

seems probable that a Class III standard of construction on the arterial routes throughout the Dominion is not far distant. The existing position at present is set out hereunder :—

(iii) Classification of State Highways (Rural Sections).

	State Highways.	Class II.	Class III.	Class IV.	Class V.	Total Classi- fication.
	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.
North Island	2,112	27	1,115	950	..	2,092
South Island	1,629	89	1,485	..	..	1,574
Totals	3,741	116	2,600	950	..	3,666

It is notable that in areas where road surfaces are comparatively weak, such as North Auckland and the central portion of the North Island, the ruling classification is Class IV, whereas the South Island, and particularly southwards of Geraldine, a uniform Class III now prevails throughout practically the whole main-highways system.

It is considered that Class III generally provides an economic loading in rural areas, and this is particularly so in the case of multi-axled vehicles which are permitted a gross laden weight of 10 tons.

When roads are newly classified it is the usual practice to grant permits enabling vehicles which do not comply with the gross-weight limits to continue in operation for the balance of their useful life. In this way undue hardship, which would otherwise be incurred by the operators, is avoided. On replacement of these vehicles, however, it is most desirable that the new vehicle should comply with the load-restrictions, and in this way complete conformity to the classification would eventually be achieved. The indiscriminate issue of permits or slack enforcement of the classification tends to defeat this whole object, which is the preservation of the road surfaces from the damaging effect of unnecessarily heavy wheel-loads. Strict adherence to the classified limits is now being required, and unless an operator has a permit enabling him to carry excess loads, he is required to observe the prescribed limits as to gross weight.

8. MOTOR-VEHICLES AMENDMENT ACT, 1936.

SPEED-LIMITS IN BUILT-UP AREAS.

The Act provides that there should be a uniform speed limit of 30 m.p.h. (i) in all boroughs and town districts except where the Minister excludes any particular streets or roads, and (ii) in any other area approved by the Minister as a closely populated locality for this purpose. It has been found in numerous cases of boroughs and town districts that the legal boundaries do not constitute the limits of population. In order that the speed-restriction may not be unnecessarily or unreasonably applied in such instances, inspections have been carried out with a view to recommending adjustments to the commencing-points of the speed-limits, where necessary, and in a number of instances the outlying sections of the more important roads entering the towns have been excluded from the provision as to speed. There is still a great deal of work to be done in this connection in various parts of the Dominion, and this is being carried out as expeditiously as possible. It is desired that the 30 m.p.h. limit should be scrupulously observed, and the first step towards ensuring this is obviously the application of the restriction only where its observance should be reasonably expected. Numerous requests have been made by rural local authorities for the application of a speed-restriction of 30 m.p.h. through various townships and settlements in their districts. In some instances these localities have been restricted accordingly, but in the case of a considerable proportion of the applications it has been deemed more effective to rely instead upon general safe driving requirements and to draw attention to any possible hazard due to local pedestrian or other traffic by the erection of suitably placed and appropriately worded cautionary signs.

9. TRAFFIC CENSUS.

Following the first comprehensive traffic census taken in 1934-35, arrangements have been made by the Main Highways Board for a similar census to be conducted during 1937-38. As previously, this census will be confined to the rural main-highway system, and will enable both the general increase in traffic volume to be ascertained, and also the trend of traffic in respect of particular routes.

As has already been shown by the first census, the results of these traffic surveys prove invaluable in the design of roads for future traffic requirements, the allocation of funds, and in connection with investigations regarding road safety.

Actually, however, the main-highway system, to which the census relates, constitutes less than quarter of the total mileage of formed roads in New Zealand, although they carry a great deal more than that proportion of the total vehicular traffic. No similar data is available concerning other rural roads nor the urban roads and streets.