

about 30 ft. from the building. Both were badly burned, and one died of his injuries the following day. The fire was confined to the building in which it occurred, and it would appear that the isolation distances for dangerous-goods stores prescribed under the Act are effective for the protection of surrounding property.

(2) At Te Kuiti a man was using a blow-lamp to heat a soldering-iron, and a few feet away was a partly empty tin of methylated spirits. Some of this spirit had evidently been spilled, as the vapour ignited and carried the flame to the tin, and the mixture of gas and vapour in the latter exploded, spraying the liquid contents over the workman, who was so badly burned that he died.

(3) At Gisborne a youth was engaged in filling the tank of a motor-lorry inside a garage from a 45-gallon drum of petrol by gravity through a length of hose. He used a lighted acetylene-lamp to see whether the tank was full, and the vapour ignited. In response to his call, his father came into the garage and attempted to turn off the tap which controlled the flow of liquid. The fire got out of hand, and the garage and lorry were destroyed, the drum exploding and scattering burning petrol in all directions. The father was so badly burned that he died the following day. It should be noted that no license was held for the storage of petrol, and the delivery of petrol from a drum by gravity is contrary to the regulations.

In addition to the above, a number of accidents occurred in the filling of tanks of motor-vehicles, four of them involving more or less serious injury to persons. There are two causes of accidents which call for special note :—

(1) In two cases serious injury was caused by the operators adjusting the delivery-control handle of the petrol-pump so that delivery could take place without manual control. The practice was in each case to start delivery and go away to attend to other business. A miscalculation of the quantity of petrol which the tank would hold was followed by overflow on to the hot engine and subsequent ignition of the vapour and tank contents either from electrical connections or from incandescent material in the exhaust-pipe.

(2) A number of fires occurred during the filling of the tanks of motor-cycles with petrol. In almost every instance the ignition was caused by the acetylene-lamp being left alight during filling. The Dangerous Goods Regulations provide that no naked light shall be brought within 10 ft. of a vehicle while the petrol-tank is being filled, and the regulation specifically mentions lighted acetylene-lamps, as it is not generally recognized by the public that even a closed lamp is a "naked light" as far as protection against petrol-gas is concerned.

Three accidents in dry-cleaning in private houses were reported, and in each case painful burns were suffered by the persons concerned. All the accidents occurred through cleaning clothes in a bucket or other receptacle in a room in which there was a lighted stove. It seems very difficult to bring home to the general public the fact that petrol when exposed to the air gives off a large quantity of heavy inflammable gas, which will flow along the floor considerable distances, particularly in the direction of any gentle draught, such as is created by a stove, and that on ignition of this gas the fire will flash back to the source of gas. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that home dry-cleaning with petrol inside a building is a very dangerous practice.

The reports on accidents received during the year again emphasize the fact that the ordinary quart tetrachloride extinguisher is effective in dealing with most petrol fires. The regulation which requires a suitable extinguisher to be kept in the vicinity of every petrol-pump has been brought under the notice of both local-authority inspectors and licensees during the year, and will be strictly enforced in future.

Prosecutions: One prosecution only was taken during the year against a firm for storage of dangerous goods on unlicensed premises. The firm in question were fined £3 and costs and forfeiture of the petrol was ordered. This prosecution was taken mainly as a warning to importers of cased petrol that the regulations must be complied with.

*Cinematograph-film.*—Legislation: A considerable amount of time was spent during the year in connection with the preparation of the Cinematograph-films Act and regulations thereunder. The Act, which was passed last year, in addition to providing for the exhibition of a quota of British films, consolidates all previous legislation regarding film, and provides for the issue of renters' and exhibitors' licenses which will replace the licenses previously issued under the Dangerous Goods (Cinematograph-film) Regulations, 1925. These regulations are repealed as from the 30th September, 1929. Regulations under the new Act have been prepared, and will be circulated to the trade interests concerned before they are gazetted. The regulations follow generally the lines of those previously in force except for the modification necessary owing to the form of the new Act.

Administration: During the year 628 theatre licenses have been issued, as compared with 516 last year. The intensive inspection of the country theatres referred to in the last annual report has been continued, with the result that very few of even the backblocks halls now present a serious fire hazard from a construction point of view. Special attention has also been paid to the provision of fire-resisting shutters between the projection-room and the auditorium, as the experience obtained from recent film fires showed that this safeguard was absolutely essential.

Accidents: Eleven fires occurred in the projection of film during the year, but in no case did the fire involve a greater quantity of film than the single spool actually in the machine, and no structural damage was done to the building in any of the fires. An examination of the reports on these fires shows that in most cases where more than a few feet of film was involved the spool-magazines on the cinematograph-machine were not closed, as required by the regulations. The exhibitors have therefore been notified through their association that prosecutions will be taken in future if this regulation is not complied with.