

RHODE ISLAND'S New State Licensing Law goes into effect immediately

Successfully culminating a decade of persistent effort by the electrical industry, licensing of electricians in Rhode Island became law when, with due ceremonies, the long-sought legislation was signed by Governor J. Howard McGrath at the State House in the presence of prominent leaders in the trade.

The formal signing took place in the executive chambers at noon on Wednesday, May 6th, and immediately afterward Governor McGrath presented the pen used to Harry Pierce, president of the Rhode Island Electrical Contractors' Association.

Others present during the ceremony were Carmine J. Longo, secretary of the contractors association; Thomas Kearney, business agent, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; Rep. James F. Burns, who sponsored the bill in the General Assembly; Peter Hicks, Providence electrical inspector; William O'Neil, electrical inspector for Pawtucket; William L. Kelman, member of the contractors licensing committee, and Senator Raymond McCabe, who helped steer the measure through the Senate.

The new law became operative immediately and after July 1, 1942, no person, firm or corporation will be permitted to "enter into, engage in, or work at the business of installing wires, conduits, apparatus, fixtures or other appliances for carrying or using electricity", either as a contractor or as a journeyman electrician, without having first obtained a license or certificate from the State Board of Examiners of Electricians.

Necessary Data Now Being Compiled

The machinery for registering firms and electricians already operating in the State is rapidly being prepared so that the Board of Examiners will be ready to proceed without delays as soon as appointed.

Persons, firms or corporations engaged in the electrical business for five years prior to the passage of the act will not be required to pass any examination, provided application is made to the board within a year of passage of the act, and proof of fitness to conduct an electrical business is provided.

● Joining Massachusetts by her enactment of a state licensing law for electricians, Rhode Island is now the second State in New England to adopt such a progressive regulatory and supervisory measure. For nearly a decade the Rhode Island industry has waged a continuous and consistent battle in the hope that it too could enjoy the protection that a state law makes possible. Its objective was accomplished on May 8. All persons in business 5 years automatically become certificate holders.

The Board of Examiners, appointed by the Governor, will comprise:

(1) A member of an electrical inspection department of any city or town with at least five years' experience as an electrical inspector, who will rep-

resent the public. Appointed for one year.

(2) An electrical contractor, who will represent the employer. Appointed for two years.

(3) A journeyman electrician, who will represent labor. Appointed for three years.

(4) A qualified employe of a utility company, who would represent the utility companies. Appointed for four years.

(5) The Superintendent of State Police, an ex-officio member.

Scale of Fees

The new law provides for three classes of licenses. Class A for contractors, costs \$25; Class B for electrical journeymen, costs \$5; Class C for firms and corporations for on premise work, costs \$1. All licenses are renewable annually.

The measure in its final form was redrafted to eliminate controversial issues and at the same time retain the principles of adequate examination and qualification.

"While none of the fundamental principles were sacrificed," said Sec-



Prominent figures in the electrical industry watch as Governor J. Howard McGrath signs the bill that makes examination of electricians in Rhode Island law. Senator Raymond McCabe is seated at the left of the Governor and Rep. James F. Burns at his right. Standing, left to right are: William O'Neil, Pawtucket electrical inspector; William L. Kelman, C. & K. Electric; Carmine J. Longo, secretary of the Rhode Island Electrical Contractors' Association; Harry Pierce, president of the association; Thomas Kearney, business agent, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; and Peter Hicks, Providence electrical inspector.

retary Longe, "Neither did we press for the inclusion of provisions which might have meant defeat of the bill, or at least more strenuous opposition. The law is a good law, well drawn to accomplish its primary purpose—the protection of the electrical industry and the public—and I think that everyone is satisfied."

President Pierce, who has served on licensing committees since the law was first proposed in Rhode Island, expressed his gratification for the untiring efforts of the contractors group and to all the other individuals and organizations that contributed to bringing about final enactment.

Association President Says "It Was a Long, Hard Fight"

"It was a long, hard fight, and the electrical industry and the public in general should be glad that it has been won," he said. "This legislation has long been needed. It is one of the most progressive steps the industry has taken in many years and I am glad to have been able to play a part in it."

The measure was passed in concurrence by the Senate in the dying hours of the session, the measure just beating the deadline of final adjournment by a couple of hours.

Although introduced fairly early in the session, the measure remained in the House judiciary committee until Rep. Burns, himself an electrical contractor, exercised his parliamentary sagacity to bring it to the floor for a favorable House vote.

Without a dissenting vote, and without debate, the measure went through the lower chamber and was sent to the Senate where in other years it had met with frigid reception and invariably was tucked into a committee pigeon-hole and allowed to die without even consideration.

Unwilling to witness further repetition of this process, Rep. Burns contacted Senator Charles T. Algren, who is himself in the building and development business, and prevailed upon him to report the measure. Concurrent action also was unopposed.

All Branches Were in Full Accord

All branches of the electrical industry were in full agreement on the bill, and the committee that pressed for action in the State House included among its members representatives of the contractors, the union, the utilities, and the Rhode Island Electrical League.

The new board will make necessary



Culminating a decade of struggle, the Rhode Island electricians licensing bill is now law, and Governor McGrath (left) presents the pen he used in signing the measure to President Harry Pierce of the Rhode Island Electrical Contractors' Association.

rules for the proper performance of its duties and will hold examinations in Providence twice a year and at other convenient places within the State at its discretion. Public notice will be given of all examinations.

"In the conduct of the examinations," reads the act, "they shall make uniform requirements for all cities and towns, which may be revised from time to time, as circumstances require. Said examinations shall be sufficiently frequent to give ample opportunity for all applicants to be thoroughly and carefully examined, may be written or in practical work, and may be supervised by one or more of the examiners, but no license shall be granted without the action of the examiners."

The board members will be paid \$10 a day for actual service attending meetings, provided, however, that compensation in any one year shall not exceed the sum of \$200 per member. The board will be allowed clerical help and a secretary.

All expenses would be paid out of fees, and the balance returned to the State treasury for general use.

Quarters for the new board will probably be in the State House or the adjoining State Office Building.

Approve Expenditure For Air Raid Sirens

The Scituate Defense Council's subcommittee on equipment has recommended purchase of 14 Federal sirens for air raid warnings. The committee after study recommended four two-horsepower units and 10 one-half horse units.

Based on studies learned in the large-scale Providence County blackout, the committee designed an air-raid alarm system that would cover

the town and eliminate "dead" sound spots.

James W. Carr, Westinghouse Electric Supply, Providence, sold the units.

Sirens also have been ordered by several other towns, including Bristol and several communities in South County.

Governor Names Examiners' Board

Rhode Island's first Board of Examiners of Electricians appointed by Governor J. H. McGrath, under the terms of the newly enacted State Licensing Law comprises:

Peter J. Hicks, veteran Providence electrical inspector, who will represent the public, appointed for one year; James F. Burns, Jr., who sponsored the bill in the Legislature, a Providence contractor who will represent the contractors, appointed for two years; Thomas Kearney, business agent, Local 99, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, who will represent the journeymen electricians, appointed for three years; William O'Neil, Blackstone Valley Gas & Electric Co., who will represent the utilities, appointed for four years. Superintendent of State Police Edward J. Kelly, ex-officio.

The members will serve without pay, although they will be allowed \$10.00 for actual attendance at each meeting, provided that it doesn't exceed \$200.00 a year.

The new Board will be charged with formulations, giving examinations, granting licenses, and enforcement of the provisions of the new law.

N. H. Utilities Suggest Users Read Own Meters

New Hampshire light and power companies recently proposed that the Public Utilities Service Commission change the rules to allow customers to read their own meters. About a dozen utility executives conferred with the commission on the plan, which they suggested as a means of conservation of manpower, automobile tires and gasoline. Needless to say that the suggestion and its resultant effect is being carefully weighed by utility heads everywhere.