

By section 5 (1) of the Finance Act, 1928 (first session, twenty-third Parliament), the provisions were further continued until the 1st August, 1929. It is still reported by the Inspectors in the four chief cities and in one or two other centres, however, that considerable hardship would be caused to tenants if the protection that has been given to them were withdrawn; in the other secondary towns there is now no shortage of houses, and therefore no further need of the Act, and the number of applications, as shown in the above table, also indicates that the need is diminishing generally.

The Act does not apply to houses first let after the 9th November, 1920.

FOOTWEAR REGULATION ACT.

There were 3,985 general inspections made throughout the Dominion under this Act, and stocks of footwear were carefully examined. There was one prosecution.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT.

During the year traders and others submitted for verification and stamping 274,777 weights, measures, and weighing and measuring instruments; these cover the verification of new appliances and also the periodical re-verification of appliances in use. Under test 260,070 proved to be accurate within the permissible amount of error, while 14,707 were rejected and required to be repaired or replaced. The total fees for testing and verifying the appliances amounted to £7,858 11s. 3d., an increase of £624 1s. 9d. over last year's total. Proceedings were taken against sixty persons—twenty-nine cases for using "unjust" (inaccurate) or unstamped appliances, whilst the remainder were for selling short-weight goods, including coal; seven of the cases were taken against bakers for selling bread underweight, in each of which a penalty was imposed; penalties totalled £94. The number of appliances submitted for verification and re-verification and stamping shows an increase of over 100 per cent. over last year's total, the figures being 132,141 during 1927-28, and 274,777 during 1928-29; increase, 142,636. The increase is mainly accounted for by the large number of milk-bottles submitted, and the adoption by oil companies of a system of delivering oil for motor-cars in quart bottles; these bottles are actually measures under the Act, as the quantity delivered is determined by a line on the neck of the bottle.

During the year forty-one appliances presenting novel features were submitted for approval in accordance with clause 5 of the regulations, as follows: Petrol-measuring instruments, 10; drum-filling measuring instruments, 7; weighing instruments, 18; liquid-measures, 5; flow-meter measuring instrument, 1. Of these 23 have been approved, 5 were rejected, whilst 13 are under consideration. A careful examination of each instrument is made, together with a test under working-conditions; in most cases it was found necessary to call for alterations before approval could be given. Sixteen of the eighteen weighing instruments submitted were of the self-indicating type; the use of this class of instrument is now almost universal, and, provided that the instrument is correctly adjusted and set up level on its base, it is reliable and serviceable, and is not only quick and efficient, but also enables the customer to readily check the purchases at the time of the sale; each instrument is provided with one or more spirit levels.

The net weight or measure provisions enacted in 1926 (under which, for the first time, the Act applied so as not only to ensure accurate weighing and measuring appliances, but also to require (1) correct weight or measure of goods sold to be given) are now well known and are generally well observed; these provisions also require (2) that all goods sold retail by weight or measure (other than certain excepted lines) shall be sold only by net weight or measure (the weight or measure of the package being excluded), and if such goods are contained in a package, then the net weight or measure shall be stated on the package; regular inspections have been made during the year throughout the Dominion: (3) certain goods, principally foods, are required by regulations under the Act to be sold only by certain prescribed or standard weights or measures—for example, 1 lb., and not 14 oz. or 15 oz. It is evident that both manufacturers and traders appreciate these provisions, as Inspectors have not found it necessary to take proceedings to enforce the Act in any case, in fact, it is stated that the requirements bring about uniformity and protect not only the customers, but also the honest traders.

PETROL-MEASURING INSTRUMENTS.

The expansion of the petrol and fuel-oil industry has added considerably to the work of Inspectors. Petrol and oil measuring instruments are now to be found in the most remote districts; as these instruments are subject to hard wear-and-tear, a constant watch is necessary in order to ensure that they deliver correct measure. As above mentioned, petrol-measuring instruments are carefully examined, and unless any such instrument is so designed and constructed as to withstand reasonably hard usage it is not permitted; the instrument must also be so constructed as not to facilitate fraud. Certain types of instruments recently introduced into the Dominion are fitted with automatically controlled discharge-valves, and have accelerated or pressure delivery. The regulations have not permitted the use of a tap or cock at the end of the hose, on account of the possible loss to the customer of the quantity retained in the hose; unless a tap or cock is fitted at the end of the hose, however, to allow the operator a rapid means of shutting off the petrol, there is a danger of petrol overflowing a motor-car tank, with consequent danger of fire or explosion. The safety factor is of first importance, and after communications with the British Board of Trade, which also had the matter under consideration, it was decided to permit the use of a tap or cock, provided it was of a form whereby the customers could readily see whether any petrol was retained in the hose.

NEW STANDARDS.

The Act provides that the imperial standard pound and the imperial standard yard shall be the source from which all weights and measures shall be derived; the gallon is legally determined by weight—viz., 10 standard pounds of distilled water. These imperial standards are very carefully