

*Dangerous Goods.*—Local authority administration : During the year four new licensing authorities undertook the administration of the Explosive and Dangerous Goods Amendment Act, 1920, viz. : Tahunanui and Kaikohe Town Boards, Awatere and Inangahua County Councils. Inspection work in connection with licensing authorities has been carried out as in the past years.

Departmental administration : Regular inspections of districts directly under departmental control have been maintained as heretofore ; 1,922 licenses were issued as compared with 1,666 for the previous year.

*Accidents.*—No accidents involving loss of life were reported during the year, but in several cases severe injuries were sustained by persons in fires which occurred through carelessness in the handling of dangerous goods. A man was having the tank of his lorry filled at a service station in Dunedin when he struck a match to see how full the tank was. In the resulting fire both man and girl attendant received burns, the girl being taken to hospital. The man was prosecuted by the police and a fine was imposed. Several accidents have occurred in the use of benzine for home dry-cleaning, injuries to the persons concerned being more or less serious in each case. Failure to observe the precautions laid down in the regulations accounted for a number of fires which occurred during the refuelling of tanks or cars at service stations. Lighted matches, lighted acetylene lamps on motor-cycles, and leaving the engine running were the main causes of ignition. Except in two instances, the fires were extinguished with the equipment which the regulations require to be kept in the vicinity of the pumps.

*Hawke's Bay Earthquake.*—After the recent Hawke's Bay earthquake a careful inspection was made of all dangerous-goods depots in the area. The results disclosed were extremely satisfactory. The large case-stores had suffered like other brick buildings and most of them were either destroyed or rendered unfit for use. In no case were the contents affected. At Napier a very fierce fire raged on the opposite side of the road, but the brick walls of the petrol stores, although damaged, offered sufficient resistance to the heat to protect the contents. The above-ground petrol-tanks at Napier and Hastings were undamaged, as also were the pipe-line connections. The reinforced concrete compound wall round the tanks at Napier, which was built on a shingle-bed, was practically undamaged, only hair cracks being found after the quake. Petrol-pump installations also came through very satisfactorily. In two cases the concrete pit in which the tanks are placed were tilted by the earthquake and the tanks had to be reinstalled ; but in no other case was serious damage done. The petrol-pumps were thrown down or tilted in many cases, but the connections were not broken, and in no instance was the petrol in the tank affected, even though the building overhead was destroyed by fire following the earthquake. It is a remarkable fact that petrol was about the only commodity not affected by either earthquake or fire.

*Cinematograph Films.*—Administration : Under the Cinematograph Films Act, 1928, licenses are now issued to the actual exhibitors, and not, as was often the case under the old Dangerous Goods (Cinematograph Films) Regulations, 1925, to the theatre or hall owner. Circuit exhibitors may obtain an itinerant exhibitor's license covering as many as ten premises. The number of licenses issued does not therefore indicate the number of licensed premises. During the year licenses were issued as follows : Exhibitors, 446 ; circuit exhibitors, 51 ; renters, 19 ; storage, 6.

Legislation : During the year it was found necessary to introduce legislation further defining the rights of rejection of films contracted for which were contained in the Cinematograph Films Act Regulations were also issued prescribing additional terms for renters' licenses.

Accidents : Ten fires occurred during the projection of film as against eight for the previous year. In only one instance was more than one spool of film involved, the flames from the spool which first ignited spreading to the second machine which was threaded up ready for the change-over. Experiments were subsequently made to determine how the fire entered the spool magazines and why the film in the second machine became involved in the fire. These experiments demonstrated that the design of the fire-traps on this particular type of machine was faulty, and also that the gauzes with which the spool-magazines were equipped permitted the discharge of flames from the burning spool, thus firing the contents of the spool-magazine on the second machine. Instructions have been issued to the agents to have these defects remedied.

#### CONCLUSION.

In view of my retirement from the Public Service as from the 30th June next, I desire to avail myself of this opportunity to express to the present and past Governments my deep appreciation of the courtesy and consideration accorded to me during my official career.

To all the officers of the Department I wish to convey my sincere appreciation of their unfailing loyalty and of the assistance extended to me at all times. I also wish to thank those officers of other Departments with whom I have been associated for their co-operation and material help.

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