

2. DEVELOPMENT OF MOTOR TRANSPORT.

A. Registrations of Motor-vehicles, by Types of Vehicle.—During the year ended 31st March, 1942, 2,777 motor-cars, 8,010 commercial vehicles, and 1,186 motor-cycles were registered. Of the commercial vehicles 3,391 were trailers. The comparative figures for the previous year were 6,755 cars, 7,069 commercial vehicles (including trailers), and 1,727 motor-cycles.

B. Motor-vehicles licensed as at 31st March, 1942.—At the 31st March, 1942, there were 305,793 motor-vehicles licensed, compared with 313,087 at the 31st March, 1941. The total licensed at the 31st March, 1942, is only 2·3 per cent. under the total for the previous year. The total of cars licensed has fallen from 215,516 in 1941 to 207,353 in 1942.

C. Vehicles actually on the Road.—The number of vehicles licensed on the register kept in accord with the provisions of the Motor-vehicles Act, 1924, may be taken as a reasonable indication of the number of vehicles actually on the road. The number of vehicles licensed have been estimated from month to month, and the averages for the years ended 31st March, 1940, 1941, and 1942 were: 1940, 296,180; 1941, 293,156; and 1942, 292,396.

The most striking feature of these figures is the heavy increase in the number of trailers in use, the average number increasing from 7,826 in 1939–40 to 11,249 in 1941–42.

3. ROADS.

A. Limitation of Loads on Roads.—There has been very little change in the mileage of classified roads, most of the roads with non-rigid types of surface throughout rural areas having already been classified for purposes of protecting the surface from the damage which would be caused by unduly heavy axle loads.

In order to meet the position caused by the serious petrol situation which occurred during the peak of seasonal carting all road classification limits were raised during January and February, 1942, to permit of approximately 1 ton extra pay-load being carried. This increase applied only during the two summer months, when road subgrades could be expected to be reasonably dry and thus capable of sustaining somewhat heavier loading than under average conditions.

B. Traffic Census.—No comprehensive census has been made during the year. The decline in vehicle-mileage as a result of petrol rationing is indicated by the records of petrol consumed by motor-vehicles each year. Taking 1938–39 = 100, the relative index figures for the ensuing years are: 1939–40 = 99; 1940–41 = 77; 1941–42 = 65.

4. ROAD SAFETY.

A. Road-accident Statistics.—These are now compiled on a calendar year basis. During 1941 there were 158 fatal accidents and 2,693 other accidents involving personal injury. These resulted in the death of 175 persons and the injuring of 3,589 others. The figures indicate a reduction of 14 per cent. in the number killed and 15 per cent. in the number injured as compared with 1940.

Detailed analyses of the accident reports have not been made, but the following comparison with the previous year is available, the 1940 figures being shown in parentheses: Occupants of motor-vehicles killed, 76 (86); injured, 1,820 (2,095). Motor-cyclists and pillion-riders killed, 21 (26); injured, 397 (479). Bicyclists killed, 25 (30); injured, 726 (872). Pedestrians killed, 53 (59); injured, 612 (724).

B. Education and Publicity.—This activity has necessarily been curtailed during the year. The work of the two Road Traffic Instructors for Schools continued until the end of the 1941 school year, but at the beginning of 1942 this was discontinued for the meantime.

C. Enforcement of Traffic Laws by the Transport Department.—During the year ended 31st March, 1942, the Traffic Inspectors attached to the Department continued to carry out their duties of traffic enforcement, as well as other duties in connection with the war effort. In addition to the counties, they now control traffic in one city and fifty-four boroughs and town districts.

During the year 3,680 of the more serious traffic offences were reported, against 7,491 in the previous year.

Full details of the results of the year's operations under the scheme of traffic offence notices and a central bureau are omitted this year, but the following comparative figures are of interest:—

Year.	Offences reported.	Prosecuted.	Convicted.	Charges dismissed.	Charges withdrawn.	Offenders warned.	No Action.	Fines received.
31/3/40 to 1/4/41	7,491	6,032	5,758	108	166	2,172	259	£ 7,688 s. 4 d. 2
31/3/41 to 1/4/42	3,680	2,615	2,475	52	88	1,047	78	3,566 18 6

NOTE.—These figures do not balance as some returns are not yet to hand.

D. Inspection of Motor-vehicles.—All motor-vehicles operated in the Dominion are required to undergo a periodical mechanical inspection, and the vehicles may be classified into three main divisions:—

- (1) Passenger-service vehicles licensed under the Transport Licensing Act:
- (2) Goods-service vehicles licensed under the Transport Licensing Act:
- (3) Other vehicles.

(1) *Passenger-service Vehicles.*—These vehicles are examined by officers of the Department specially appointed for the purpose. The vehicles embraced in this class are those which carry passengers for hire or reward, and include omnibuses, service cars, passenger trucks, school vehicles, rental vehicles and taxis (excluding taxis in the four main centres, which are inspected by the Metropolitan Licensing Authorities).