

Electric Lines

Serve 12,000 Farm Families

REA Grants May Double Total in Illinois With- in Year.

WASHINGTON (Special)—More than 12,000 Illinois farm families, many of them in the Champaign-Urbana area, are having electricity brought to their homes through allotments by the Rural Electrification administration, that agency announced today.

Allotments now pending but not yet approved probably will double that number before the end of the year, officials said.

They pointed out that assuming the average farm household to house four persons—a low estimate—REA already has provided for electricity in the homes of about 50,000 rural residents of Illinois, and that allotments out of funds now on hand probably will bring the number to around 100,000:

3,912 Miles

The allotments have been in the form of long-term loans, mostly to cooperative power associations in the state, for the erection of rural power lines. The allotments already approved total \$4,300,000 and call for the construction of 3,912 miles of rural power lines.

The REA was first established to provide government aid in extending rural electric lines in areas where the power companies were unable or unwilling to do so.

From the requests for funds which have poured in upon the agency, the program has been very successful. One reason for this, officials say, is that through experiment, they have been able to cut considerably the cost of erecting rural power lines.

Cost \$1,000-\$1,500 a Mile

Formerly, the cost was about \$2,000 a mile. Through improved technique the lines under the federal grants are now being constructed for around \$1,000 to \$1,500 per mile, officials said.

The largest allotment yet made in Illinois was for \$945,000 for constructing 624 miles of line in Pike, Adams, Scott, Morgan, Calhoun and Greene counties. This fund included \$217,000 for construction of a generating plant.

As a general rule, the rural power groups get their power from local utilities, but where they are unable to get their power from such organizations at a "reasonable" rate, loans also are made for generating plants.