

On the 1st June, 1931, the registrations of 12,785 vehicles lapsed owing to the licenses not having been renewed during the relicensing years 1929–30 and 1930–31.

The following figures show the number of motor-vehicle registrations (including dormant registrations) as at the 31st March, 1932 :—

Kind of Vehicle.	North Island.	South Island.	Dominion Total.
Cars	98,594	55,701	154,295
Commercial vehicles	26,666	13,414	40,080
Cycles	21,558	14,299	35,857
Totals	146,818	83,414	230,232

These figures do not include vehicles for which approximately 2,500 “demonstration” plates were issued to dealers during the year.

The number of registrations cancelled between the coming into operation of the Motor-vehicles Act, 1924, and the 31st March, 1932, is as follows :—

Kind of Vehicle.	North Island.	South Island.	Dominion Total.
Cars	12,369	7,110	19,479
Commercial vehicles	5,371	2,385	7,756
Cycles	9,854	7,526	17,380
Totals	27,594	17,021	44,615

MOTOR-VEHICLE REGISTRATION-PLATES.

Alternative tenders were called for during the year for the manufacture of motor-registration-plates for periods of one year, three years, and five years. The tender submitted by the Precision Engineering Co., Ltd., of Wellington, was accepted for a period of three years. The plates for the year 1932–33 will have black numerals and border-line on a yellow ground.

It is hardly necessary to draw attention to the fact that motor-vehicle registration-plates for the current licensing year differ from those of earlier years in features other than the colours, but since the reasons for, and advantages resulting from, such a change are not so obvious, a little information hereon may be of some interest.

In the past considerable difficulty was experienced and numerous errors were made by the police, traffic officers, motorists, and by others concerned in determining the several figures on the plates of passing vehicles; consequently, from time to time requests were made for more legible plates.

A new system was therefore introduced whereby better legibility has been obtained through new outlines in the figures, and by the use of a prefix letter to avoid the need for plates with six figures. When it is realized that the former plates carried figures that were alike in outline, all curved ones being based upon the figure 8, and that in the new system no two curves are alike, it will be admitted that this characteristic distinctiveness of the new figures will avoid confusion and must tend towards greatly improved legibility. Whereas formerly six figures of the series had similar top outlines and six had similar bottom outlines, it is now possible for a traffic officer or other observant person to correctly determine every figure on an oily or muddy plate when a relatively small portion only of each figure is visible. Further assistance has been given through the use of the distinctive and easily read prefix letter, which itself has a significant meaning and materially aids the Registrar in compiling the statistical records.

Again, under the new system, an inexpensive, complete, and self-evident classification of all motor-vehicles has been possible, *e.g.*—

- (a) The motor-car which, at the time of licensing, was declared to be “principally used for private purposes” now carries either a registration-plate with no prefix letter or one with the prefix “X.”
- (b) A car in the hands of an agent or motor-vehicle dealer exhibits a plate with prefix letter “D.”
- (c) The vehicle that is exempt from heavy-traffic fees has a plate with prefix “E.”
- (d) Vehicles owned by the Crown have prefix letters “GOVT.”
- (e) Taxis carry the prefix letter “T.”
- (f) Passenger-service vehicles operating under the Transport Licensing Act, 1931, carry either a prefix “P” or “S” according to their classification.

While in the commercial-truck group the vehicle that—

- (g) Is declared to be not more than 2 tons gross weight when fully laden gets an “L” registration-plate, and
- (h) The heavier vehicles which are subject to heavy-traffic tax carry a plate with the prefix letter “H.”