

Organization.

The traffic staff is organized into four districts, each district being under the charge of a Chief Traffic Inspector. The numbers of Inspectors in each district and the length of roads which are under their control are set out hereunder :—

Traffic District.					Number of Traffic Inspectors as at 31st March, 1938.	Length of Roads, 31st March, 1936.
						Miles.
No. 1 district	..	..	..	..	16	10,230
No. 2 district	..	..	..	..	16	11,112
No. 3 district	..	..	..	..	11	9,825
No. 4 district	..	..	..	..	10	7,570
Totals	..	..	..	..	53	38,737

Duties of Traffic Inspectors.

The duties of the traffic staff are as follows :—

I. Road safety—

- (a) Securing a reasonable observance of the provisions of the Motor-vehicles Act and the regulations thereunder.
- (b) Education of motorists in their legal requirements, and in general road safety.
- (c) Reporting breaches of the traffic laws to the Department.
- (d) Conducting prosecutions in the Courts in respect of traffic offences.
- (e) Testing applicants for drivers' licenses.
- (f) Controlling motor traffic at race meetings, shows, and other occasions where the flow of traffic becomes abnormal.
- (g) General patrol of roads under their control.

II. Road Protection—

- (a) Securing reasonable observance of the Heavy Motor-vehicle Regulations which deal with the speeds, weights, loads, &c., of all heavy motor-vehicles.
- (b) Reporting breaches of these regulations to the Department.
- (c) Conducting prosecutions in the Courts in respect of offences against these regulations.

III. Regulation of Commercial Motor Transport—

- (a) Securing reasonable observance of the Transport Licensing Act and the regulations thereunder.
- (b) Reporting breaches of these laws to the Department.
- (c) Conducting prosecutions in the Courts in respect of offences against these laws.

IV. Taxation—

Generally seeing that all fees, licenses, and third-party insurance premiums are paid.

PROSECUTIONS.

During the year ended 31st March, 1938, some 4,003 informations were laid by the Department in respect of breaches of the laws relating to motor traffic; convictions were obtained in 3,846 cases, and the Courts imposed fines (exclusive of costs) amounting to £6,667. In 93 instances the cases were dismissed by the Courts, and 64 informations were withdrawn. Full details of these cases are set out in Table II in the Appendix.

It is estimated that for every case of prosecution there were between 6 and 10 cases where warnings or advice were given.

TRAFFIC OFFENCES BUREAU.

Up till the end of September, 1937, the Traffic Inspectors attached to the Department took cases against offending motorists on their own initiative. As from the 1st October, 1937, the Inspectors handed each offender on the spot a traffic-offence notice, which sets out the full details of the alleged offence and explains that the offender may, if he so desires, submit an explanation direct to the Commissioner of Transport, who will decide whether or not a prosecution will be taken.

The principal advantages of the new scheme are, firstly, that it would tend to result in a uniform policy as regards prosecutions; secondly, a motorist is notified of the offence when it occurs or as soon as possible thereafter and is given an opportunity of submitting an explanation before a prosecution is decided on; and, thirdly, the traffic-offence notices provide a national record of prosecutions and warnings. Knowing this, the motorists would tend to pay more respect to the observance of the law.