

B. PUBLICITY AND ADULT EDUCATION.

During the period of this report publicity and adult educational activities were carried out as follows :—

Films.—One of the main developments in the Department's publicity activities during the year was the screening of safety films at a number of public gatherings throughout New Zealand. These films invariably attracted large audiences and proved an excellent medium for demonstrating the principles of safe conduct on the roads.

Driver Tests.—Valuable road-safety educational work was carried out in the Department's pavilion at the Centennial Exhibition by means of films and driver-testing machines. This apparatus represents the latest advancement in scientific examination of driving ability, and was designed by Dr. H. De Silva, of Harvard University, U.S.A. The machines test reaction time, steering ability, visual acuity, binocular co-ordination, ability to resist the adverse effects of glaring headlights, speed of recovery from these effects, fidelity of vision, peripheral vision, and ability to estimate speeds. All these capacities are of considerable importance in driving.

Members of the public were invited to undergo the tests, and a booklet explaining the machines was later given to all tested. This booklet contained a graph showing how a person's score compared with that of the average driver. Any faults or weaknesses which were revealed were explained, and advice was given as to the measures which should be undertaken to counteract these defects.

Considerable interest was shown in the exhibit, and more than six thousand persons were tested. Not only to those undergoing the tests, but also to their friends and onlookers, this form of adult education proved exceptionally valuable. It fostered an appreciation of the skills needed for safe driving and encouraged a critical attitude towards one's abilities. It also proved very useful in detecting individual defects which, had they not been revealed to the driver concerned, would have rendered him or her liable to accident.

The following were the main additional types of publicity work carried out during the year :—

Press.—Excellent co-operation was received from the press in the publication of appeals and articles.

Radio.—The Department is indebted to the National and Commercial Broadcasting Services for their valuable co-operation in broadcasting slogans, addresses, and dialogue.

Book-cover Publicity. Thanks are due to the proprietors of the *N.Z. Race Guide* for publishing appeals in quarter-million copies at very cheap rates. Magazine wrappers have also been utilized for the publishing of road-safety messages and cartoons.

Motor-cyclists.—A number of meetings have been held with motor-cycle road-safety committees in various centres. A considerable improvement in the road-safety conduct of motor-cyclists is reported.

Leaflets. A leaflet was issued to motorists on the occasion of the annual reissuing of driving licenses.

Screen Slides. Screen slides were displayed in a number of theatres prior to the Christmas holiday period.

Posters.—One pictorial poster and one slogan poster were printed and widely distributed during the year.

Churches.—Valuable co-operation was given by churches in the delivering of appeals for care and caution on the roads.

Cycle Boards. A thousand strawboard signs to hang between the frame of a bicycle were distributed to the Department's Inspectors for local use.

Special Efforts.—Special road-safety efforts, lasting a week in each case, were conducted in New Plymouth and Hawera in conjunction with the Winter Show and the Automobile Associations. Road-safety films were displayed in Christchurch at the Industries Fair and, to a lesser extent, at Palmerston North during an enforcement week.

Insurance Company Co-operation.—A generous gift of £500 to be devoted to a special Christmas campaign was received from the combined motor insurance companies. This enabled a special publicity effort to be made, including the production and distribution of a three-colour poster. Conduct on the road during this period was reported to be the best for many years.

Following the outbreak of war and realization of the need for conserving resources, Great Britain and Australia increased their grants for accident-prevention publicity. Colonel Bruxner, the Minister of Transport for New South Wales, indicates in the following words the wartime necessity for the conservation of man-power and material resources through an adequate road-safety campaign :—

“ This is one of the services on the home front that must be continued, war or no war, and, if possible, extended, for the very vital reason that the nation cannot afford to lose even one life when the loss can be prevented. Services to the cause of road safety, therefore, are of even greater national importance to-day than they are in time of peace.”

Similar sentiments have been expressed by transport authorities in Great Britain. In New Zealand the need for an increased campaign in road-safety adult education is as great as elsewhere in the Empire. The national economic loss resulting from road accidents runs annually into more than a million pounds. If the accident rate since the reimposition of the petrol-restrictions is not reduced, by the end of the present financial year 250 persons will have been killed and approximately 5,000 injured on the roads.