

In Nos. 4 and 7 Districts, however, the absence of relatively closely populated areas, together with much longer routes, combine in reducing passenger revenue in proportion to vehicle-mileage, while the use of lighter cars results in reduced operating costs.

Table No. 8 in the Appendix shows the applications for passenger-service licenses, together with the decisions given at the 31st March, 1932.

The section of the table relating to decisions is exclusive of many applications for continuous and seasonal passenger-service licenses which were not considered until after the 31st March.

The maps at the end of the Appendix show the routes and the numbers of passenger-services licensed under the new Act.

PASSENGER-SERVICE VEHICLE INSPECTIONS.

For the safety of the traveller by road, the Transport Licensing Act, 1931, requires the owner of each motor-vehicle that is used for the carriage of passengers for hire or reward (other than the vehicle designed to seat not more than eight persons, and which is operating strictly and solely as a taxicab) to make application for a certificate of fitness, and an inspection is thereafter made by the inspecting officer located in the district wherein the vehicle is regularly garaged.

If the application covers a vehicle which is to be used on a route required to be licensed under the above-mentioned Act, a bank draft for £3 must accompany the application for inspection, and similarly a payment of £2 must be made—

- (a) In the case of a vehicle used for the carriage of school-children, with or without their teachers, but not at the same time carrying other passengers; and
- (b) In the case of a vehicle carrying passengers under a contract, expressed or implied, for the use by them of the vehicle as a whole, while the vehicle which is to be used on a service that has been or is to be specially licensed for one week, more or less, must, upon each occasion, be covered by a fee of 2s. 6d. for the permit.

It will be seen, therefore, that the legislation has embraced practically every passenger-vehicle used for hire or reward, other than the genuine taxi; but in this regard it is apparent to the Department that many owners have not yet realized their obligations, and of these defaulters the majority are in the £2-payment class indicated in (b) above.

The first applications for inspection were received in the second week in January last, and for seven months they have been coming to hand daily. A summary of the position throughout the Dominion at noon on the 16th August, 1932, shows, in all, a few more than 1,700 applications had been lodged, and that of a total of 1,692 applications, for which the necessary fees had been duly paid, no less than 103 applications, or 6 per cent. of the total, were withdrawn by the owners either before or during the inspection period, while 44 other vehicles, being 2·8 per cent. of the remainder, were, upon examination, found to be beyond repair, and therefore were condemned, being unfit for further service.

In this connection it is worth mention that both withdrawals and condemned vehicles figure in the returns from each of the ten districts into which the Dominion has been divided.

The 1,545 "active" vehicles are distributed as under:—

1. No. 4 District (Hawke's Bay and Gisborne areas)	231
2. No. 2 District (Auckland City and contiguous counties)	222
3. No. 6 District (Wellington City, Manawatu, and Wairarapa areas)	209
4. No. 3 District (Waikato and Bay of Plenty areas)	176
5. No. 5 District (Taranaki, Wanganui, Rangitikei, and Taumarunui areas)	174
6. No. 7 District (Marlborough, Nelson, and Westland areas)	161
7. No. 9 District (Dunedin City and Otago areas)	134
8. No. 8 District (Christchurch City and Canterbury areas)	121
9. No. 1 District (Warkworth and North Auckland areas)	72
10. No. 10 District (Southland Province)	45

But, as already mentioned, many more vehicles have yet to be embraced, chiefly vehicles engaged in the transport of school-children and as contract vehicles; of the latter the majority are "passenger-trucks."

As a guide to all concerned, and for uniformity of treatment by the several inspecting officers, certain draft regulations were framed in January last, and these incorporate the requirements which for the past five years have been applied to motor-omnibuses that were licensed under the Motor-omnibus Traffic Act, 1926, and contain also extra clauses appropriate to the respective requirements for the widely different types of passenger-vehicles that have been embraced by the legislation of November last.

The draft as prepared was then submitted for constructive criticism to representatives of the several parties interested in passenger-transport by motor-vehicles, and certain amendments were agreed to, as was the case at a later date when the service-car proprietors again met the officers of the Department.

The draft, as amended, covering the construction and equipment of omnibuses, service-coaches, service-cars, and school-children vehicles, now has the backing of the licensed operators and the Education Department, and will be duly recommended for gazetting as Part I for existing vehicles, Part II for new vehicles, together with two other parts, which are as yet incomplete, being Part III for the passenger-truck and Part IV for the trackless trolley-omnibus.