

Crown Solicitor, Dunedin, and Mr. J. B. Callan, Solicitor, Dunedin. The case for the defence was in the hands of the following counsel: Messrs. M. Myers, K.C., of Wellington; C. P. Skerrett, K.C., of Wellington; S. Solomon, K.C., of Dunedin; with their junior counsel; and Messrs. A. T. Donnelly, of Christchurch, and W. D. Campbell, of Timaru. His Honour Justice Sim gave a verdict for the defendants, with costs against the Crown.

As the Attorney-General has decided to appeal against the decision, comment will be withheld until the appeal is decided.

Several complaints were received during the year concerning the action of certain commercial and manufacturing organizations fixing prices and conditions of sale. The Department made careful inquiries in all cases, but in no instance was there evidence of an offence against the provisions of the Act.

#### GAS REGULATIONS, 1924.

Regulations under the provisions of the Board of Trade Act for the control of the sale and supply of gas, with special reference to the four main features—heating-value, purity, pressure, and price—were gazetted on the 25th August, 1924. The regulations were drafted after due consideration had been given to the enactments and regulations ruling in other parts of the British Empire. The regulations before adoption were fully discussed with representatives of the gas undertakings in the Dominion. It may be said without fear of contradiction that the regulations have met with the general approval of the industry and the general public. The first step in putting the regulations into force was to appoint a Chief Gas-examiner and Gas Referees. Accordingly the following gentlemen were appointed: Dr. J. Maclaurin, Messrs. R. Dougall and R. W. Holmes, all of Wellington. Dr. Maclaurin (Dominion Analyst) was also appointed to the position of Chief Gas-examiner.

The regulations came into force as from the 1st January last, and, as a preliminary step to their enforcement, the Minister of Industries and Commerce called upon the four gas undertakings at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin to declare the calorific value of the gas which was intended to be supplied as from the 1st April, 1925, and to state for his approval or otherwise the maximum price, or prices, at which it was proposed to sell each therm or each thousand cubic feet of gas of the declared calorific value. It was further indicated to these undertakings that the Department would inquire into the cost of production and distribution of gas. This inquiry is approaching completion, and it is expected that the necessary declaration as to calorific value and maximum prices will be published shortly after the presentation of this report.

The regulations as gazetted are included in an appendix to this report.

#### CONTROL OF THE TAILORING TRADE: SALE OF GARMENTS TO MEASURE.

Following conferences held between the Department of Labour, master tailors, clothing-manufacturers, and operative tailors, it was decided to initiate legislation relating to the manufacture of tailor-made and factory-made garments to measure. The proposed legislation made it an offence to sell or offer for sale as "hand-made" or "hand-tailored" any garment which was not completely made by hand; and also made it an offence to sell or offer for sale as "tailor-made," "tailored to measure," &c., any garment which did not contain a specified amount of hand-work. It was decided, however, that special legislation was not necessary, as the matter could be dealt with by means of regulations under the Board of Trade Act.

The regulations were accordingly drafted, approved, and gazetted, and were made operative as from the 1st March, 1925.

The officers of the Labour Department are co-operating with the Department of Industries and Commerce in seeing that the regulations are given effect to, and it is pleasing to report that no serious breaches have arisen during the few months in which the regulations have been in force. The regulations appear to have gone a long way towards settling a problem which has vexed the order-tailoring trade for many years past. At the same time the consumer has been protected against misrepresentation as to the class of article offered for sale.

Copies of the regulations, as gazetted, form an appendix to this report.

#### INVESTIGATIONS.

As has been stated in previous reports, the necessity for restrictive control over prices charged by traders in the Dominion is now much less than was the case a few years ago. Competition in many trades is keen, and fully adequate to ensure the charging of no more than reasonable prices.

For purposes of price-control, and for other reasons, detailed investigations of a number of industries and trades have been necessary during the past year. Costs of production and distribution, the effects of Customs tariff, overseas competition, &c., have been matters for consideration in many instances. Among many inquiries of a similar nature, investigations in relation to the following commodities or services may be mentioned: Bricks and tiles, chemical fertilizers, rennet, printing, bread, paper, and paper bags. Where necessary and possible, action was taken to correct an unsatisfactory position in relation to prices, supplies, or competition.

#### SUGAR.

Since the cessation of Government control of this industry on the 31st August, 1923, supplies and prices have been left entirely to the adjustment of private enterprise and competition. Consumers, however, continue to draw their main supplies of refined sugar from the refinery at Chelsea, Auckland,