

Appliances presenting such novel features are required under our regulations to be submitted for approval before use as being suitable for trade, and such as not to facilitate fraud. As a result of the information received from the countries where these appliances were made the Department has been assisted in detecting faults warranting rejection. It is sometimes found, for example, that an appliance is rejected in England or Canada and then sent to New Zealand in the hope that it will be accepted here. It is noteworthy that while sixteen new appliances were during the year submitted for approval, ten of them were rejected; applications respecting fourteen others are still under consideration.

The sale of petrol in tins containing 4-gallon quantities has now been almost discontinued, and petrol-measuring instruments (generally spoken of as petrol kerb-side or "bowser" pumps) have been installed throughout the Dominion. To the end of March last the number of measuring-pumps dealt with was approximately 2,200. In order to cope with the demand for pumps numerous types have during the past two and a half years been submitted for approval of the Department, and only after careful inspection and test has such approval been granted. At present there are some sixteen different types of pumps in use. The visible petrol-measure has been approved as being the most accurate and the more readily checked by the purchaser, and regulations have been made whereby no new "blind" pumps shall be installed. Existing types have been granted a period within which they shall be altered to conform in this respect, or else cease to be used for trade. The Department is now insisting on the fitting of satisfactory interlocking mechanism on these pumps whereby no liquid can be drained back to the tanks while delivery is being made to the purchasers, and no delivery-valves opened unless the adjustments are correct and maintained correct. Existing pumps will be gradually brought into line with this requirement. All adjustments, stops, &c., are sealed by the Department's Inspectors. All pumps are verified from time to time.

The new Weights and Measures Act passed in 1925, and which came into force on the 1st January, 1927, appears to be generally understood by scale manufacturers and traders, and the administration has so far proceeded smoothly.

As explained last year, the former Act merely enabled the Department to ensure that weighing and measuring appliances are correct and are of suitable construction, but made no provision to ensure that correct weight or measure of goods purchased is given. The new Act extends the law to cover this requirement, and for this purpose provides (*inter alia*)—

(1) That when goods are sold by weight or measure, whether wholesale or retail, the correct weight or measure shall be given (section 23). The Act also enables regulations to be made requiring the goods specified therein to be sold only in certain prescribed quantities—weight or measure (see item (3)).

(2) That all goods except those that may be exempted by regulation shall when sold by retail by weight or measure be sold by net weight or measure, and where made up in packages the net weight or measure shall be shown on the package (section 18). The goods exempted from this section comprise some forty-five articles which it has not been considered practicable to sell by net weight or measure—for example, fruit in bottles. Most of these have already been exempted for some years from similar provisions in the Sale of Food and Drugs Act (administered by the Department of Health), and also under the New South Wales Weights and Measures Act. As the Sale of Food and Drugs Act and the Weights and Measures Act overlap as regards the weight or measure of foods and drugs, it has been arranged that the question of correct weight and measure shall be dealt with in future by this Department, under the Weights and Measures Act.

(3) That the goods specified in regulations shall be sold only in the quantities (weight or measure) prescribed (section 39 (12)). This provision is designed to meet cases where it has become a practice to sell goods so slightly short of an ordinary weight—for example, 14 oz. or 15 oz. instead of 1 lb.—as to lead a customer to believe that a full pound was being given. It is fair to say that shopkeepers and other traders generally themselves disapprove of the practice, and many of them welcome the new provision as being a protection to the fair trader and to the public. The articles (principally foods) for which regulations have been made requiring the sale by prescribed or standard weight or measure are butter, tea, sugar, coffee, chicory and cocoa and cocoa-powder, chocolate-powder, treacle and golden syrup, honey (except in the comb), pepper, mustard, and milk; also black japan, including its substitutes; Brunswick black, including substitutes; candles, other than fancy candles; nails; paints; tobacco; turpentine; and varnish, including lacquers.

A period varying from the statutory minimum of six months to eighteen as from the date of the regulations has been allowed before the standard weight and measure provisions take effect. This was done in order to give dealers an opportunity to dispose of existing stocks; and also to enable manufacturers to make any necessary adjustments. As each class of goods is brought under the regulations, attention to the fact is being called in the newspapers and otherwise. It is proposed to add to the above lists, but before so doing opportunity will be given to those concerned to make any representations.

(4) It should be noted that, except in the special cases mentioned in item 3, the new provisions of the Act, as set out in items 1 and 2, do not apply where the goods are sold otherwise than by weight or measure. It is therefore not an offence to sell any such article by the piece, package, or number, such as a joint of meat or a packet of soap.

It might be pointed out that care in bringing the various classes of goods under section 39 (*r*) is needed, as the application of the provision might cause an increase in price greater than the increase in the quantity of the article given. The chief value to the public of the requirement lies, first, in preventing manufacturers and other traders from misleading customers as to the quantity; and, second, in ensuring that a package containing, say, 15 oz. of an article is not allowed to compete with another make containing a full pound.