

The removal of these vehicles from the control of this Department in so far as inspection is concerned is reflected in the reduced number of applications for certificates of fitness submitted, and the reduced number of service cars when compared with last year's figures.

The total number of vehicles in the Dominion which were covered by certificates of fitness or permits during the period now under review is shown below :—

District No.				Omnibuses.	Service Cars.	Service Coaches.	Passenger-trucks.	Total.
1	..	..	..	10	59	7	63	139
2	..	..	..	204	157	20	21	402
4	..	..	..	64	142	8	32	246
5	..	..	..	17	89	2	26	134
6	..	..	..	115	136	7	19	277
7	..	..	..	22	109	..	36	167
8	..	..	..	51*	44	9	12	116
9	..	..	..	48	89	4	13	154
10	..	..	..	22	74	3	8	107
Totals				553	899	60	230	1,742

* Includes eleven trackless trams.

The inspection of passenger-service vehicles has been smoothly and efficiently carried out, and good maintenance of vehicles is reported.

A general steady improvement is shown in the standard and comfort of vehicles now provided for the travelling public, and, in particular, service cars show a marked improvement. In such vehicles the dicky or folding seat is rapidly disappearing, and reconstructed or new service cars built in accordance with the Department's requirements are of pleasing design and give ample room and comfort for long journeys.

Commercial chassis which may be adapted to suit the eight-to-twelve passenger-service car requirements are now available, and it is possible that a greater selection of models in this range will be on the market in the near future, therefore the need for alterations of large private-car chassis to meet the demand for medium-sized service cars is now practically non-existent.

In the omnibus class also the trend is towards modern stream-lined bodies, and greater comfort combined with more pleasing interior decoration and fittings. Omnibus-body building in New Zealand has been brisk during the last twelve months, and the completed vehicles reveal a high standard of workmanship and design.

A complete omnibus with an English steel frame body was imported in December last, and this afforded an excellent practical comparison with New-Zealand-made omnibus bodies. Furthermore, English-manufactured steel fabrication for three omnibus bodies has arrived in the Dominion, and when the completed vehicles are on the road the manner in which the steel bodies withstand New Zealand service conditions will be closely watched.

Interest in the progressive design of the compression-ignition engine in other countries and its application to road-transport vehicles has been manifest in New Zealand for some considerable time, and the importation this year of a standard British compression-ignition-engine bus chassis was an important event for passenger-service operators.

The vehicle has proved a complete success to date in actual service, and it is confidently anticipated that many more compression-ignition-engined passenger-vehicles will be operating in New Zealand in the near future.

It is worthy of mention that eleven British firms now market an aggregate of thirty-five models of compression-ignition-engine passenger-chassis, the range of seating-capacities available being from twenty to seventy-two. In the goods chassis the range is larger, with twenty-three manufacturers offering models from 2-ton pay-load upwards.

B. GOODS SERVICES.

The continuous and seasonal goods-service licenses expire on 31st May of each year, midway between February and August, when the passenger-service licenses also expire.

(a) CONTINUOUS GOODS-SERVICE LICENSES.

No less than 2,146 applications for the renewal of existing licenses and a small number of new licenses were considered by the various Licensing Authorities during the year. Of these, 2,016 were granted, 91 were refused, 25 were withdrawn, and 14 were deferred. Corresponding figures for the preceding year were 2,146 applications, of which 1,898 were granted, 118 refused, 43 withdrawn, and 87 deferred.

(b) SEASONAL GOODS-SERVICE LICENSES.

Applications for the renewal of existing licenses and a few new licenses numbered 108, compared with 99 for the preceding year. Eighty-nine of these applications were granted, 9 were refused, 7 were withdrawn, and 3 were deferred. For the previous year 88 were granted, 3 were refused, and 8 were withdrawn.