

All classes of vehicles licensed as at 31st March, 1949 (excepting taxis), show gains over the figures for the preceding year.

Table I of the Appendix shows details of motor-vehicles licensed as at 31st March, 1949, by postal districts.

Table II sets out, for comparative purposes, the number of motor-vehicles licensed year by year as at 31st March, 1938 to 1949, inclusive.

PETROL CONSUMPTION.—The table hereunder shows for the individual calendar years 1938 to 1948 the estimated quantities of petrol used in the Dominion, specifying separately that consumed by motor-vehicles and that used for other purposes.

Estimated Petrol-consumption in New Zealand From 1938 to 1948

Calendar Year.	Estimated Consumption of Petrol.		
	By Motor-vehicles (<i>i.e.</i> , Petrol on Which All Duty was Paid).	Other (<i>i.e.</i> , Engines, Aeroplanes, &c., on Which Refunds of Duty Were Made).*	Total.
	Million Gallons.	Million Gallons.	Million Gallons.
1938.. ..	89·4	7·6	97·0
1939.. ..	92·0	8·0	100·0
1940.. ..	74·1	9·7	83·8
1941.. ..	67·0	15·3	82·3
1942.. ..	46·1	10·4	56·5
1943.. ..	50·2	9·2	59·4
1944.. ..	53·7	9·0	62·7
1945.. ..	65·6	9·0	74·6
1946.. ..	86·5	10·1	96·6
1947.. ..	103·3	13·7	117·0
1948.. ..	102·6	15·7	118·3

* Refunds of motor-spirits taxation are granted as follows: aircraft and fishing-launches, 1s. per gallon; milking-machinery, shearing-equipment, donkey-engines, tractors, lighting and heating plant, manufacturing, cleaning, and scientific purposes, 10d. per gallon; all launches (other than fishing-launches), 6d. per gallon. Of all refunds granted approximately 85 per cent. are at the rate of 10d. per gallon, 10 per cent. at 1s. per gallon, and 5 per cent. at 6d. per gallon.

These figures vary slightly from those published in previous reports: minor adjustments have been necessary to make the figures more strictly comparable.

The average petrol-consumption per vehicle decreased from 326 gallons in 1947 to 297 gallons in 1948 (these figures are based on the average number of vehicles, excluding trailers, in use throughout the year). The reduction in petrol-consumption per vehicle has resulted from the reintroduction of petrol-rationing, first on a voluntary basis as from 15th November, 1947, and on a modified form of the wartime rationing system as from 1st March, 1948.

Petrol-consumption for other purposes increased substantially in 1947 and 1948. This is accounted for by an extension in farm mechanization, expansion of commercial aircraft services, the revival of aero-club-flying activities, and a considerable increase in petrol-driven plant and machinery used on general construction and road-maintenance work. During the quarter ended December, 1948, 26,605 individual refunds of duty were made, as compared with 22,565 during the same period in the previous year.

MOTOR-TAXATION.—Table No. 3 shows that motor-taxation yielded £9,324,800 in 1947–48, as compared with £7,061,700 in the previous year. With the increased number of vehicles in use, taxation receipts from all sources have shown an upward tendency.