

CHATELS TRANSFER ACT, 1924.

Section 57 of the ChateLS Transfer Act is administered by the Department, and during the year several applications for the inclusion of certain chattels to the Seventh Schedule to the Act were received. Once a chattel has been included in the Seventh Schedule there is no necessity to register the agreement, and the bailee still retains his protection under the Bankruptcy Act by reason of the fact that the agreement becomes a "customary hire-purchase agreement" and one which is recognized under the Bankruptcy Act without registration.

Before additions are made to the ChateLS Transfer Act, however, it is necessary for applicants to establish that a sufficiently notorious custom exists of disposing of the class of chattel by hire purchase as to warrant its inclusion in the Schedule.

During the year applications were received for the inclusion of electric vacuum cleaners, electric refrigerators, radio sets and equipment, bicycles, fire-proof safes, steel cabinets, vault doors, steel chests, and metal shelving.

An investigation into the trade customs existing in each of the four main centres was made in respect of each chattel, and the evidence disclosed that in the case of electric vacuum cleaners, electric refrigerators, radio sets and equipment, and bicycles a sufficiently notorious custom did exist which warranted the inclusion of these chattels in the Seventh Schedule. The appropriate Order in Council was consequently gazetted. In the case of the other chattels the trade custom did not indicate such justification, and the applications were declined.

At the present time further applications are before the Department for investigation, and the customary inquiries are being undertaken in the four main centres.

TRADING-COUPONS.

Under the provisions of the Trading-coupons Act, 1931, the redemption of trading-coupons otherwise than for cash is an illegal offence. The Department investigated the few cases which occurred last year in which breaches of the Act were alleged, but the circumstances did not render it necessary for a prosecution to be taken.

GAS REGULATIONS.

The Board of Trade (Gas) Regulations, administered by the Department, are designed to provide protection in respect of calorific value, purity, pressure, measurement, and price.

All the large undertakings, both municipal and private, have been brought within the scope of the regulations, and the number now covered by them is nineteen.

The work of the Gas-examiners and Inspector of Meters has been carried out efficiently during the year, and official relations with the gas companies and municipal undertakings have, without exception, continued to remain most satisfactory.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY IN NEW ZEALAND.

The Government has for a considerable time had very careful investigations made into the possibility of establishing a large-scale steelworks in this country, which works would represent a basic industry from which would flow many ancillary industries and at the same time provide increased avenues of employment.

Besides the investigations which have been carried out by Government officers, the Government also consulted H. A. Brassert and Co., Ltd., of London, Metallurgical and Consulting Engineers, and when all the data had been collected the prospects of successfully establishing the industry were distinctly encouraging.

As a result, during the second portion of the 1937 parliamentary session, power was taken in the Iron and Steel Industry Act to establish a State industry for the production of iron, steel, and steel products.

Attempts by private enterprise have been made in the past to raise the necessary finance to establish a works, and one enterprise was carried to the point where a blast furnace was erected and pig iron and iron pipes were produced. This enterprise failed, however, and is in the course of liquidation.

Although very careful investigations were made before the Government reached its decision to introduce the Bill into the House, the passing of the Act was only one stage further in the development of this basic industry. It was still necessary to carry out many surveys and tests, and to consult further on technical aspects with H. A. Brassert and Co., Ltd. This work is in hand at the present time, and no major commitment is being made until the results of these surveys are known.

NEW ZEALAND CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION.

The preliminary activities of last year have been continued with further preparation for the Centennial Exhibition, and the Department has been closely associated with the company formed to undertake the work. In view of the possibilities arising through the regulations of the convention relating to international exhibitions, it was decided to designate the exhibition "Empire."