

road-accident prevention. At present a number of gramophone-records of road-safety lectures are being prepared for circulation amongst the schools. During the last seven years, approximately 12 per cent. of those killed have been children under the age of fifteen years; 36 per cent. have been under twenty-five years of age.

Although it is difficult to reduce the annual total of road accidents while the number of vehicles is increasing, it is not impossible. It has been done in several countries overseas. The following figures show the reduction in road accidents in Great Britain, following upon an energetic campaign by the Minister of Transport. During the year 1935 there were 160,000 more vehicles on the road than in 1934 :—

Year.			Persons killed.	Persons injured.	Deaths per 1,000 Vehicles.
1932	..	..	6,667	206,450	4·06
1933	..	..	7,202	216,328	4·15
1934	..	..	7,343	231,603	3·92
1935	..	..	6,521	218,798	3·21

It will be observed that the ratio of persons injured to those killed in Great Britain is approximately 31 to 1. Similar figures have not been recorded in New Zealand, but negotiations are now proceeding with the Police Department with a view to having details collected of the number of persons injured in road accidents.

12. TRAFFIC CONTROL.

(a) TRANSPORT LICENSING ACT, 1931, AND AMENDMENTS.

There has been no alteration in the policy adopted in supervising transport on the roads, and the Department still relies on the co-operation of local-body traffic officers to carry out this duty.

This system was reasonably successful in the past when the legislation was not generally known by those most concerned, but some dissatisfaction has been expressed by both passenger and goods licensees that control by local-body inspectors is not adequate or satisfactory.

Attention is at the present time being given to the question of improving the machinery for ensuring that the provisions of the transport legislation are reasonably observed.

(b) MOTOR-VEHICLES ACT, 1924, AND AMENDMENTS.

The very noticeable improvement in road safety which followed on last year's check on brakes and lights was not maintained, and clearly indicated that motorists were not giving these two items the necessary care and attention required by the regulations.

Arrangements were made for a further check-up when 55,067 vehicles were stopped on the roads. Approximately 31,000 of this number were actually tested, and 12·3 per cent. had defective brakes and 7 per cent. defective lights.

Much of the value of the check was lost through some local authorities failing to co-operate, but principally through the almost universal failure to institute Court proceedings. Although 6,327 vehicles did not comply with the requirements of the regulations, only 246 drivers were prosecuted.

The Department now has under consideration the question of whether some form of periodical inspection should not be adopted to ensure that all motor-vehicles are maintained in a reasonably safe mechanical condition.

(c) TRAFFIC OFFENCES.

It is not generally realized that convictions for traffic offences now represent approximately 30 per cent. of the total convictions in the Magistrates' Courts. For the calendar year 1930 the number of convictions for traffic offences numbered 18,145, but this number steadily declined for various reasons to 14,136 in 1933. The following summary shows the comparisons of the principal offences for which convictions were recorded during the last five years for which figures are available.

Class of Offence.				Calendar Year.				
				1930.	1931.	1932.	1933.	1934.
Registration, &c., of vehicles	..	..	..	3,678	4,184	4,521	4,337	4,460
Lighting of vehicles	..	..	..	3,965	2,557	3,406	3,661	3,234
Negligent or dangerous driving	..	..	..	3,923	3,109	2,693	2,314	2,429
Excessive speed	..	..	..	2,120	2,084	2,052	1,428	1,269
Parking regulations	..	..	..	1,836	1,049	949	694	1,326
Other	..	..	..	2,623	2,152	1,983	1,702	1,712
Totals	..	..	..	18,145	15,135	15,604	14,136	14,430

These figures give some idea of the magnitude of the problem of traffic enforcement in the Dominion. They also indicate that the number of registration, &c., offences shows an increasing tendency, while a disquieting feature is the increase in the number of convictions for negligent or dangerous driving.