

RATIONING OF MOTOR-SPIRITS AND POWER KEROSENE.

The issuance of oil-fuel licenses and petrol coupons in terms of the Oil Fuel Emergency Regulations 1939 was continued during the year by Sub-district Oil Fuel Controllers (Postmasters). Most consumers of motor-spirits are now cognizant of the need for conserving supplies for essential purposes.

The number of applications for increased licenses was lower than in the previous year, when the gallonages being made available to users were continuously under review.

Apart from issuing licenses and coupons, officers visit pumpholders' stations from time to time to ascertain whether the provisions of the regulations are being complied with. Records are kept at Sub-district Controllers' offices of the quantities of motor-spirits and power kerosene delivered monthly to each pumpholder by the oil companies, and action is taken to ensure that all supplies are satisfactorily accounted for to holders of either oil fuel licenses or petrol coupons.

The Oil Fuel Regulations are administered by the Transport Department, and more detailed information of the rationing scheme will be found in the annual report of that Department.

IMPRESSMENT OF MOTOR-VEHICLES FOR THE ARMED SERVICES.

In terms of the Motor-vehicles Impressment Emergency Regulations a considerable number of trucks, cars, and motor-cycles were impressed on behalf of the armed Services. The Director-General of the Post and Telegraph Department, in his capacity as Chief Impressment Officer, arranged for the serving of warrants of impressment on owners of vehicles selected by the Army Vehicle Committee.

When delivering vehicles at the collecting centres the owners handed over the signed change-of-ownership forms, the relative certificates of registrations, and a declaration setting out fully the details of the vehicles. The impressment forms were subsequently forwarded to a Valuation Committee charged with the duty of assessing the values of all vehicles impressed. On being notified of the assessments, the Chief Impressment Officer despatched valuation notices to the vehicle-owners. In the case of unencumbered vehicles, cheques for the full amount of the official valuation were forwarded with the valuation notices. The cheques for encumbered vehicles were not despatched until agreement had been reached as to the amounts to be paid to each party concerned.

TELEGRAPH AND TOLL SERVICES.

TELEGRAPH TRAFFIC.

The volume of telegraph business, in comparison with that for the previous year, declined slightly. The number of telegrams decreased by 5·1 per cent. (285,749 messages) and the revenue by 0·76 per cent. (£2,707).

FREE CABLEGRAMS TO AND FROM CHILDREN EVACUATED FROM GREAT BRITAIN.

To enable children evacuated from Great Britain to New Zealand under Government auspices to keep in touch with their parents by telegraph, a free cablegram service was introduced in October. One telegram a month is permitted, and the children have the choice of a large number of prearranged texts. The parents are afforded similar facilities for communicating with their children.

This free service, which applies in all Empire countries to which children have been evacuated, is the outcome of negotiations initiated by Cable and Wireless, Ltd., and represents a substantial concession on the part of the company.

CONCESSION-RATE TELEGRAMS TO AND FROM MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES IN NEW ZEALAND.

As from the 22nd July, a reduction was made in the charges for inland telegrams exchanged between members of the armed forces in New Zealand and their friends and relatives in the Dominion. The rate for such telegrams on week-days is 1d. a word, with a minimum of 6d., no charge being made for the addresses. A corresponding reduction has been made in the charges on Sundays and holidays.

TELEGRAMS TO NEW ZEALAND NAVAL PERSONNEL SERVING OVERSEAS.

In conjunction with the Admiralty and the New Zealand Naval Board, arrangements have been made for telegrams on urgent private business to be sent from next-of-kin in New Zealand to New Zealand personnel serving in His Majesty's ships overseas at a rate similar to that adopted for cablegrams to members of other branches of the fighting forces beyond the Dominion. Owing to the congestion on naval communication channels and to the fact that these channels must at all times be available for official purposes, the service is restricted to one message a month from each person. Negotiations are nearing completion for the introduction of a similar service in respect of messages of an urgent nature from naval personnel overseas to their next-of-kin in New Zealand.

CURTAILMENT OF TELEGRAPH SERVICES.

Owing to the drain upon the staff for war purposes and to the need for conserving the man-power available, it was found expedient to curtail the telegraph services to some extent. The observance of a telegraph attendance of from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. at certain offices has been abolished, while at other offices the telegraph hours of attendance commence at 8.30 a.m. instead of 8 a.m. In addition, only telegrams paid for at "urgent" rates are delivered after 6 p.m.

DECORATIVE TELEGRAM STATIONERY.

With a view to conserving paper-supplies the Department has suspended for the duration of the war the provision of decorative stationery for telegrams of a "greetings" and "congratulatory" nature. As a result, the special cheap-rate service which over the last few years proved so popular with the public during the Christmas and New Year festive period was not available in December and January last.