



THE ELECTRIC HOME JOURNAL



We are happy to say that the institution of the Electric Home Journal has met with enthusiastic appreciation, both from traders and readers. From both quarters praise and appreciation have come, with the expression of opinion that the departure is a welcome one and will meet a felt want. It is our hope that it will do so. Traders on the one hand will be glad of a medium which will specifically cater for the distribution of news concerning the manifold devices made available by the adaptation of electricity for the lightening of domestic labour. Readers in their turn will also appreciate, we think, the opportunity of learning just how efficaciously and conveniently electricity can be used by them for reduction of domestic drudgery. As we pointed out last week, there is now no reason why a great deal of the labour which falls upon the too often inadequate shoulders of the women in the home, should not be considerably reduced by electricity. Particularly is this so with regard to the electric washing machine. In this field we predict that a notable expansion will take place in the near future, while the additional comforts of radiators, electric fires, water-heating equipment, sewing machine equipment, will also be largely utilised. Power authorities, we predict, will find a steadily increasing demand, and it will be our effort to accelerate the speed of progress.

SPECIAL interest should be taken by all home lovers in the collective effort now being made by associated electrical interests to establish a fund for the popularisation of the use of electricity. The scheme proposes that the sum of £20,000 should be found over a period of three years by three organised interests in the following proportions:—Public Works Department, £8000, the supply authorities, £8000, and the Electrical Federation, £4000. With this sum it is proposed to energetically encourage the public in the fuller use of electricity in the home. This proposal has come in for a good deal of public discussion, mainly of an approving nature. The principle that "it pays to advertise" is one

which has been fairly well established in general but there are sometimes those who, while subscribing to generalities, avoid particular applications. It is hoped that this will not be so in this case.

SOME of the comment that has been devoted to the scheme has taken the line of approving the business-like objectives of the bodies named to increase their own turnover and business profits. That seems a natural inference at first glance but it is not the argument which to our mind has most weight. Of the three bodies named, two are wholly concerned with the public good, namely the Public Works Department representative of the Government and the people as a whole, and the supply authorities who are concerned with the adequate discharge of their responsibilities on behalf of their ratepayers. One body only enters the field in a private profit-earning capacity, namely the Electrical Federation but its members know full well that they profit only by service. Behind the direct interests of these three bodies we see a larger interest which wholly commands our support. This is the interest of the general public.

IN this publicity effort to popularise electricity the body that stands to gain most is simply the general public. It will benefit in two ways. First of all the general public is in essence the owner of electricity in New Zealand. As we pointed out last week, the government of the Dominion has reserved as a national asset the water resources of the Dominion for power development purposes. Nearly nine millions of money has been directly invested by the Government on behalf of the public in major development schemes. Supply authorities drawing power directly from these publicly-owned plants have invested a further twelve millions in reticulating their territory to convey power to the people. Other supply authorities, to provide their constituents with the boon of electricity, have found a further six millions for the same purpose. All of these authorities—these power boards, councils, etc.—are dealing with the money of the people. It is thus the money of the

public—to the tune of approximately £26,000,000—which is at stake. It is therefore the public which stands to benefit in the first instance by measures which add to the demand for power and so protect the assets built up by public money. A sound commercial business protects itself by advertising its product, by encouraging that demand which will increase its output, maintain and expand its turnover and ensure its continued earning power. Behind this advertising effort the general public, as owners of the main electrical power plants and resources of the Dominion, should put its whole weight. The supply authorities are charged with the duty of protecting their public investments and no sounder course can be taken than to ensure that the demand for the output of electricity shall be developed to its maximum.

BUT there is another way in which the public stands to benefit. It is the consumer as well as the owner. As the owner, it stands to lose its capital investment if earnings are insufficient. As the consumer, it stands to pay high individual power and lighting rates, if consumption is not popularised. The veriest tyro in modern business knows that low individual prices for any commodity depend upon the extent of the demand; that the more consumers over whom essential overhead costs can be spread, the lower the price to all. Particularly is this the case in the generation of electricity. The cost of operating a power-house is substantially the same whether it is running at half or peak load. The ideal is peak load the clock round. That being impossible in a practical world, the next best is an even maximum for the longest possible period. And that boils down into the fullest possible use of electricity in the home and in the factory. Which means popularising the use of power; harnessing power and light to every possible purpose. And that being done means lower rates for all consumers. Public opinion, therefore, will, in our opinion, establish itself solidly at the back of the projected combined advertising scheme. It means much to the country, collectively and individually.