

The Hon. F. HACKETT, Minister of Transport, Wellington.

Transport Department, 28th July, 1948.

SIR,—

Herewith I have the honour to submit the annual report of the Transport Department for the year ended 31st March, 1948.

I have, &c.,

G. L. LAURENSEN, Commissioner of Transport.

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## REPORT

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### INTRODUCTION

**SUMMARY OF CONTENTS.**—(a) The number of motor-vehicles licensed at 31st March, 1948 (360,949), showed an increase of 30,027, or 9·07 per cent., over the number as at 31st March, 1947, and is the highest level yet reached.

(b) Petrol-consumption by motor-vehicles rose from 86,440,000 gallons in 1946 to 101,270,000 gallons in 1947, an increase of approximately 17 per cent.

(c) In 1947, 206 lives were lost and 4,762 persons were injured as the result of road accidents, a decrease of 8 per cent, in the deaths per 1,000,000 gallons of petrol used as compared with 1946.

(d) Slightly more school-children were injured in road accidents during 1947 than in 1946, but there was a substantial drop in the number of pre-school children injured.

(e) Substantial expansion in road safety measures and activities, including the reintroduction of the New Zealand Road Safety Council.

(f) New Zealand still has the lowest road accident death-rate of the motorized countries; comparative figures of fatalities per 10,000 motor-vehicles in 1947 show New Zealand, 6·2; United States of America, 8·5; Canada (1946), 10·7; Victoria, 13·3; New South Wales, 14·1; Great Britain, 16·0; South Africa (1946), 19·5.

(g) The Department's traffic staff reported 10,217 breaches during the year ended 31st March, 1948; of these, 4,914 offenders were warned and 5,303 prosecuted.

(h) Over one private motor-vehicle out of every five examined had defective brakes.

(i) More than one-third (2,914) of the total road transport licences (7,902) are held by ex-servicemen.

(j) Passenger traffic on public motor services continues at high levels.

(k) Public road freight carriers have efficiently met all demands on their services, and have substantially assisted in timber and fertilizer traffic when there have been "bottlenecks" in the rail services.

(l) Several of the Dominion's older timber bridges are in such bad condition that restrictive load-limits are imposed for their protection; this frequently reduces normal vehicle loading, and correspondingly retards movement of goods and produce.