

ROADS

LIMITATION OF LOADS ON ROADS.—The limits imposed upon the loading of vehicles are as follows :—

By statute, no motor-vehicle (if it has only two axles) may exceed 10 tons in gross weight, and if there are more than two axles, no axle load may exceed 6 tons. The Minister of Transport may grant exemption from these provisions in special cases. For example, there are certain vehicles which are needed for carrying heavy items of plant, machinery, or engineering equipment which cannot be transported in small loads. A small number of public passenger-service vehicles operating in and adjoining the main centres also exceed the statutory limits of 10 tons with the approval of the Minister and the concurrence of the roading authority.

In most districts roads outside the towns have been classified by the roading authority (with the approval of the Minister of Transport) so that the allowable loading of vehicles is further restricted according to the capacity of the road to carry heavy loads. There are three such classes, viz. :—

Class Three which restricts axle loads to a maximum of $5\frac{1}{2}$ tons in respect of a two-axled vehicle and 5 tons on any one axle in the case of a multi-axled vehicle.

Class Four, restricting axle loads to 4 tons maximum for a two-axled vehicle and to $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons for a six-wheeler or other multi-axled vehicle.

Class Five, the limits being 3 tons and $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons axle load for a two-axled or a multi-axled vehicle respectively.

Of nearly 50,000 miles of rural roads throughout the Dominion, over 27,000 miles are classified in one of the three classes, over 12,000 miles being classified Three, nearly 13,000 miles classified Four, and 2,000 miles classified Five.

In many districts only the main highways and other key roads have been classified, and the subsidiary roads have remained unclassified. However, in the latter case loads are virtually restricted to the same limits as apply to the key roads because vehicles in the usual course must travel over the main highways or key roads in order to reach the subsidiary road.

Comparatively few roads have been classified in the urban areas.

The following tables show the lengths of roads classified at 31st March, 1949 :—

- (a) In the whole system of rural roads, in each Island ;
- (b) In the system of rural main highways ; and
- (c) In the State highway system.

(a) *Classification of All Rural Roads at 31st March, 1949*

Area.				Total Formed Roads.	Class Three.	Class Four.	Class Five.	Total Classification.
				Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.
North Island	..	..	..	27,154	5,506	10,575	1,832	17,913
South Island	..	..	..	22,400	6,675	2,546	278	9,499
Totals	..	..	..	49,554	12,181	13,121	2,110	27,412

(b) *Classification of Main Highways (Rural Sections) at 31st March, 1949*

Area.				Main Highways.	Class Three.	Class Four.	Class Five.	Total Classification.
				Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.
North Island	..	..	..	6,843	3,297	3,164	187	6,648
South Island	..	..	..	5,479	4,611	162	42	4,815
Totals	..	..	..	12,322	7,908	3,326	229	11,463