

REPORT.

1. INTRODUCTORY.

THE year 1935-36 has been one of outstanding events in the motor-transport industry. Both passenger and goods services licensed under the Transport Licensing Act, 1931, reflect expansion of business and increasing prosperity. New car registrations during the year were recorded as 19,469, only 1,400 behind the record figures for 1930. The registrations of commercial vehicles are the highest yet recorded.

The quantity of petrol consumed by motor transport was just under 62,000,000 gallons, against 56,000,000 for the previous year and 63,000,000 gallons in 1929-30.

The receipts from all classes of motor-taxation (including Customs duties in respect of vehicles and parts) was just under £4,500,000, the highest figure yet recorded.

The annual expenditure on roads, streets, and bridges was just under £7,300,000, an increase of £430,000 over the figure for the previous year.

While expenditure on construction work dropped from £2,465,000 in 1933-34 to £2,361,000 in 1934-35, and interest and sinking-fund charges decreased from £2,354,000 in 1933-34 to £2,303,000 in 1934-35, the expenditure on maintenance rose from £2,025,000 in 1933-34 to £2,608,000 in 1934-35.

A further 1,300 miles of roads were classified according to load-limits during the year. Just over 88 per cent. of the main highways and 50 per cent. of the rural roads are now classified.

Detailed results of the first national road-traffic census ever held in the Dominion became available during the year.

Motor accidents caused 203 deaths during the year, an increase of 21 over the figure for the previous year. For the first time on record the claims paid under the third-party-insurance scheme were greater than the premium revenue, the figures being premiums £211,000 and claims £288,000.

Far-reaching changes were made in the legislation relating to the licensing of motor transport. The more important of these were the introduction of the three-year, in place of the annual, tenure of licenses, the simplification of licensing procedure, the reduction in the number of licensing authorities from nine to four and the personnel of the licensing authorities from three persons to one person, the abolition of the Transport Co-ordination Board and the vesting of its functions in the Minister of Transport.

2. MOTOR-VEHICLES INSURANCE (THIRD-PARTY RISKS) ACT, 1928.

(a) STATISTICS.

The Motor-vehicles Insurance (Third-party Risks) Act passed in 1928 compels every owner of a motor-vehicle to insure against liability to pay damages on account of the death or injury to another person caused through the use of a motor-vehicle.

Payment of the insurance premiums is made annually to the Deputy Registrars of Motor-vehicles simultaneously with that of the annual license fee payable under the Motor-vehicles Act. Owners of motor-vehicles are required to nominate each year the insurance company with which the contract of insurance is to be made.

For the year ended 31st May, 1935, forty-four insurance concerns gave the prescribed notice to undertake business under the Act, and carried on business accordingly. The following table shows the experience of the scheme during the six years ended 31st May, 1935. The figures for claims do not represent the amount paid during each year, but refer to accidents happening during each particular period.

Year ended 31st May,	Revenue from Premiums.	Claims paid and Estimated Liability for Claims outstanding at 31st May.	Claim Ratio.
	£	£	Per Cent.
1930	235,007	202,380	86·12
1931	242,864	186,379	76·74
1932	233,731	161,352	69·03
1933	229,133	151,095	65·94
1934	221,734	198,614	89·57
1935	211,709	288,554	136·30
Totals	1,374,178	1,188,374	86·48

(b) ANNUAL REVIEW OF PREMIUM RATES.

Section 16 of the Act provides that the amount of the premiums to be paid in respect of third-party insurance may be fixed from time to time by Order in Council.

In accordance with the usual practice, the financial operations of the companies undertaking this class of insurance were carefully examined, and it was decided to make no alterations to the existing premiums.