

ROADS

4. Limitation of Loads on Roads.—In order to protect the road surfaces from the damaging effect of unduly heavy wheel loads, most of the rural highways and county roads have been classified in Class Three, Four, or Five, according to the standard of construction. Class Three allows of a maximum axle load of $5\frac{1}{2}$ tons in the case of a two-axled heavy motor-vehicle, or 5 tons in the case of a multi-axled vehicle or trailer. Class Four permits of 4 tons and $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons maximum axle loads respectively, and Class Five of 3 tons and $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons.

The following tables show the mileages classified at the present time :—

(a) CLASSIFICATION OF ALL RURAL ROADS AT 31ST MARCH, 1946

—				Total Formed Roads.	Class Three.	Class Four.	Class Five.	Total Classification.
				Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.
North Island	..	..	..	26,817	5,692	10,288	1,813	17,793
South Island	..	..	..	22,232	6,651	2,612	275	9,538
Totals	..	..	..	49,049	12,343	12,900	2,088	27,331

(b) CLASSIFICATION OF MAIN HIGHWAYS (RURAL SECTIONS) AT 31ST MARCH, 1946

(This section includes State highways shown under Table (c) following)

—				Main Highways.	Class Three.	Class Four.	Class Five.	Total Classification.
				Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.
North Island	..	..	..	6,680	3,213	3,072	167	6,452
South Island	..	..	..	5,424	4,577	133	42	4,752
Totals	..	..	..	12,104	7,790	3,205	209	11,204

(c) CLASSIFICATION OF STATE HIGHWAYS (RURAL SECTIONS) AT 31ST MARCH, 1946

—				State Highways.	Class Three.	Class Four.	Class Five.	Total Classification.
				Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.
North Island	..	..	..	2,112	1,262	799	..	2,061
South Island	..	..	..	1,686	1,589	..	..	1,589
Totals	..	..	..	3,798	2,851	799	..	3,650

While a considerable mileage of the total length of formed roads remains unclassified, loading on much of this length is virtually restricted because of the classification of the key roads in each district. In the vicinity of the larger industrial centres the roads are usually of a high type of construction and capable of carrying heavier loads than the flexible-surface types of road which are generally adequate within a purely rural district. These high types (usually bituminous or Portland cement concrete surfaces) are thus not classified. Although it is usually desirable to limit loads on the flexible-surface types of road to protect the surfaces, consideration is also necessary of the effect upon road transport of restricting axle loads and thus payloads; a balance must be maintained between the need on the one hand for preserving road surfaces, and on the other for facilitating economic transport.