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Power News

(Continued from page 132)

unless some existing power plant group of plants, will drop present to take on the RDB plan—a solution outside the realm of economic or political practicality.

The wind-tunnel construction program, a part of so-called Unitary Plan, was worked out in 1945 by National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, cooperation with armed forces and aircraft manufacturing industry. Little has been done since, though foreign countries, including Russia, are known to be plunging ahead with super-sonic research.

UNITARY-PLAN PROGRAMS

Details of Unitary Plan still guarded, but its general outlines are revealed in various official documents, including the recent Air Policy Commission (Finletter) Report. According to this account, the plan includes three separate research programs, each calling for supersonic wind-tunnel construction. These programs provide for (1) 16 "small tunnels" to be built at "universities and other educational institutions" throughout the country (2) new national supersonic research center to be operated by NACA, with "number of supersonic wind tunnels somewhat larger than those already in existence" and (3) another new center, under the U. S. Air Forces, which will require, among other things, a 40-ft square wind tunnel, costing an estimated \$140,000,000 and consuming 500,000 hp of energy.

Though it has found sufficient power for none of these programs, RDB, which is charged with supply problems of Unitary Plan, is most concerned over the last two. Both call for tunnels larger than any now in existence.

What this means in the way of electric power is further outlined by operating experience at the largest existing supersonic wind tunnel, in NACA's Aircraft Propulsion Research Laboratory in Cleveland. This facility—mere 6 x 8-ft passage—requires 100,000 hp for operation. NACA has often complained of inability to obtain power in such proportions except at sporadic intervals.

Unitary Planners have concluded that the electric utility companies need every piece of new equipment they can lay hands on for the next several years to meet their own expanding power demands. For this reason Unitary has abandoned hope of getting help from

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