

(3) *Conference at Eltham: No. 7 Highway District.*—Present, representatives from the following counties: Clifton, Taranaki, Egmont, Inglewood, Stratford, Eltham, Waimate West, Hawera; also the District Engineer, Public Works Department, Stratford.

After discussion, a resolution similar to that carried at Masterton and Timaru was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

(4) *Conference at Whangarei: No. 1 Highway District.*—Present, representatives from the following counties: Mangonui, Whangaroa, Hokianga, Bay of Islands, Whangarei, Hobson, Otamatea, Rodney, Waitemata. Also present, the District Engineer, Public Works Department, Whangarei.

The whole question of transport in this area was fully discussed, and the following resolution was carried unanimously: "That the maximum classification in No. 1 Highway District be restricted as a general policy to 4½ tons, excluding therefrom an area within a radius of twenty miles of Auckland City."

Since the conference the classification of the roads in Whangaroa and Whangarei Counties has been reduced from third to fourth class in accordance with this resolution.

During the year fifty-five local authorities were visited, and various typical roads under their control inspected. The classification figures for the Dominion are now as follows:—

	Total Formed Roads.	First Class.	Second Class.	Third Class.	Fourth Class.	Fifth Class.	Total Classified Roads.
North Island ..	24,606	323	1,081	2,831	5,054	2,544	11,833
South Island ..	20,888	96	1,057	1,529	1,121	247	4,050
Totals, 1931 ..	45,494	419	2,138	4,360	6,175	2,791	15,883
„ 1930 ..	44,558	436	1,274	3,530	4,582	2,544	12,366

THE PROBLEM OF MOTOR ACCIDENTS.

In June, 1930, a conference was arranged by the Minister to consider ways and means of reducing the traffic-accident rate in New Zealand. The conference consisted of representatives of the Municipal and Counties Association, the North Island and South Island Motor Unions, the service-car and motor-lorry proprietors, the various insurance companies, and the Railways, Public Health, Census and Statistics, Justice, Education, State Accident, Police, Public Works (including Main Highways Board), and Transport Departments.

The conference made some very important recommendations to the Government, and the following is a brief indication of the nature of the more important of them, together with an indication of the action which is being taken in the meantime to deal with the recommendations.

After considering the available statistics concerning traffic accidents in New Zealand, the conference proceeded to review the present laws which are intended to limit these accidents. In connection with drivers' licenses, it was recommended that when a driver, through his negligence or intoxication, causes personal injury or death it shall be compulsory for his license to be cancelled for minimum periods of six months in cases of intoxication and three months in cases of negligence, and, later, when the Third-party Risks Act was under discussion, it was recommended that in cases of intoxication the amount of the insurance paid out may be recovered from the driver by the insurance company, and that also in all cases of negligent driving, including the foregoing, the conviction shall be endorsed on the license for three years from the date of the offence. To help in the latter, the old license is to be presented when any new license is obtained. It was also recommended that for second and subsequent offences of driving without possessing a license the Court be given power to inflict imprisonment.

These proposals are now under consideration in conjunction with other legislation for the present session.

Various alterations to the Motor-vehicle Regulations were considered, including suggestions for the bettering of the system of issuing motor-drivers' licenses, and the provision for compulsory driving tests framed by regulation applicable to all parts of New Zealand. The recent consolidation of the Motor-drivers' Regulations contained most of these alterations. An important recommendation of the conference under this heading was that an absolute speed-limit of forty-five miles per hour be fixed for rural localities and twenty-five miles per hour for urban localities, and in the latter case additional absolute restrictions of fifteen miles per hour in passing intersections, &c., and ten miles per hour when going round sharp bends, &c.

These recommendations are under consideration by the Government.

In connection with railway level crossings, the conference unanimously agreed that, in view of the finances available and the measures in hand, the best available steps were being taken by the Railway Department; and a similar resolution was carried in connection with roadworks of the Main Highways Board and Public Works Department. In connection with railway crossings, a resolution was carried unanimously that power be given to local authorities and the Government, through the local authorities, to remove growth, even if on private property, obscuring the view at railway level crossings. Proposals for the regulation of pedestrians and other road traffic were approved by the conference, which also recommended that the Stock Act, 1908, and other Acts relating to stock on roads be revised and brought into line with modern conditions.

These proposals would also require amendment of the law, and are under consideration.

After reviewing the existing laws, the conference proceeded to consider the methods of enforcement thereof, and it was clear that the majority of the conference was not satisfied with the present system of divided control, whereby some three hundred local authorities in New Zealand are responsible for