

38. Goods Service Charges.—Prior to the operation of the Goods Service Charges Tribunal Emergency Regulations 1943, the fixation of charges to be made by goods-service operators for the carriage of goods was a function of the four District Transport Licensing Authorities, who had prescribed schedules of charges which were operative in their districts. These regulations provided for the setting-up of a Goods Service Charges Tribunal to take over this function for the whole Dominion. The Tribunal was appointed soon after the regulations became operative, and comprised the following personnel—Chairman: Sir Francis Frazer. Members: T. H. Langford, Esq.; A. C. A. Sexton, LL.M., Esq.; M. Simson, Esq.; and R. A. Glen, F.P.A.N.Z., Esq.

39. The regulations provided that in exercising its powers and functions the Tribunal shall be deemed to be exercising them under and for the purposes of the Economic Stabilization Emergency Regulations 1942, within the meaning of Regulation 4 (3) of those regulations, and shall have regard to the general purpose of those regulations.

40. In accordance with the provisions of Regulation 4 (3) of the Economic Stabilization Emergency Regulations the Minister of Industries and Commerce directed the Tribunal as follows: To prevent the war effort of the Dominion being undermined by disturbance of the economic structure through progressive inflation of the cost of goods and services and to minimize post-war economic difficulties, it is the policy of the Government to stabilize at the general level existing on 15th December, 1942—(a) wages and the principal items in the cost of living; (b) rents; (c) prices of farm products and principal items of farmers' costs; (d) transport charges and principal items of costs. In widely varying circumstances and constantly changing wartime conditions it is not practicable to hold all prices and all costs rigidly at the basic level, and the stabilization scheme does provide for adjustment of anomalies and some measure of elasticity to meet changing conditions. The guiding principle, however, is to hold generally to the basic level of prices and costs.

Transport is a considerable item in the cost of most goods at the point of utilization or consumption, and for this reason the Goods Service Charges Tribunal, within its proper sphere, is called upon to play an important part in carrying the stabilization policy into effect.

For this purpose, under the provisions of Regulation 4 (3) of the Economic Stabilization Emergency Regulations 1942, the Tribunal was generally directed to deal with all matters brought before it in accordance with the stabilization policy as outlined above.

In giving effect to this policy the Tribunal shall—

- (a) Give due consideration to the necessity within the limitation imposed by wartime conditions of maintaining an efficient and adequate transport service;
- (b) When considering any variations in rates schedules, have due regard to the extent to which the position might be met by increased efficiency and/or greater co-ordination in the transport services; and, in particular
- (c) Where deemed advisable for the adjustment of anomalies in rates schedule, increase certain charges and decrease other charges, provided that any such adjustment would not, in the opinion of the Tribunal, cause such an increase in the general level of transport charges in the district concerned as would involve a departure from the general stabilization policy above outlined;
- (d) Before giving its decision in any case in which, owing to special circumstances, it is considered necessary for the continuance of an adequate and efficient service in any district or in a particular area within a district, or for the transport of any specified class of commodities that the revenue of the transport operators concerned should be increased, but in which it appears to the Tribunal that the increase in charges required would involve a departure from the general stabilization policy above outlined, refer the matter to the Minister of Industries and Commerce for his directions as to whether the necessary additional revenue is to be provided wholly or partly by means of increased charges or wholly or partly by alternative means of relief. When referring any such matter to the Minister the Tribunal may make recommendations regarding alternative means of relief, whether by way of subsidy or otherwise.

41. To date the Tribunal has reviewed the schedule of charges in operation in the following transport rate schedule areas: Poverty Bay and East Coast, Hawke's Bay, South Canterbury, Bay of Plenty, northern Manawatu, southern Manawatu, Wanganui, Central Hawke's Bay, Wairoa, South Auckland, Taranaki, and Wairarapa.

With the exception of two small areas, increases in the charges ranging from 2½ per cent. to 15 per cent. were granted.

The Tribunal has also reviewed the prices in fifty-seven general and seventy mail contracts.

42. In all cases where increased revenue was found by the Tribunal to be necessary it was directed that same should be provided by means of increased charges.

43. Inspection of Motor-vehicles.—A six-monthly inspection of all passenger- and goods-service vehicles licensed under the Transport Licensing Act is carried out by the Department's vehicle inspection staff. The vehicles embraced are omnibuses, service cars, passenger-trucks, school vehicles, rental vehicles, taxis (including taxis operating in the four main centres which are inspected by the Metropolitan Licensing Authority), and all goods vehicles plying for hire. The maximum permissible load is inscribed in a Certificate of Fitness, which the vehicles are required to carry.

The following table gives the number of passenger and goods vehicles operating in the four licensing districts during the year:—

District.	Number.		Total.
	Passenger-service Vehicles.	Goods-service Vehicles.	
No. 1: Auckland	1,373	2,764	4,137
No. 2: Wellington	1,201	2,510	3,711
No. 3: Christchurch	801	1,341	2,142
No. 4: Dunedin	455	903	1,358
Total	3,830	7,518	11,348