

## LOCAL-AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATION

Local-body licensing authorities under the Explosive and Dangerous Goods Amendment Act, 1920, number 163. This is the same figure as in the past few years, there having been no change in this direction.

## AMENDMENT OF LEGISLATION

Substantial progress has been made towards the completion of the proposed new regulations to replace the Dangerous Goods Regulations 1928. The regulations have now been printed in draft form and are shortly to be circulated to trade interests concerned. During the year two minor amendments were made to legislation. These comprise the insertion of a section in the Explosive and Dangerous Goods Act, 1908, giving power to issue certificates of competency in the use of explosives to specialized classes of user, and an alteration to the Explosive and Dangerous Goods Amendment Act, 1920, bringing all fuel oil within the definition of dangerous goods.

## INDUSTRIAL EFFICIENCY ACT

Reference was made in the last annual report to negotiations with the Bureau of Industry for the adoption of a simplified procedure in handling and routing applications and annual returns. As an outcome of this a satisfactory arrangement has now been reached whereby applications within the areas administered by local-body licensing authorities under the Act are now sent direct to the Bureau of Industry without having to pass through this office as was previously the case. This arrangement not only assists to speed up the handling of such applications, but also relieves this office of a burdensome task.

## CINEMATOGRAPH THEATRES

During the year the parliamentary committee set up to inquire into the operations of the motion-picture industry completed its work and published its report. The report contains recommendations which, if put into effect, will have far-reaching consequences, particularly in so far as the licensing of theatres is concerned. Action has already been taken to implement a recommendation of the Committee that the aggregation of theatres by chain interests should be controlled. To this end, amending regulations known as the Cinematograph Films (Issue of Exhibitors' Licences) Regulations 1937, Amendment No. 2, were enacted in September. These regulations define in some detail what constitutes "control" of a theatre, and go on to give the licensing officer power to refuse to transfer a licence to or issue an additional licence to any person, company, &c., which has a control of 10 or more theatres. Provision is also made to require an applicant for transfer of an exhibitor's licence to obtain the precedent consent of the licensing officer. Whilst the powers conferred by these regulations are extremely wide they are permissive in form.

Many problems of considerable perplexity still arise in connection with applications for licences to exhibit 16 mm. commercial entertainment film. In the absence of specific legislation there is no option but to apply the existing regulations, and confusing situations thus frequently arise. The determination as to whether an application is or is not one for commercial exhibition becomes in practice a matter of no little difficulty, and the position is not made easier in that certain classes of applicant do not apparently scruple to endeavour to cloak what is in fact the commercial exhibition of ordinary entertainment films under the guise of community activities, film clubs, &c. These difficulties will persist until regulations are brought down clearly defining the powers of the licensing authority to the screening of 16 mm. films.