

E. VEHICLES ACTUALLY ON THE ROAD.

The number of vehicles licensed on the register kept in accord with the provisions of the Motor-vehicles Act, 1924, may be taken as a reasonable indication of the number of vehicles actually on the road. The number of vehicles licensed have been estimated from month to month, and the averages for the years ending on the 31st March, 1938, to the 31st March, 1940, are given hereunder :—

Class of Vehicle.	Averages.		
	1938.	1939.	1940.
	Number.	Number.	Number.
Cars	172,899	193,733	208,233
Trucks, light, up to 2 tons laden	24,214	25,413	26,063
Trucks, heavy, over 2 tons laden	18,965	19,883	20,750
Omnibuses	622	667	707
Taxis	1,682	1,672	1,607
Rental cars and private-hire cars	601	703	729
Service cars	648	626	616
Dealers' cars	1,687	1,868	1,842
Local-body road vehicles	2,276	3,439	1,922
Government vehicles	2,371	3,118	3,929
Dealers' motor-cycles	135	135	133
Motor-cycles	19,947	18,627	17,164
Trailers	5,119	6,758	7,826
Passenger-trucks	1,190	1,457	1,659
Totals	252,359	278,099	296,180

There has again been an increase in the average number of vehicles on the road, there being 18,081, or 6·5 per cent., more vehicles in use on the average than in 1938-39. Cars once more show a large increase of 14,500, or 7·5 per cent., more than the average number on the road for 1938-39.

F. PETROL CONSUMPTION.

The following table shows a classification of the manner in which petrol was consumed in the Dominion during the last three calendar years :—

Calendar Year.	Estimated Consumption of Petrol.		
	By Motor-vehicles— i.e., Petrol on which all Duty was paid.	Other—i.e., Engines, Aeroplanes, &c. (Petrol on which Refunds of Duty were made).	Total
	Gallons.	Gallons.	Gallons.
1937	82,110,905	7,339,000	89,449,905
1938	89,306,192	7,590,000	96,896,192
1939	91,954,671	8,027,000	99,981,671

3. ROADS.

A. LIMITATION OF LOADS ON ROADS.

It is now a generally accepted principle that the damaging effect of heavy vehicles on the road surface is dependent upon the axle weight of the vehicle rather than upon its gross weight. Until some two years ago there has been in this country a gross-weight restriction and also an axle-weight restriction in respect of all heavy motor-vehicles under the various road classifications. In December, 1937, the gross-weight limitation on multi-axled vehicles was removed, and this action has now been followed in respect of all types of heavy motor-vehicles, the limitations now being in respect of axle weights only.

Furthermore, the maximum axle weights prescribed for multi-axled vehicles were previously considerably lower than those for two-axled vehicles operating on roads of the same classification. These have been increased so that they are now only $\frac{1}{2}$ ton less than the corresponding axle-weight limits for two-axled vehicles.