

REGISTRAR-GENERAL'S OFFICE.

Births.—The total birth registrations were 28,756, a slight decrease on the previous year's figures. Included in this number are correcting and legitimation entries, registrations under section 27 (after adoption), and under section 24 (special provision for unregistered births). Four hundred and twenty-one adoptions were recorded, and 349 legitimations, necessitating in every case a new birth registration. There were also 107 registrations under section 24, involving considerable work in getting the necessary corroborative evidence for applicants. Maori birth registrations totalled 1,890.

Deaths.—There were 11,882 death registrations (including correcting-entries). Maori death registrations numbered 1,029.

Marriages.—10,745 marriage notices were received by Registrars on which certificates authorizing marriage were issued, and 10,648 marriages were solemnized. Of this number 2,136 (or about 20 per cent.) were solemnized by Registrars of Marriages. There were 501 dissolutions of marriage recorded, and 266 marriages of Maoris solemnized under the provisions of the Native Land Act.

Officiating Ministers.—On the 31st December last there were 1,960 names on the list of officiating ministers authorized to solemnize marriage, of the following religious denominations: Church of England, 495; Presbyterian Church, 410; Roman Catholic Church, 312; Methodist Church, 268; Congregational Independents, 34; Baptists, 71; Church of Christ, 33; Salvation Army, 115; Ratana Church, 80; Ringatu Church, 33; other religious bodies, 109.

Dentists.—During the year thirty-six dentists were registered, and nine names removed on account of death. Of those registered the qualifications were—Bachelor of Dental Surgery, University of New Zealand, 11; and Certificates of Proficiency in Dental Surgery, University of New Zealand, 14. Ten were registered under the special provisions of section 2 of the Dentists Amendment Act, 1926, and one under section 15 (2) of the Dentists Act, 1908.

Searches and Certificates.—The total number of searches made and certificates issued in the Head Office amounted to 30,692, made up as follows: For Pensions Department, 5,340; for National Provident Fund, 2,538; for Labour Department, 1,638; for Education Department, 1,006; other searches (for public), 11,012; certificates issued, 9,158. The District Offices in the main centres made over 2,000 searches for other Departments of the State.

OFFICE OF CHIEF INSPECTOR OF EXPLOSIVES.

Explosives Licenses.—Importation licenses for the following explosives were issued during the license year ending 30th June, 1928: Gelignite, 938,000 lb.; blasting-gelatine, 52,000 lb.; gelatine-dynamite, 27,500 lb.; A2 Monobel, 405,550 lb.; Samsonite No. 3, 90,850 lb.; blasting-powder, 114,750 lb.; sporting-powder, 15,740 lb.; pellets, 151,250 lb.; detonators, 1,650,000; E.D. fuses, 695,000; fireworks (packages), 2,046. Other licenses were issued during the same period as follows (corresponding figures for the previous year being given in parentheses): Conveyance, 272 (240); sale, 646 (651); storage, 388 (371).

Examination of Explosives.—As usual, all shipments of explosives were examined on arrival, and, with one exception, were found to be in good condition. Portion of a consignment of Samsonite No. 3, ex a.s. "Piri" was found to be damaged by sea-water, and a considerable quantity was overhauled. One hundred and forty-eight cases were found to be damaged, but as an opportunity offered to use the explosives in a quarry-tunnel shot within a short period after arrival permission was given to dispose of the explosives in this manner. An unusually large number of samples of cordite was submitted to the silvered-vessel test during the year for the Defence and Navy Departments.

Dangerous Goods.—Legislation: The new regulations under the Act regarding dangerous goods were put into force during the year, and, with the exception of one or two matters, are working satisfactorily. Representations have been made by the trade interests concerned regarding the use of light-steel drums for petrol, and also regarding the installation of petrol-pumps inside buildings. It is proposed to send an officer of the Department to Australia during the coming year to discuss these matters, and also the question of harbour by-laws regarding the landing of petroleum from tank steamers.

Local-authority administration: During the year three new licensing authorities undertook the administration of the Explosive and Dangerous Goods Amendment Act, 1920—Kumara Borough Council, Manukau County Council, and Putaruru Town Board. Manukau is the first county to be appointed a licensing authority, as it has not been the policy of the Department in the past to agree to the administration of the Act by County Councils, and the appointment of the Manukau County Council is more or less in the nature of an experiment. The county is comparatively small in area, more closely settled than most counties, and possesses the services of an officer who has had previous experience in local-authority administration. If the experiment is successful, then similar applications from other counties may be favourably considered. Inspection visits to all licensing-authority districts have been made by departmental officers during the year, and the premises of licensees have been visited in company with the local-authority officers.

Departmental administration: The Department administers the Act in districts other than those controlled by licensing authorities. During the year 1,515 licenses were issued, as compared with 1,397 during the previous year. Inspection visits to most of the licensed premises have been made during the year.

Accidents: Three accidents occurred during the year, involving loss of life, and the following details of these are of interest:—

(1) At Auckland on the 1st April, 1929, a brick store containing petrol and kerosene in 4-gallon tins and 45-gallon drums caught fire (arson is suspected but could not be proved) and burned out in about four days. During the course of the fire the explosion of the drums threw both drums and tins high into the air, the empty containers falling in some cases 50 ft. from the walls of the building. In some cases the drums of petrol "rocketed" on bursting, discharging the burning liquid behind them. One of these drums discharged portions of its contents over two firemen who were operating a hose