

ELECTRICAL FIRES.

During the year there were 23 fires attributed to electrical causes and reported to the Department by the electrical supply authorities, as per list below.

The sources of this year's electrical fires included the following :

Electric irons	5
Radiators	2
Water-heaters boiling dry	1
Other electrical appliances	1
Defective installations	9
Defective radio installation	1
Contacts between overhead lines	3
Lightning	1
Totals	23

The following is a summary of causes of electrical fires for the seven-yearly period, 1933-39 :—

—	1933.	1934.	1935.	1936.	1937.	1938.	1939.	Totals.
Electric irons	4	12	8	8	7	3	5	47
Electric radiators	2	..	1	2	..	1	2	8
Other electrical appliances	2	3	6	4	6	6	1	28
Defective installations	4	11	7	12	3	9	9	55
Defective flexible cords	..	..	..	..	3	..	..	3
Defective radio installations	1	..	..	..	1	..	1	3
Bedding in contact with lamp	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1
Contact between distribution and service lines	..	..	..	..	1	..	3	4
Lightning	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	2
Soldering-iron	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1
Rats	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	2
Transformer-oil overheating	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
Water-heating appliances boiling dry	..	..	..	..	..	2	1	3
Totals	13	26	22	27	23	24	23	158
Number of consumers	322,997	334,593	342,334	355,973	371,027	388,580	407,316	..

REGISTRATION OF ELECTRICAL WIREMEN.

Eighteen full-day meetings of the Board were held during the year ended 31st March, 1939. This is the largest number of meetings in any year since the year the Act came into operation, when thirty-two meetings were held in order to register the wiremen who were operating at that time.

The shortage of wiremen which has been noticeable for the last two or three years still continues, and has been accentuated temporarily by work undertaken in connection with the Centennial Exhibition. To assist in relieving the position several wiremen from Great Britain, Australia, Canada, and Europe arrived during the year. One hundred and fifteen wiremen were granted full registration during the year, and ninety-seven were granted limited registration. To avoid the delay caused by waiting for a meeting of the Board in those cases where a person did not have the usual opportunity to make an application, the Act was amended in 1926 to provide that an authority to carry out electrical work could be issued on the approval of two members of the Board, pending the determination of the Board with respect to the application. Fifteen of these authorities were issued during the year to wiremen who had found work before the subsequent meeting of the Board.

To assist further in relieving the shortage it was decided to set up two comprehensive classes of electrical servicemen under limited registration, and this had the additional advantage of reducing the number of types of registration by grouping together several types. Both classes include—

- The replacement of fuse-links,
- The connection and replacement of flexible cords and the earthing of appliances,

and one class also includes—

- The disconnection and reconnection of appliances and the assembly and repair of appliances.

The classes of ratings in the Royal Navy to whom registration is granted were given further careful consideration, and these have been extended. Electrical artificers, leading torpedomen, and torpedo-gunners' mates have been eligible for some years for full registration after passing the wiremen's examination. Leading telegraphists are now eligible for limited registration for electrical work in