

1942.
NEW ZEALAND.

TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

(ANNUAL REPORT OF).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave.

The Hon. R. SEMPLE, Minister of Transport, Wellington.

SIR,—

Transport Department, 30th June, 1942.

Herewith I have the honour to submit the annual report of the Transport Department for the year ended 31st March, 1942.

I have, &c.,

G. L. LAURENSEN, Commissioner of Transport.

REPORT.

1. INTRODUCTION.

THE following are the salient points recorded in this report:—

- (1) The shortage of tires caused by the loss of Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies has not so far resulted in any material reduction in road transport. The problem of carrying on in the future with reduced supplies of tires will, however, shortly become the major problem in the road-transport industry.
- (2) There were 305,793 motor-vehicles licensed at 31st March, 1942, compared with 313,087 at 31st March, 1941; motor-car licenses dropped from 215,516 in 1941 to 207,353 in 1942.
- (3) Extra-load limits of approximately 1 ton were allowed in January and February, 1942, on classified roads in order to offset restrictions on petrol.
- (4) There was a reduction of approximately 16 per cent. in motor-vehicle traffic in 1941-42 compared with 1940-41.
- (5) Road accidents in 1941 caused 175 deaths and injuries to 3,589 persons. These figures are 14 per cent. and 15 per cent. respectively below those for the previous year.
- (6) Convictions for traffic offences numbered 2,615 for 1941-42, against 5,758 for 1940-41.
- (7) The selection and inspection of vehicles for the armed services, the organization and training of the Emergency Traffic Police Units and the Lines of Communication Motor Transport Units (Army Reserve Transport), as well as the arrangements of special reserves of petrol have thrown a great deal of extra work and responsibility on the four Transport Licensing Authorities and the Department's staff.
- (8) Public road passenger services in 1940-41 ran 27,000,000 vehicle-miles and carried over 32,500,000 passengers, compared with 26,000,000 miles and 30,500,000 passengers in 1939-40.
- (9) Licensed goods services ran 113,000,000 truck-miles for a gross revenue of £7,400,000, as against 120,000,000 miles and £7,250,000 for 1939-40.
- (10) Commercial air services flew 837,000 miles and carried 41,482 passengers, 164,000 lb. of mail, and 206,000 lb. of freight during 1941.

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).

(2) *Goods-service Vehicles*.—All goods-service vehicles licensed under the Transport Licensing Act are subjected to a thorough mechanical inspection each six months, and the maximum permissible load which can be transported in safety is inscribed in the certificate of fitness.

The following table gives the number of passenger and goods vehicles which operate in the four licensing districts :—

District.	Number.		Total.
	Passenger-service Vehicles.	Goods-service Vehicles.	
No. 1 : Auckland	1,273	2,978	4,251
No. 2 : Wellington	1,207	2,688	3,895
No. 3 : Christchurch	747	1,354	2,101
No. 4 : Dunedin	492	889	1,381
Total	3,719	7,909	11,628

(3) *Other Vehicles*.—All motor-vehicles other than those coming within the scope of the Transport Licensing Act are required to undergo a periodical inspection each half-year. The issue of warrants of fitness to these vehicles is undertaken by motor garages approved for the purpose, and some of the municipalities. The inspection includes a check of brakes, lights, steering-gear, wheel-alignment, windscreen-wiper, rear-vision mirror, warning-device, and door-fastenings.

5. WAR MEASURES.

A. Additional Functions of Traffic Staff.—These have comprised the organization and training of Emergency Traffic Police units, the regular inspection of reserve petrol storage and testing of petrol delivery pumps, the testing of military drivers for purposes of the issue of driving licenses, investigations and inquiries concerning the administration of the Oil Fuel Emergency Regulations, and latterly the district administration of the control of tires and tubes.

B. Additional Functions of Vehicle Inspection Staff.—During the year these officers have been engaged for a considerable part of their time on the inspection of vehicles for impressment purposes.

6. REGULATION OF COMMERCIAL ROAD TRANSPORT.

TRANSPORT LICENSING ACT, 1931.

Licensing.—During the year the Licensing Authorities continued to carry out their usual duties of considering applications for licenses, amendment, renewal, and transfer of licenses, and in addition acted as appeal authorities for vehicles impressed for the Army.

The main feature of the licensing system has been the automatic extension of expiring licenses under the Transport Licensing Emergency Regulations 1942. The Licensing Authorities have the power of exempting licenses from the operation of these regulations, while the power to review licenses still operates.

A considerable number of licenses have been suspended for the duration of the war. This is authorized by the Transport Licensing Emergency Regulations 1942, and has the effect of keeping licenses in existence without the payment of fees while the licensees are with the armed services.

Inspection of Accounts and Records.—The routine inspection of accounts has been discontinued. The work is now confined to investigation of complaints or cases where special inquiries are necessary.

Finances and Statistics.—Owing to the shortage of paper it has been decided to discontinue the general collection of financial and statistical returns from licensed operators for the duration of the war, except in those instances where it is considered necessary to have returns submitted.

The main features of the statistics for the year 1940–41 were :—

(i) *Passenger-service Industry.*—In 1939–40 these services covered 26,000,000 vehicle-miles to carry over 30,500,000 passengers; in 1940–41 the mileage run was just under 27,000,000 miles and the number of passengers carried in excess of 32,500,000.

In other words, vehicle-mileage run increased by 3·6 per cent., while the number of passengers carried increased by 6·5 per cent.

Gross revenue has advanced from £1,407,000 in 1939–40 to £1,661,000 in 1940–41, while net revenue has risen from £119,000 to £193,000.

(ii) *Goods-service Industry.*—During the year ended 31st March, 1941, it is estimated that the goods-service vehicles licensed to operate under the Transport Act covered 113,000,000 vehicle-miles for a total cost of £6,800,000. The gross revenue from these operations approximated £7,400,000, thus giving a net return to the industry of £625,000. The comparative figures for the previous year were : Mileage, 120,000,000 miles; gross revenue, £7,250,000; and net revenue, £750,000.

(iii) *Taxi-service Industry.*—For the year ended March, 1941, it is estimated that the 1,675 taxi and private-hire cars holding transport licenses covered over 33,000,000 vehicle-miles to earn a total gross revenue exceeding £1,000,000.

The total cost of operating these vehicles also exceeded £1,000,000 and included £445,000 expended on wages or drawn out by way of drawings in lieu of wages at award rates of pay.

Appeals.—Appeals lodged during the year totalled 56, of which 37 related to goods services, including ancillary users, and 19 to passenger services.

The following details are given regarding the appeals in respect of passenger and goods services, including appeals brought forward from the previous year :—

District.	Carried Forward from Previous Report.	Lodged during Current Year.	Appeals withdrawn.	Licensing Authority's Decision upheld.	Decision modified.	Decision reversed.	Referred back.	Under Action.
GOODS-SERVICES.								
No. 1 ..	19	7	4	12	2	..	3	5
No. 2 ..	22	6	4	13	6	2	..	3
No. 3 ..	13	17	7	1	1	4	3	14
No. 4 ..	22	7	7	12	2	1	1	6
Totals ..	76	37	22	38	11	7	7	28
PASSENGER-SERVICES.								
No. 1 ..	3	4	2	3	..	..	1	1
No. 2 ..	1	3	..	1	..	..	..	3
No. 3 ..	..	8	..	..	..	1	..	7
No. 4 ..	3	1	..	..	..	..	3	1
Metropolitan ..	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	3
Totals ..	7	19	2	4	..	1	4	15

7. COMMERCIAL AIR SERVICES.

For the year 1941 the commercial air services covered 837,000 miles and carried 41,482 passengers, 164,000 lb. of mail, and 206,000 lb. of freight.

8. CHANGES IN TRANSPORT LAW IN NEW ZEALAND.

The following are the principal enactments passed during the year ending 31st March, 1942 :—

(1) Statutes.

Statutes Amendment Act, 1941.—Sections 82 to 86 provide for the appointment of an Appeal Authority in place of the Hon. the Minister of Transport owing to the latter becoming also Minister of Railways. The Hon. Sir Francis Vernon Frazer has since been appointed Appeal Authority under the powers given by this legislation. Section 87 authorizes the issue of regulations relating to the compulsory membership of transport organizations by licensees.

(2) Regulations and General Orders (other than those revoked).

His Majesty's Forces (Motor-cyclists) Suspension Order 1941 (Serial No. 1941/68).—This Order waives the provisions of the Motor-drivers Regulations 1940 relating to learner drivers when those drivers are members of the armed forces.

Heavy Motor-vehicle Emergency Regulations 1941 (Serial No. 1941/78).—These contain concessions relating to heavy traffic and heavy traffic fees relative to vehicles used for the purposes of the Army, E.P.S., &c., and trucks impressed for the Army.

Motor-drivers Emergency Regulations 1941 (Serial No. 1941/126).—These have the effect of suspending the provision whereby motorists had to undergo a driving test if the respective driving license had expired for more than three months.

Transport Legislation Suspension Order 1941 (Serial No. 1941/140).—This provides for exemption from annual license fees in the case of certain tractors, and trailers drawn by tractors, used for fertilizer haulage by farmers.

Transport Organization Membership Regulations 1941 (Serial No. 1941/224).—These regulations follow the legislation referred to above, and provide for the taking of polls of licensees relating to compulsory membership of transport organizations.

Transport Legislation Suspension Order 1941 (No. 3), (Serial No. 1941/262).—This order contains various concessions in licensing provisions, third-party insurance, &c., relating to motor-vehicles used for the purposes of the Home Guard or Emergency Reserve Corp.

Transport Licenses Emergency Regulations 1942 (Serial No. 1942/43).—These regulations safeguard the licenses of those licensees who are serving with the armed forces. The regulations also provide that transport licenses will, unless sooner revoked, remain in force for the duration of the war, thus avoiding the necessity of their renewal from time to time.

Stock Transport Emergency Regulations 1942 (Serial No. 1942/62).—These regulations contain provisions relating to the control of the transport of live-stock by road, whether under transport license or otherwise.

Taxicab Emergency Regulations 1942 (Serial No. 1942/91).—These regulations contain provisions relating to the "doubling-up" of hirers of taxicabs.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given ; printing (602 copies), £6 19s.