

difficulties without forcing or even permitting a major trade recession. Excessive fire loss is a national wastage which must of necessity depreciate the economic position of any country. Our present rate of loss is undoubtedly excessive, and if not checked will become a factor seriously affecting our economy. The carelessness of the rank-and-file employee in trade and industry is the cause of most of the rank-and-file fires, as well as of the conflagrations which boost the fire-loss returns. If they are not to learn the hard way, some effort must be made to bring home to both employer and employee the seriousness of the present position. The Fire Services Bill now before Parliament requires the Fire Service Council to encourage, supervise, and carry out fire-prevention activities. The facts set out above indicate that this should not be one of its less important functions.

### THE LOSS OF LIFE IN FIRES

The number of deaths resulting from fires during the year under review was seven—five in residence fires and two in apartment houses.

### LARGE FIRES

The following table gives details of the fires occurring in fire districts during the year where the loss exceeded £5,000.

*Table III—Fires with Loss Exceeding £5,000*

| Fire District.  | Day and Date.         | Time.      | Occupation of Premises in Which Fire Occurred.     | Cause of Fire.                                                            | Loss.    |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Auckland ..     | Saturday, 15/1/49 ..  | 1.37 a.m.  | Educational Centre ..                              | Unknown ..                                                                | £ 25,801 |
| " ..            | Friday, 21/1/49 ..    | 2.34 a.m.  | Brick and tile store and drying-shed ..            | " ..                                                                      | 19,200   |
| " ..            | Sunday, 20/2/49 ..    | 11.45 a.m. | Apartment house ..                                 | " ..                                                                      | 8,000    |
| Christchurch .. | Thursday, 24/2/49 ..  | 6.31 p.m.  | Cabinetmaking-factory ..                           | " ..                                                                      | 16,983   |
| Dunedin ..      | Monday, 14/3/49 ..    | 10.33 a.m. | Rope and twine manufacturers' bulk store ..        | " ..                                                                      | 34,233   |
| " ..            | Wednesday, 6/10/48 .. | 2.40 a.m.  | Clothing factory, restaurant, and shops ..         | Burning embers from heating furnace ..                                    | 8,986    |
| " ..            | Friday, 12/11/48 ..   | 1.00 a.m.  | Theatre, factory, offices, and wool-store ..       | Unknown ..                                                                | 14,545   |
| Feilding ..     | Wednesday, 12/5/48 .. | 2.25 a.m.  | Flourmill and grain and fertilizer store ..        | " ..                                                                      | 8,015    |
| Greymouth ..    | Saturday, 26/6/48 ..  | 1.59 a.m.  | Brewery bottle-store ..                            | " ..                                                                      | 8,450    |
| Lower Hutt ..   | Monday, 24/5/48 ..    | 11.22 p.m. | Woollen-felt mill ..                               | Suspected spark from wool-teasing machine ..                              | 47,611   |
| Nelson ..       | Monday, 7/6/48 ..     | 12.30 a.m. | Tobacco-factory ..                                 | Overheating of electric blower ..                                         | 5,435    |
| Timaru ..       | Monday, 2/8/48 ..     | 3.33 a.m.  | Engineers' merchants and wine and spirits store .. | Unknown ..                                                                | 9,520    |
| Wellington ..   | Saturday, 16/10/48 .. | 1.04 a.m.  | Tobacco-factory and clothing-factory ..            | Not established—possibly radiation from gas-heater set on wooden floor .. | 20,872   |
| " ..            | Saturday, 30/10/48 .. | 10.08 p.m. | Wool-store ..                                      | Unknown ..                                                                | 87,450   |
|                 |                       |            |                                                    |                                                                           | £315,101 |

### NEW LEGISLATION

A further redraft of the Fire Services Bill was made during the year after consideration by the Government of the report of the Royal Commission on the Ballantyne fire at Christchurch. The recommendation of the Commission that the Fire Service should be