

The above table shows that there were 3,774 fewer motor-cars, 1,492 fewer motor-cycles, and 48 fewer omnibuses on the road in 1932-33 as compared with 1931-32. The number of trucks actually increased by 675, due mainly to conversions of motor-cars to light trucks, while tractors gained from 426 to 561, and trailers from 1,160 to 1,545. The consumption of petrol shows a drop of just over 5,000,000 gallons, or approximately 10 per cent., for the calendar year 1933, as compared with 1932, which fact, considered in conjunction with the preceding figures regarding vehicles, appears to indicate a reduction in the average mileage per vehicle during 1932-33 as well as a drop in the average number of vehicles actually on the road throughout the year.

The outstanding point disclosed by the foregoing figures is not the actual decrease in the use of motor-vehicles during 1932-33, but the relative smallness of the decrease. It is very plain evidence of the strength of the demand for motor-vehicles in the Dominion that, in a year of unparalleled and severe shrinkage in the national income, the number of trucks, trailers, and tractors should increase, that the number of motor-cars and cycles should decrease by 2.88 and 6.35 per cent. only respectively, and the total consumption of benzine should be only 5,000,000 gallons, or 10 per cent., less than the preceding year, and only 13,000,000 gallons, or approximately 20 per cent., below the figure for 1930, which was the highest ever recorded. These facts are indicative of the important place occupied by the motor-vehicles in the economic and social life of the Dominion.

(e) PETROL CONSUMPTION.

The following table shows a classification of the petrol consumed in the Dominion during the last five calendar years according to whether it was consumed in motor-vehicles or otherwise.

Calendar Year.	Consumption of Petrol.		
	By Motor-vehicles (i.e., Petrol on which all Duty was paid).	Other (Engines, Aero- planes, &c.), (Petrol on which Refunds of Duty were made).	Total.
	Gallons.	Gallons.	Gallons.
1928	41,457,150	2,057,940	43,515,090
1929	56,575,840	3,650,040	60,225,880
1930	62,821,479	3,907,900	66,729,379
1931	55,203,252	5,286,000	60,489,252
1932	49,861,449	5,495,479	55,356,928

The figures in the first column afford a reasonably reliable index of the usage of motor-vehicles during the last five years, subject to allowance being made for the growing use of smaller cars with a lower consumption of petrol.

(f) MOTOR-VEHICLE REGULATIONS, 1933.

In February of this year the Motor-vehicle Regulations, 1928, together with amendments, were consolidated and reissued as the Motor-vehicle Regulations, 1933. These new regulations are, with the exception of two important amendments and a number of more or less minor alterations, similar to the previous regulations.

The two amendments of general importance are as under:—

Regulation 4: Equipment; Brakes.—The old regulations provided that when a motor-vehicle is travelling at 20 miles per hour the foot-brake shall be capable of bringing the vehicle to rest within 50 ft. and the hand-brake within 75 ft. The importance of efficient and adequate brakes on motor-vehicles cannot be overstressed, and the new regulations, therefore, were made more exacting in this respect and the distance within which a foot-brake shall be capable of bringing a motor-vehicle to a stop has been decreased to 40 ft.

Regulation 15: Speed.—Under the old regulations there was no absolute speed restriction for motor-vehicles, but the new regulations provide that for the present the limit of speed shall be 40 miles per hour on roads other than dustless surfaced roads (with the exception of the Picton-Bluff main highway, where the speed-limit is forty-five miles per hour on the non-dustless sections).

3. MOTOR-SPIRITS TAXATION ACT, 1927.

The motor-spirits tax was increased from 6d. to 8d. per gallon as from the 7th October, 1931, and a further increase to 10d. was made as from the 9th February, 1933.

The following data show the yield from and distribution of the petrol-tax for the year ended 31st March, 1933. The figures regarding the net yield for previous years are given for comparative purposes:—

	(a) YIELD.	£
Gross yield	2,000,996
Deductions—		
Refunds and cost of making same..	135,234
Net yield	£1,865,762