

**Local-authority administration :** During the year one licensing authority only undertook the administration of the Explosive and Dangerous Goods Amendment Act, 1920—viz., the Kaikoura County Council. Inspection visits to all licensing-authority districts have been made by departmental officers, and the premises of licensees visited in company with the local-authority inspectors.

**Departmental administration :** The Department administers the Act in districts other than those controlled by licensing authorities. 1,666 licenses were issued, as compared with 1,515 for the previous year. Inspection visits to most of the licensed premises were made.

**Accidents :** Four accidents involving loss of life occurred with dangerous goods. In one case a woman was dry-cleaning clothes with petrol in a washhouse and after completing this work threw the rag she was using into the copper-fire, when the flame flashed back to petrol spilled during the cleaning operations and she was so badly burned that she died. The second fatality was caused by the use of a tin of methylated spirit for lighting a fire. The gas in the tin ignited from the fire and the tin burst, scattering burning spirit over the woman concerned. The third fatality was caused by a woman lighting a match in a shed in which a two-gallon can of petrol had been left with the screw-cap off. The petrol vapour which had escaped from the can was ignited, and the woman died from the burns received. The other fatal accident was caused by a workman engaged on car-repair work in an inspection-pit lighting a cigar-lighter, when petrol spilled in the pit ignited.

In addition to the above, there were two accidents reported involving serious burns to persons engaged in home dry-cleaning, owing to the ignition of petrol-vapour at fires in the vicinity. Two accidents also involving bad burns were caused through bringing, in one case, a lighted match and, in the other, an acetylene-lamp close to the petrol-tank of a motor-vehicle which was being filled with petrol.

As usual, a number of accidents were due to carelessness in filling motor-vehicle tanks from petrol-pumps, but in only one case did the fire-extinguishers required by the regulations to be kept at the pump fail to deal with the outbreak. In this case the fire, which was caused by an acetylene-lamp on a motor-cycle, involved the full contents of the cycle petrol-tank and also of the visible bowl (5 gallons) on the petrol-pump. Two pumps were destroyed and considerable damage was done to the service station, which was fortunately of the open type. Several of the accidents referred to involved more or less serious injuries to the persons concerned, but in no case did they cause loss of life.

At Christchurch, on the 1st August, 1929, a fire occurred in the wholesale cased-petrol store of Messrs. D. H. Brown and Sons, Ltd. The building was at the time heavily overstored, the cases being stacked right up into the roof over the whole floor area. The fire was started by an incendiary, and was particularly interesting from the fact that water was used in large quantities and about half the contents of the store (nearly 200,000 gallons) was salvaged after the fire. The cases were so tightly packed that the air-access to the cases was limited to the top, and after the fire had been burning for several hours the overlying burned-out debris, dampened down by water, choked the fire, and it was finally extinguished after about two days. During the progress of the fire a conference of the Fire Brigade Superintendents from the principal city brigades was held in Christchurch to discuss methods of handling petrol-fires, and also the construction and situation of these stores. (See note above regarding legislation.)

**Prosecutions :** Two prosecutions were taken by departmental officers. Both cases were taken for publicity purposes, and small fines only were inflicted, but the dangerous goods which were the subject of the prosecutions were forfeited by the Court. In one case the forfeiture included all petrol tanks and pumps erected in a service station.

**Cinematograph Films.—Legislation :** The regulations under the Cinematograph Films Act, 1928—Cinematograph Films (Storage, Exhibition, and Renting) Regulations, 1929—which replace the regulations under the Explosive and Dangerous Goods Amendment Act, 1920, were gazetted during the year and are now in operation. The regulations are similar to those previously in force, but have been brought into line with similar controlling regulations in Great Britain.

**Administration :** 639 premises were licensed for the screening of film, as compared with 628 last year. The introduction of the sound picture has necessitated the enlargement of the projection-room at most of the theatres where the necessary equipment has been installed. Advantage has been taken of the opportunity to have the rooms brought up to standard. When the controlling regulations were first issued, in 1925, there were many theatres which had been converted for picture purposes and where the projection-room opened into the auditorium or otherwise did not comply with the regulations, but were of reasonably satisfactory construction. The Department licensed the premises, but advised the licensee that alterations would have to be made at a later date. The work can now be carried out, in conjunction with the installation of sound equipment, with little or no additional expense to the exhibitor concerned.

**Accidents :** Eight fires occurred during the projection of films, a reduction of three as compared with last year. In two cases the fire involved more than one spool of film, but in no case was the building damaged by the fire, and in every case the safety equipment functioned satisfactorily. Reports of inspections made denote a considerable improvement in the installation and care of safety devices in projection-rooms, and a reduction in the number of fires and the quantity of film involved is evidence thereof.

#### CONCLUSION.

It is a pleasure to again express appreciation of the excellent services rendered by the controlling officers and their staffs. The willing co-operation of other Departments of State has been of valuable assistance.

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