

APPENDIX XIV.

STORAGE OF PETROL

In view of the new regulations issued by the one Secretary on July 31st 1907, and for the benefit of our clients who may not be versed on the subject, we are reproducing some of the principal points that must be observed. We are indebted to *The Autocar* from which, with the kind permission of the Editor, we are making the following extracts. The original article was written by Mr. Douglas Leechman, Barrister-at-Law.

A purveyor of petrol must have a license from the local authority even if he only wants to sell a little now and again and keeps the petrol principally for use in his own cars. A private owner may choose to apply for a license under special circumstances ; but as a rule, he will prefer to be free from the attentions of the local authority. What are the restrictions he must comply with under these circumstances?

Rules for the Owner who has no License.

First, there must be a proper storehouse. This term means any room, building, coachhouse, lean-to, or other place in which the petrol is kept. An open air place of storage is included, if due precautions are taken to prevent unauthorised persons having access to the spirit. As a rule it is not advisable to keep the petrol in such a place as a conservatory, as it should be carefully noticed that where the storehouse forms part of or is attached to another building, and the intervening partition or floor is of an unsubstantial or highly inflammable character, or even if it has an opening, *e.g.*, a door or window, in it, the storehouse will be deemed to include the whole building, which must not be used as a dwelling or as a place where persons assemble. This is a very important restriction, and it is emphasised by the regulations adding that the storehouse shall have a separate entrance from the open air, distinct from that of any dwelling or building in which persons assemble. Given such a storehouse, and it is thoroughly ventilated, sixty gallons of spirit may be kept in it, and no more. If one or more cars are in the same place, the petrol in their tanks must be counted in reckoning the maximum of sixty gallons. If the owner has

two or more storehouses, each fulfilling the requirements, he may keep any quantity up to the maximum in each ; but if two or more storehouses are within twenty feet of each other, such two or more shall count as one only, so far as concerns the quantity of spirit to be kept therein.

If any person keeps petrol in a storehouse which is within twenty feet of any other building (whether in his occupation or not), or of any timber stack or other inflammable goods not owned by him, he must give notice to the local authority, and must allow their officer to inspect the spirit at any reasonable time. The notice must be renewed in January of each year. This regulation does not apply to the petrol kept in the tank of the car.

Owner with or without a License.

If the private owner decides to proceed by license obtained from the local authority, under the Petroleum Act, 1871, he will not be subject to the foregoing regulations, as such, except as to the thorough ventilation of the storehouse. But, license or no license, he will be bound by the following regulations. The petrol must be kept, used, and conveyed in metal vessels calculated to withstand any ill-treatment short of gross negligence or extraordinary accident ; and the vessels must be so constructed and maintained that no leakage of either liquid or vapour can take place therefrom. Every such vessel, not forming part of a car, when used for keeping or conveying petrol, shall bear the words, " Petroleum spirit, highly inflammable," conspicuously (not merely "legibly," as in the 1903 regulations) and indelibly stamped or marked on it, or on a metallic or enamelled label attached to it.

The capacity of the vessels must not exceed two gallons each, unless, in the event of the license being obtained, the same prescribes a higher limitation.

All the petrol and all dangerous vapours derived therefrom must be removed as far as practicable from any such vessel before any repairs are done to it. The filling or replenishing of a vessel with petrol must not be carried on, nor must the contents of the vessel be exposed in the presence of fire or any artificial light liable to ignite vapour rising from the spirit. Nor must such fire or artificial light be brought dangerously near to any vessel containing petrol.

All due precautions must be taken to prevent accidents by fire and explosion, and to prevent unauthorised persons having access to the petrol, or to vessels which

do contain, have contained, or are intended some day to contain petrol. Further, every person managing or employed on, or in connection with, any light locomotive shall abstain, and shall prevent others, from committing any act tending to cause fire or explosion, and which is not reasonably necessary. This regulation and the first of the two new ones apply to persons who obtain licenses to keep petrol for sale, or partly for use and partly for sale. Otherwise such persons do not come under the regulations, but remain under the Petroleum Act, from which the regulations in most cases exempt the private owner.

The two new regulations are as follows:

- (14) In the storehouse or any place where a light locomotive is kept or is present, petroleum spirit shall not be used for the purpose of cleaning or lighting or as a solvent or for any purpose other than as a fuel for the engine of a light locomotive.

Provided that where due precaution is taken to prevent petroleum spirit from escaping into a sewer or drain, and provision made for disposing safely of any surplus petroleum spirit, and where no fire or naked light is present, quantities not exceeding one gill may be used for the cleaning of a light locomotive at a safe distance from any building, place of storage of inflammable goods, or much frequented highway, or for the repair of tyres, under suitable precautions.

This regulation shall apply to premises on which petroleum spirit is kept for the purpose of, or is being used on, light locomotives, whether such premises are licensed or not, unless the local authority see fit, in the case of licenses premises, to grant an exemption by a special form of license.

- (15) Petroleum shall not be allowed to escape into any inlet or drain connecting with a sewer.

A gill, it will be remembered, is a quarter of a pint. As all the regulations apply to any petroleum which gives off an inflammable vapour of less than 73° Fahr., as well as to petrol itself, it will be no defence to say that the liquid used for cleaning the car or removing patches from air tubes, or other purposes, was not really "petroleum spirit."

Owner with License.

From what has been said above as to storehouses, it will be evident that there is many a private owner whose garage does not comply with the requirements

of a place wherein petrol may be kept under the regulations. Not only is he then prohibited from storing sixty gallons - he must not store any at all without a license from the local authority. They may or may not see fit to grant a license. If they do grant one they may also grant requests to allow of petrol being stored in vessels of more than two gallons capacity each, and allow of more than sixty gallons being kept in one storehouse. But these extensions are more likely to be desired by, say, a motor omnibus company than by an ordinary private owner. The local authority means the court of the Lord Mayor and Alderman of the City of London, the London County Council, the Borough Council, or the District Council as the case may be. The fee for a license is 5s. The license will be subject to all the regulations referred to as applicable in the lastly preceding section, and to such others as the local authority may prescribe, provided they are not inconsistent therewith.

A breach of the regulations is punishable on Summary conviction by a fine of not exceeding £10 ; and persons storing petrol without a license where such is required are liable to a fine of not more than £20 a day.

