

the past few years, been consumed in aircraft. Certain types of vehicles used for agricultural purposes have been exempted from the payment of annual license fees, and this has resulted in larger amounts being refunded to certain claimants.

Year.						Number of Claims.	Amount refunded.
							£
1928	..	..	..	..	..	11,101	34,299
1929	..	..	..	..	..	19,814	60,834
1930	..	..	..	..	..	25,797	83,741
1931	..	..	..	..	..	37,116	132,150
1932	..	..	..	..	..	45,986	137,387
1933	..	..	..	..	..	49,265	138,194
1934	..	..	..	..	..	52,718	155,714
1935	..	..	..	..	..	55,447	163,884
1936	..	..	..	..	..	52,342	176,390
1937	..	..	..	..	..	50,965	188,446

The particulars of the claims paid during each of the quarterly periods in 1937 are as follows :—

Quarter.						Number of Claims.	Amount refunded.
							£ s. d.
March	..	..	..	..	..	13,564	51,238 9 6
June	..	..	..	..	..	13,543	50,885 5 2
September	..	..	..	..	..	11,783	41,675 1 8
December	..	..	..	..	..	12,075	44,646 19 9

During the calendar year 1937, 3,270 claims were lodged during the second month following the close of the respective quarterly periods and they were reduced by 10 per cent. in accordance with the provisions of section 7 of the Finance Act, 1933 (No. 2).

Refunds are made at the rate of 6d. per gallon on all motor-spirits consumed for purposes other than as fuel for motor-vehicles in respect of which annual license fees are payable. Section 13 of the Customs Acts Amendment Act, 1934, authorizes an additional refund of 2d. per gallon to be made on motor-spirits consumed in aircraft and in vessels used exclusively in the fishing industry for commercial purposes.

SPECIAL MILEAGE-TAXATION.

Mileage-tax is payable by owners of most vehicles which are not propelled exclusively by means of motor-spirits. The tax is also payable by owners of self-propelled well-boring, air-compressor, saw-bench, and crane plants, the owners of which are, in effect, exempted by the provisions of the Motor-vehicles (Special Types) Regulations, 1935, from the payment of all other forms of motor-vehicle taxation. The owners of the last-mentioned vehicles are entitled to claim refunds of duty on all of the motor-spirits consumed in operating their contrivances. As the result of the amending legislation the number of vehicles subject to the tax has increased from 198 to 276.

The figures for the last five years are as follows :—

Year ended 31st March,					Number of Vehicles.	Revenue.
						£
1934	..	..	..	..	269	1,597
1935	..	..	..	..	96	1,629
1936	..	..	..	..	142	1,813
1937	..	..	..	..	198	4,159
1938	..	..	..	..	276	10,591
Total					..	19,789

4. ROAD SAFETY.

A. GENERAL.

With the development of the motor-vehicle, especially in its speed capabilities, and its increasing use in skilled and unskilled hands, there has grown up an almost world-wide accident problem of a magnitude comparable in its effect upon the physical safety of people with the effects produced by modern warfare on a large scale. Forty years ago there were no more than four thousand petrol-driven vehicles on the road; to-day there are nearly forty million. The casualties in 1935 were not far short of two million, while the estimate for 1937 is nearly two and a quarter millions, including approximately eighty thousand killed. New Zealand's road traffic casualties, serious as they are in a country of small population, represent but a very small fraction (0.25 per cent.) of the huge world total.