

painful burns. The remaining accidents were due to the ignition of chlorate-impregnated clothing or fibre by friction or open flame, and were of the type that has been fully dealt with in past reports.

During the year several caches of buried explosives were reported, and the Department undertook the removal and disposal of the explosives.

Dangerous Goods.

Local-authority Administration.—One new licensing authority, the Whangaroa County Council, was appointed during the year. The Cobden Town District having merged with the Greymouth Borough, the number of local authorities which are licensing authorities still stands at the same figure as last year—viz., 163. Inspection visits were made to most licensing-authority districts during the year.

Departmental Administration.—The usual annual inspections were made of districts directly under the control of the Department. Licenses issued totalled 2,049, as against 1,940 for the previous year.

Accidents.—Only one fatal accident involving the use of inflammable liquids was reported during the year. The details of this accident show that a boy was engaged in priming a blow-lamp with methylated spirits, when an explosion occurred, and he received injuries to which he subsequently succumbed. The exact cause of the ignition was not definitely ascertainable, witnesses called at the coronial inquiry being unable even to state definitely whether the blow-lamp was alight at the time of the accident. Four persons were injured in another accident also caused by the ignition of methylated spirits. In this instance a woman in order to relight a patent stove which was thought to have gone out, poured some methylated spirits from a bottle into the collar of the stove. Actually the stove was still alight and an ignition of the spirit occurred, the contents of the bottle being sprayed over all four people in the room at the time, with the result that all received burns of a more or less severe nature. An unusually large number of accidents associated with the use of lamps, stoves, &c., in which benzine or other inflammable spirits are used has been reported this year, and it is desired to issue a word of warning per medium of this report. An examination of the causes of accidents of this type shows that they are largely due, not to faulty construction of the apparatus, but to carelessness on the part of the users in exposing inflammable spirits near open lights or fires. When refilling or priming spirit stoves, lamps, &c., the utmost care should therefore be taken to ensure that no open lights or fires are allowed until these operations have been carried out and the container from which the spirit has been drawn securely closed and removed.

A number of accidents which can be classed as ignition of vapour of inflammable spirits by naked lights occurred during the year, one being worthy of further mention as exemplifying a hazard not generally enough recognized. The details are that an acetylene torch was being used to cut through a drum which had previously contained petrol, when an explosion occurred, the head of the drum being ripped off, and thrown some distance. The operator was fortunate enough to escape injury, but he had evidently not appreciated the fact that a container which has held petrol may be an even greater danger than one which is actually full. The fact is that the vapour of petrol being heavier than air may hang in the drum for a very long time, and, as the proportion necessary to form an explosive mixture with air is small (about $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to 6 per cent.), the likelihood of the formation of an explosive atmosphere inside the drum is greater than if liquid petrol were actually present, in which case the vapour-air mixture though inflammable would contain too great a proportion of petrol vapour to be explosive. Before an operation involving the use of a naked light is carried out on a container which has held petrol, the vapour should be completely removed by prolonged steaming out.

As in past years, there have been a number of accidents traceable to failure to observe the precautions laid down in the regulations. It is, however, pleasing to note that only one accident—and that not serious—is recorded as due to home dry-cleaning. It is hoped that warnings given in previous reports, coupled with publicity efforts in connection with fire-prevention, are having some effect in bringing home to people the desirability of eschewing this process.

CINEMATOGRAPH FILMS ACT.

Licenses.—The totals of various licenses issued during the license year ended 30th September, 1934, are as follows (corresponding figures for the previous year in parentheses): Exhibitors, 410 (435); circuit exhibitors, 35 (23); renters, 14 (17); storage, 14 (16); miscellaneous, 34.

Accidents.—Only three fires occurred during the projection of film—a decrease of two on last year's total. In two cases less than one spool of film was involved, but in the third instance the theatre was destroyed. This was not due to faulty construction of the projection-room, but to the action of the operator in throwing a spool of film which had ignited from some unascertained cause, out of the door of the projection-room into a cloak-room below, where the blazing film set fire to the walls. It was found impossible to check the blaze, and the hall was burnt to the ground. Before the fire had obtained too great a hold, the audience was asked to leave the building, and did so without panic. The action of the operator in this case was in direct contravention of specific instructions issued by the Department as to the steps to be taken in case of fire in the projection-room.

An accident in connection with film occurred on the premises occupied by one of the film exchanges, two men being severely burned. It appears that one of the attendants in the building and an employee of the film exchange took two tins of scrap film to the furnace-room for destruction. Some of the film was put in the furnace and the door closed. Almost immediately a minor explosion occurred, blowing open the door of the furnace, and flames leaping out ignited the remainder of the film in the tins. The furnace-room was a small one, the sole access being through a trap-door in the ceiling, and one man in escaping was burned, whilst the other, being unable to escape, huddled in a corner and was found afterwards in an unconscious condition. As a result of this accident the Department took up with the Film Exchanges' Association the question of the disposal of scrap film, and satisfactory arrangements have now been made.