

railway services which were restricted owing to lack of adequate coal-supplies. By providing transport at these times road transport materially assisted in maintaining the industry and trade of the Dominion.

82. As a result of the revocation of the Taxicab Emergency Regulations 1942, which gave taxi-operators permission to charge separate fares to separate hirers sharing a taxicab hire, a large number of passenger licences have been granted to taxicab licensees to run passenger-services to and from trains and race meetings. These applications were particularly numerous in the Auckland Metropolitan District, where many such licences were granted to taxicab licensees for passenger-services to race meetings and early-morning passenger-services.

83. The Licensing Authorities dealt with 7,717 applications during the year for new transport licences and for renewal, amendment, and transfer of existing licences. Altogether 6,310 applications were considered by District Licensing Authorities, and the balance, 1,407 applications, came before the Metropolitan Authorities. A total of 6,312 applications was granted, comprising 1,413 new licences, 1,813 renewals, 2,162 amendments, and 924 transfers. The new licences granted were 702 passenger-service licences, 167 taxicab licences, 58 rental-car licences, and 486 goods-service licences. Full details of the decisions by type of service are given in Tables 14–17 inclusive in the Appendix.

84. Growth of Motor Transport.—There was a further increase during the year in the number of licences issued under the Transport Licensing Act. Goods-service licences increased from 3,963 to 4,416, passenger-service licences increased from 1,207 to 1,583, taxicab-service licences increased from 1,461 to 1,592, and rental-car licences increased from 117 to 153. There is an over-all increase in the total number of licences on issue of 14·8 per cent. on the previous year.

85. Public Passenger-services.—The road public-passenger services throughout the Dominion continue in a very buoyant condition. Passenger volumes have been maintained at very high levels at fares that are, with a few exceptions, on a pre-war basis. The main difficulty facing the industry is the inadequate supply of new buses to replace obsolete vehicles and enable time-tables to be expanded, and existing services extended.

86. Goods-services.—The public road freight carriers continue to meet the demands of industry and trade efficiently and smoothly, at a time when both the older forms of transport—shipping and railways—are having difficulties in meeting the demand for their services.

87. It is worthy of record that during the war and post-war years road transport has never failed to fulfil with credit all demands—and there have been many—placed upon it. Not only has it never caused delay in the flow of its freight traffic, but it has frequently rendered valuable assistance when the railway services have been restricted. This has been amply demonstrated in the cartage of heavy freight such as timber and fertilizers, which are traditionally regarded as traffic that can best be handled on the railways. The road freight industry is essentially, in the main, small-scale businesses, and its performance reflects great credit on the working owner-drivers and employees who do the driving as well as the loading and unloading. Its resilience, adaptability, and general efficiency have already won for it an important place in the national transport system.