

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS.—(a) The number of motor-vehicles licensed at 31st March, 1949 (380,995), showed an increase of 26,006, or 7·20 per cent., over the number as at 31st March, 1948, and is the highest level yet reached.

(b) Petrol-consumption by motor-vehicles decreased from 103,300,000 in 1947 to 102,600,000 gallons in 1948.

(c) Expenditure on roads in 1947–48 amounted to £10,847,265, an increase of 22 per cent. over that for the previous year.

(d) In 1948, 196 persons were killed and 4,706 injured as a result of road accidents. This represents a decrease of 4 per cent. per million gallons of petrol used as compared with 1947.

(e) The number of school and pre-school children killed and injured in 1948 showed an increase over the previous year.

(f) New Zealand continues to have the lowest road-accident death-rate of the motorized countries; comparative figures of fatalities per 10,000 motor-vehicles in 1948 show New Zealand, 5·2; United States of America, 8·2; Canada (1947), 10·2; Victoria, 10·9; New South Wales, 13·5; Great Britain, 13·8; South Africa (1947), 21·0.

(g) The Department's traffic staff examined 29,428 persons for drivers' licences, and reported 11,116 breaches during the year ended 31st March, 1949; of these, 4,894 offenders were warned and 6,222 prosecuted.

(h) Fifty-seven out of every 100 private cars inspected were found to be free from mechanical defects.

(i) The number of passengers carried by public road transport has increased from 36,000,000 in 1940 to 81,000,000 in 1948.

(j) Taxi-cabs ran approximately 43,000,000 miles and rental cars approximately 12,000,000 miles during the year.

(k) Forty-three per cent. of all road-transport licences are held by ex-servicemen.

(l) It is estimated that rationing saved 10,000,000 gallons of petrol during the year.

DEVELOPMENT OF MOTOR TRANSPORT

LICENSING OF MOTOR-VEHICLES, BY PRINCIPAL CLASSES.—Under the Motor-vehicle Act, 1924, motor-vehicles are required to be registered and licensed. Such licences are renewable annually. The following table sets out the number of motor-vehicles in the principal classes, licensed as at 31st March, 1949, the figures for the two preceding years being included for comparative purposes:—

Number of Motor-vehicles (in Principal Classes) Licensed in New Zealand as at 31st March, 1947, to 1949 inclusive

Type of Vehicle.	Number of Licences.			Increase of 1949 Over 1948 Licences.
	1947.	1948.	1949.	
Cars	202,437	217,871	226,707	8,836
Trucks not exceeding 2 tons laden	33,134	36,591	40,536	3,945
Trucks exceeding 2 tons laden	25,375	28,839	31,823	2,984
Passenger-trucks	1,997	2,100	2,182	82
Omnibuses	1,133	1,267	1,397	130
Taxis, including private-hire cars	2,147	2,231	2,209	—22
Service cars	637	679	692	13
Rental cars	828	1,047	1,056	9
Motor-cycles	17,699	19,066	19,989	923
Trailers	22,788	25,254	29,293	4,039
Local-body and other vehicles exempted from annual licence fees	14,451	17,549	22,009	4,460
Government vehicles	8,296	8,455	9,062	607
Total	330,922	360,949	386,955	26,006 or 7·20%.