

(d) MOTOR-TAXATION.

Table No. 7 shows an analysis of the revenue received from the various taxes and fees levied in connection with motor-vehicles, together with comparative figures for the previous thirteen years.

The total amount for 1935-36 was £4,451,863, the greatest figure yet recorded. The increase of £549,311 over the previous year is mainly due to an increase of approximately £308,000 in motor-spirits tax and £191,000 in Customs duties on motor-vehicles and parts.

7. HEAVY MOTOR-VEHICLE REGULATIONS, 1932.

(a) ALLOCATION OF HEAVY TRAFFIC LICENSE FEES.

The regulations provide that, where the local authorities in any heavy-traffic district are unable to agree as to the distribution of the heavy-traffic fees collected in that district they may apply to the Minister of Transport to apportion those fees. During the year several applications were received from various districts, but in each case agreement was finally reached as the result of negotiations.

For the purpose of a Minister's allocation under the regulations it is necessary for the Department to investigate the road-expenditure figures in the heavy-traffic district. This involves a considerable amount of work, and the regulations were therefore amended to provide that in such cases there should be power to deduct one-half of 1 per cent. of the total amount of fees to be distributed and to credit this amount to the Consolidated Fund.

Tentative proposals for amending the regulations with the object of simplifying the system of apportionment by Minister's order were submitted to all local authorities. The majority who replied expressed themselves in favour of the proposals, but a small number brought forward very definite and relevant objections to the suggested amendment.

On the instructions of the Minister, the Department is at present carrying out investigations into the whole question of motor-taxation. This investigation will naturally cover the incidence and allocation of heavy-traffic fees. Consequently it appears undesirable that any major alterations should, at this stage, be made to the existing method of apportioning the fees by Minister's order.

(b) LIMITATION OF LOADS ON ROADS.

Alterations in Axle Weights allowable.

Experience has shown that in three-axled vehicles where one axle only is driven it is desirable that the axle-load of the driven axle be slightly greater than that of the trailing axle. To meet the position the regulations were amended to allow of an increase of approximately 15 per cent. on the maximum axle weights formerly allowed. No increase is allowed in the maximum gross weights nor is the condition affected whereby at least 18 per cent. of the total weight must be borne by the steering-axle. The amendment does not apply to two-axled vehicles, and the new table of load limits is as follows:—

Classification of Roads.	Heavy Motor-vehicles other than multi-axled Heavy Motor-vehicles.		Multi-axled Heavy Motor-vehicles.	
	Maximum Gross Weight.	Maximum Axle Weight.	Maximum Gross Weight.	Maximum Axle Weight.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Class II	8·0	6·4	12·0	5·5
Class III	6·5	5·2	10·0	4·6
Class IV	4·5	3·6	6·5	3·0
Class V	3·0	2·4	4·5	2·1

The Position regarding Road Classification.

During the period under review 1,300 miles of main highways and other rural roads were classified. In the Hawke's Bay, Takaka, and Southland counties, where no roads were formerly classified, there is now a uniform classification of Class III over the main highways, except in the case of the higher types of road surfaces adjacent to Napier and Hastings.

The existing position in regard to the classification of rural roads generally and of the main highway system is set out in the following tables:—

(i) *Classification of Rural Roads.*

—				Formed Roads.	Class II.	Class III.	Class IV.	Class V.	Total Classification.
				Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.
North Island .. .. .	..	..	..	26,025	313	4,551	8,469	3,197	16,530
South Island .. .. .	..	..	..	21,929	811	4,848	2,250	312	8,221
Totals .. .. .	..	..	..	47,954	1,124	9,399	10,719	3,509	24,751