

From January to July, 1945, the number of casualties averaged 255 per month, May being the worst month, with a total of 326 casualties. In August, coincident with the partial relaxation of petrol-restrictions, the casualties reached 391. From August to December the number of casualties remained well above the previous months, the average being 329 casualties per month, or 29 per cent. higher than in the first seven months of the year.

17. Accidents involving the Pre-school Child.—Table No. 11 in the Appendix classifies, both in age-groups and circumstance of accident, the number of young children killed or injured during the calendar year 1945.

In 1945 three children under five years were killed and 30 others injured through colliding with motor-vehicles. Nearly all the accidents were caused through the child running out into the roadway.

18. Accidents involving School Pupils.—Table No. 12 in the Appendix gives details relating to the number of school pupils killed or injured during each calendar year 1941–1945 inclusive.

The year 1945 saw a drop in the number of school pupils killed or injured as pedestrians and also as cyclists. In 1944 there were 101 casualties among school pupil pedestrians, including one death, and 103 among school-pupil cyclists, with 4 killed. In 1945 there were 82 pedestrians injured (including 2 killed) and 83 cyclists injured (1 being killed). Pupils under ten years continue to figure very largely in the pedestrian accidents. In most of the recent years about half of the victims of all accidents involving school pupils as pedestrians have been under eight years.

B. NEW ZEALAND ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL

19. The first meeting of the Council for several years was held in September, 1945, the holding of regular meetings during the war years having been considered to be both impracticable and inopportune. A number of changes in the personnel of the Council have taken place since it was first set up in 1936.

The Council reviewed the situation, and discussions centred around the questions of road safety propaganda, traffic control, the licensing of drivers, and the examination of motor-vehicles. As the most urgent measure to meet post-war traffic conditions, primary consideration was given to the need for road safety education of all classes of road users and a sub-committee of the Council was appointed to go fully into the question of propaganda and to recommend what steps should be taken.

C. EDUCATIVE PROPAGANDA

20. With a view to directing public attention to the causes of road accidents and to cultivating safer road habits, there has been a certain limited amount of propaganda during the year in one form or another. At appropriate times the newspapers have featured various aspects of road safety by means of editorials and articles and have published regularly the statistical and other information furnished by the Transport Department.

21. A number of safety messages have been broadcast by the National and National Commercial Broadcasting Stations from time to time, notably prior to and during the Christmas holiday period and prior to Easter. Advertising on the theatre-screens was extended considerably by the Department during the past year, the third-party insurance pool contributing a portion of the cost.

D. ROAD TRAFFIC INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL PATROLS

22. The organized instruction of school pupils by special Traffic Officers of the Transport Department, by a number of the road service officers of the automobile associations, and by a few of the local-body Traffic Inspectors has continued smoothly.