

FINANCIAL AND TRAFFIC DATA.

Attention is directed to the fact that owing to this report being required earlier this year it has not been possible to include the tabulated results of the financial and traffic data which has been obtained for the year ended 31st March, 1938. This will be published later on as soon as it becomes available.

C. CO-ORDINATION OF LONG-DISTANCE SERVICES.

Further negotiations were carried out during the year in connection with the purchase of some fifty-four operators who run road freight services for particularly long distances over routes that are parallel with the railways. The tribunal, consisting of one representative of the road and railway interests respectively and presided over by Sir Francis Frazer, considered thirteen cases during the year. The recommendations made by the tribunal in these cases were unanimous, and the prices recommended have been accepted by the parties concerned.

D. TAXI-CABS IN CHRISTCHURCH TRANSPORT DISTRICT.

As mentioned on page 29 of the report for last year, a Committee of Investigation was set up by the Minister of Transport on the 16th September, 1936, to report to him on the taxi-cab and town carrier industries throughout New Zealand. On 19th December, 1936, the Committee made its report, which disclosed what it considered to be a chaotic state of affairs in the taxi-cab industry. The Committee recommended, *inter alia*, that all taxi-cab services be brought under the provisions of the Transport Licensing Act, 1931.

A circular was addressed to all local authorities on 28th April, 1937, drawing attention to the above Committee's report, and advising that, although it was possible to bring taxi-cabs under the Transport Licensing Act by issue of a warrant under hand of the Minister of Transport, it was intended to obtain legislative sanction before taking such a step in view of the fact that these services had been specially exempted when the legislation was enacted. It was stated that if any local authority desired such step to be taken in advance of the amending legislation the proposal would receive consideration on receipt of a request from the local authority.

On 25th May, 1937, the Christchurch City Council advised the Minister that it was agreeable to action being taken forthwith to bring taxi-cabs in the Christchurch Transport District under the Transport Licensing Act, and on 10th June, 1937, the Minister signed a warrant for this purpose, but the gazetting of the warrant was held over until 1st July, 1937.

Meantime, for the purpose of obtaining views of all interested parties on the effect of the control, and the aims to be sought through the licensing system before it became effective, a conference of all interested parties was summoned in Christchurch by the Minister on the 23rd June, 1937. Matters discussed and agreed to included hours of work, wages, fares, taxi-meters, and other important subjects to be dealt with in the licenses.

The above-mentioned warrant was then gazetted, thereby completing legal steps for bringing Christchurch taxi-cabs under the Transport Licensing Act, and on the 12th August, 1937, an Order in Council was gazetted whereby these vehicles were exempted from Certificates of Fitness, thus leaving their mechanical inspection under control of Christchurch City Council.

Sittings of Christchurch City Council as Metropolitan Licensing Authority were commenced on 18th October, 1937, to deal with the applications from eight-four persons owning 157 taxi-cabs, and on 18th November, 1937, the decisions of the Authority were given whereby 73 applications were granted and 11 applications were refused. A standard list of special conditions was applied to each license granted.

Appeals were lodged within twenty-one days of the above date from proprietors owning 123 taxi-cabs out of the total of 157 applied for. On 26th February, 1938, the Minister gave an interim appeal decision amending certain of the above-mentioned special conditions, and in particular altering the fare conditions, driving-hours, and requiring fitting of taxi-meters. The Minister gave his final appeal decision on 14th March, 1938, when he confirmed the refusal of licenses to two applicants, but granted licenses to six owner-driver applicants who were refused a license by the City Council.

So far as the number of cabs is concerned, the final result of the licensing and appeal action taken to date in respect of these vehicles under the Transport Licensing Act, 1931, is as follows:—

Licensed by Council under by-laws	..	..	..	..	165 taxi-cabs.
Transport licenses sought for	..	..	..	..	157 taxi-cabs.
Transport licenses granted by City Council for	..	..	..	..	134 taxi-cabs.
Transport licenses granted by Minister for	..	..	..	..	140 taxi-cabs.

Arising from the action taken, as above described, the taxi-cab industry in Christchurch has been stabilized, fares have been fixed which are reasonable to all parties and are easily enforceable, wages, hours of driving, and other working-conditions have been improved, and competition among the taxi-cab owners has been placed on a reasonable basis.