which will provide for an additional 20,000 h.p. in this station. Contracts have been let for the tunnel, pipe-line, power-house building, and machinery, and a programme of construction has been arranged which will enable this additional amount of power to be made available for the winter of 1926. Additions are being made to the main sub-station at Addington which will enable additional power to be supplied to the City of Christchurch and additional feeders to be run to Power Boards and other consumers in the adjoining districts.

During the year supply has been given to the Ashburton Power Board, the Timaru Borough Council, Malvern Power Board, and the Railway Department to enable the Department to operate its signalling-system on the Midland Railway.

HORAHORA POWER SCHEME.

An expenditure of £79,795 has been made on extensions and additions to the Horahora Power-station and to the transmission system radiating therefrom.

Contracts have been let for the supply of two additional 2,000 kw. units, which have now been delivered and are being erected. Additions to the power-house and enlargement of the head-race and tail-race are being carried out by the Department, and it is anticipated that this extra amount of power will be made available before the end of the present year. A transmission-line connecting Horahora and Auckland has been under construction during the year, and will be completed by about January next, when it will be possible to supply the Auckland Power Board with an additional 2,000 h.p. for reticulation of the southern area of their district, and to allow them to shut down portions of their steam plant at times when it may be possible to operate more economically with water-power.

ARAPUNI POWER SCHEME.

Early in the year tenders were invited in two sections for the construction of the complete headworks and power-station for the first instalment of this plant. This will consist of three units each of 15,000 kw. capacity. For the first section of the contract, which comprises the dam and headworks, three tenders were received, ranging in price from £610,375 to £931,951. For the second section of the contract, which comprises power-house building and the whole of the power-house plant, four complete tenders were received, ranging from £565,082 to £740,196.

The lowest tender in each case was submitted by Sir W. G. Armstrong, Whitworth, and Co. (Limited), and a contract totalling £1,170,891 has been made with this firm for the construction of both sections. The departmental estimate was £1,168,277.

This power plant, which will be considerably larger than anything previously operating in New Zealand, will be manufactured for the most part in Great Britain, although a portion of the electrical apparatus will be manufactured by the Swedish General Electrical Company, who are subcontractors to Messrs. Armstrong-Whitworth for this section of the plant. Special arrangements have been made whereby as much as possible of the plant supplied by this firm will be obtained in England. The Department was somewhat hesitant about awarding any section of this contract to foreign manufacturers, but, in view of the very favourable price submitted by Messrs. Armstrong, Whitworth, and Co., and in view also of the excellence of the plant and machinery submitted, had no option but to accept the lowest tender, although such tender involved the placing of a small proportion of the business outside Great Britain.

It is exceedingly gratifying to know that such satisfactory tenders were received for this work, and that it is to be carried out at a price almost exactly in line with the estimates prepared by the Department's Engineers. The whole scheme has been most favourably commented upon by the various experts who investigated it in connection with these contracts, and it is now assured that the Auckland District will be supplied for some years to come with power to meet all requirements.