

In the table set out below estimated road usage in New Zealand during the calendar year 1948 has been allocated between the various types of vehicles, on the basis of (a) petrol-consumption, (b) vehicle-miles, and (c) gross ton-miles recorded :—

Type of Vehicle.	Petrol Consumed.	Vehicle-miles.	Gross Ton-miles.
	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.
Cars (including taxis and rental cars)	36·4	52·4	32·0
Trucks not exceeding 2 tons laden	18·6	17·0	14·8
Trucks exceeding 2 tons laden	39·1	24·2	46·1
Omnibuses and service cars	5·1	2·8	6·8
Motor-cycles	0·8	3·6	0·3
Total	100·0	100·0	100·0

These figures show that commercial road transport accounts for a very large proportion of the total road usage.

ROAD FINANCE

THE DOMINION'S ROAD BILL, 1939-40 TO 1947-48, INCLUSIVE.—The Department has abstracted from official sources statistical data relating to road finance, and analysed it to show the approximate expenditure on roads, streets, and bridges under the headings of construction, maintenance, and loan charges. The expenditure has been apportioned between three types of roads—main highways, urban roads and streets, and other (rural) roads. Some estimation has been necessary to obtain the mileages for the various types of roads and to ascertain certain other figures used. Any estimates, however, have been calculated on a conservative basis, and the figures are sufficiently accurate to form a reliable basis for broad general conclusions.

In order to provide continuous information on road expenditure over the years, figures for 1941-1943 which were not compiled during the war have now been extracted. The data shown for the years 1944 to 1946 are somewhat different from those published in previous annual reports. It has been necessary to amend these figures primarily because of adjustments made in the Main Highways' Accounts by virtue of section 3 of the Finance Act, 1943 (No. 3). Information for the year ended 31st March, 1949, is not yet available.

The figures for the year ended 31st March, 1948, show that expenditure on road-construction is increasing. After falling to a minimum of £683,440 in 1943-44, it increased to £3,088,460 in 1947-48. Constructional expenditure amounted to 21·3 per cent. of the total in 1946-47 and to 28·5 per cent. of the total in 1947-48; the corresponding proportion averaged over the six years immediately preceding the war amounted to 41·2 per cent. of the total.

Expenditure on maintenance in 1947-48 was 44·6 per cent. above the corresponding figure in 1938-39, £5,365,615 in 1947-48 and £3,711,737 in 1938-39. However, in considering the volume of work that was obtained for the expenditure in latter years, due allowance must be made for increased wage rates and higher costs of materials.

Total expenditure in 1947-48 showed an increase of 22 per cent. over the previous year.

It is estimated that the operating-costs of all classes of motor-vehicles in the Dominion amounted to £69,600,000 in 1948-49. The method of assessing operating-costs has been revised in the light of more accurate costing data now available, and this figure is not strictly comparable with that given last year. These figures indicate the importance