

44. Condition of Vehicles.—Since the outbreak of hostilities the number of new vehicles placed in service has been very small, with the result that approximately 40 per cent. of the commercial vehicles in New Zealand are ten years old or over and are rapidly reaching the end of their economic life. The position has, however, been relieved to a limited extent by the release of a certain number of lend-lease and second-hand Army vehicles.

45. Due to the necessity of having to retain in operation vehicles which normally would have been replaced by new ones, the demand for spare parts has risen steeply. This factor, combined with a general wartime difficulty in securing spare parts from overseas, has created a difficult problem for the transport industry. The vehicle-inspection staff of the Department has therefore been called upon to assist operators to locate spare parts and to give technical advice in the solution of maintenance problems.

46. Although of necessity the patch and repair principle has had to be adopted as a wartime expedient, it is clear that if an efficient road-transport system is to be maintained in the Dominion the renewal of a large proportion of New Zealand's fleet of passenger and goods vehicles must in the near future become an urgent matter.

47. Changes in Transport Law of New Zealand.—The following are the principal enactments passed during the period 1st March, 1943, to 31st March, 1944:—

The Transport Control Emergency Regulations 1942, Amendment No. 1 (Serial No. 1943/36).—This effects amendments to the regulations relating to Control Committees and districts by making further provisions in regard to control of taxis.

The Transport Control Emergency Regulations 1942, Amendment No. 2 (Serial No. 1943/93).—This makes further provision in regard to the above regulations by strengthening the provisions relating to enforcement.

Goods Service Charges Tribunal Emergency Regulations 1943 (Serial No. 1943/40) and Amendment No. 1 (Serial No. 1943/123).—These regulations set up a tribunal for the purpose of dealing with rates and charges in connection with goods services, and replace previous powers of Licensing Authorities in this respect.

Motor-vehicles Registration Emergency Regulations 1942, Amendment No. 1 (Serial No. 1943/48). These regulations authorize local authorities, subject to certain safeguards, to take possession of and sell motor-vehicles abandoned on the roadways.

Passenger Service Time-tables Emergency Regulations 1943 (Serial No. 1943/92). This provides that the Minister of Transport may direct amendments in the time-tables of passenger-services and that the Licensing Authorities and Transport Appeal Authority shall comply with such directions.

Motor-drivers Regulations 1940, Amendment No. 1 (Serial No. 1943/101). The main purpose of these regulations is to prevent a woman taxi-driver from plying during the hours of darkness.

Motor-vehicles (Special Types) Regulations (No. 2) 1937, Amendment No. 1 (Serial No. 1943/113). These regulations provide for exemption from license fees in the case of tractors, traction-engines, grass-mowers, and vehicles drawn thereby if used for purposes of recreation or education.

Transport Licensing Passenger Regulations 1936, Amendment No. 4 (Serial No. 1943/111). These regulations make alterations in the fees payable in regard to passenger services.

His Majesty's Forces (Motor-vehicles) Suspension Order 1943 (Serial No. 1943/161). This Order exempts Armed Forces vehicles from the provisions of the Traffic Regulations relating to "left-hand drive" vehicles and carriage of blue light in certain cases.

Transport Licenses Emergency Regulations 1942, Amendment No. 1 (Serial No. 1943/175). These regulations provide that when dealing with transport licenses the Licensing Authorities are to take into account the desirability of rehabilitating discharged servicemen and the undesirability of excessive goodwill.

Warrant of Fitness Emergency Order 1943 (Serial No. 1943/182). This Order provides that in the case of a private car used for less than 2,000 miles of road within six months the warrant of fitness shall remain in force for twelve months instead of the usual six months.

Traffic Regulations, 1936, Amendment No. 3 (Serial No. 1943/199). These regulations make further provision in relation to warrants of fitness, in that authority is given for certain warrants to apply to vehicles used during daylight only. The regulations also make an important amendment to the "right-hand rule" applying at intersections.

Transport Licensing Passenger Regulations 1936, Amendment No. 5 (Serial No. 1944/40).—These regulations make provision for uniform children's fares under all passenger-services.

Delivery Emergency Regulations 1942, Amendment No. 3 (Serial No. 1943/94), and Amendment No. 4 (Serial No. 1943/176).—These regulations amend the list of commodities to be dealt with by zoning of deliveries and also authorize the zoning committees, with the written approval of the Minister to impose a levy or charge on vendors.

48. Service on Committees.—It is fitting that acknowledgment should be made of the valuable and loyal service rendered by many representatives of road transport, farming, railways, Chambers of Commerce, and other organizations on the many local committees whose chief functions have been to save tires, petrol, and vehicle-mileage. Their combined activities have greatly assisted in keeping the wheels of road transport turning in critical times. Their services are all given on a voluntary basis.

49. Staff.—Since the outbreak of war some eighty-one officers of the Department have joined the Armed Services, six have returned and resumed their duties. The following have paid the supreme sacrifice: Messrs. G. N. Harrison, W. D. A. McLeod, J. B. Monro, L. J. Dawes, H. W. Farquharson, M. E. Lawes, J. D. Wallace, and S. G. Cottrell. Their passing is deeply mourned by their fellow-officers.

I desire again to express my thanks to all the officers of the Department who have rendered excellent service under trying conditions.