

It is estimated that the general increase in motor traffic on the whole of the national roading system has been about 8 per cent. since 1937-38. The whole of this increase occurred during 1938-39, but, owing to curtailment of use during the latter part of 1939-40, there has been no further increase for the whole year, although individual months show very considerable fluctuation in use. Over the whole year there has been a very slight falling off in use since the preceding year, although during the first six months the petrol figures show that there was a further increase of more than 10 per cent. over the corresponding period of 1938-39. No separate figures are available for the different systems, which together comprise the national roading system.

C. ROAD FINANCE.

(1) DOMINION'S ROAD BILL, 1935-39.

The Department has investigated the numerous statistical data available from official sources and has analysed and classified them in order to show approximately what the roads, streets, and bridges are costing under the headings of construction, maintenance, and loan charges.

The classification of the roads into main highways, urban roads and streets, and other roads has been carried out, as each class of road or street has differing problems attached to it. This classification has involved a certain amount of estimation, as also have certain aspects of the figures for the whole road bill. Any estimations have been made on a conservative basis, and the figures are sufficiently close to actual fact to form a basis for reliable broad conclusions.

The following table shows the expenditure for the three years 1936-37 to 1938-39 under the headings of "Construction," "Maintenance," and "Interest and sinking-fund charges":—

Year.	Maintenance.	Construction.	Interest and Sinking-fund Charges.	Total.
	£	£	£	£
1936-37	2,777,099	1,004,859	2,226,742	9,008,700
1937-38	3,211,188	5,053,326	2,358,584	10,623,098
1938-39	3,711,737	6,665,941	2,555,292	12,932,970

Of the total figure of £12,933,000 for 1938-39, £6,000,000 was spent on main highways, £2,300,000 on urban roads and streets, and £4,600,000 on other roads. The comparative figures for the previous year were—main highways, £4,700,000; urban roads and streets, £2,000,000, and other roads, £3,900,000.

The expenditure on main highways was made up of construction, £3,330,000; maintenance, £1,950,000; and sinking-fund and interest charges, £730,000.

On urban roads and streets £1,300,000 was spent on construction, £450,000 on maintenance, and £570,000 in interest and sinking-fund charges.

With other roads construction totalled £2,030,000, maintenance £1,300,000, and interest and sinking-fund charges, £1,250,000.

SOURCES OF MONEYS SPENT ON ROAD BILL, 1936-37 TO 1938-39.

The sources of the moneys spent on roads for the three years 1936-37 to 1938-39 are set out hereunder:

Year.	Loan Moneys.	Local Rates.	Unemployment or Employment Taxation.	General Taxation.	Motor Taxation.	Total.
<i>Main Highways.</i>						
	£	£	£	£	£	£
1936-37	892,274	517,507	5,662	169,239	1,958,949	3,543,601
1937-38	1,708,635	448,949	97,864	213,299	2,222,301	4,691,048
1938-39	2,739,751	451,737	297,531	233,098	2,297,072	6,019,189
<i>Urban Roads.</i>						
1936-37	199,783	1,059,920	330,156	..	346,457	1,936,316
1937-38	203,827	1,097,237	336,140	..	389,110	2,026,314
1938-39	157,429	1,077,607	705,807	..	393,051	2,333,894
<i>Other Roads.</i>						
1936-37	939,714	916,181	357,220	1,017,082	298,586	3,528,783
1937-38	1,169,128	1,027,709	276,695	1,101,369	330,835	3,905,736
1938-39	1,350,322	1,168,289	554,242	1,185,080	321,954	4,579,887

Loan moneys spent on roads show an increase of £1,160,000 on 1937-38, while moneys from the Employment Promotion Fund for the same purpose increased by nearly £870,000. Moneys spent from other sources show only a very slight increase.