

*General.*

An important activity of the Department is the formation of a complete transport reference library. All the known useful periodicals in English relating to the Department's duties are regularly obtained, and their substance is thoroughly indexed. Numerous works of authority on the various problems of transport are held or being obtained, and statutes and other data relating to transport conditions in other countries are also received. It may, therefore, be stated that the Department is kept thoroughly abreast of the times in its activities. When the library is more complete, it is intended to encourage those interested in transport in New Zealand to regard the Department's library as a bureau of information available to all *bona fide* inquirers.

A task of considerable magnitude has been in progress practically from the commencement of the Department, and is still proceeding—namely, the preparation of statements and statistics showing the full position as regards the incidence of motor-taxation in New Zealand, and reviewing the whole field of such taxation. This is dealt with more fully later in this report, but it is hoped that from these activities an answer may be given to a problem which, so far as is known, has not yet been solved by any country—namely, the correct proportion of the costs of the roads which should be borne by traffic using the roads and by the different classes of such traffic.

## 2. FUNCTIONS OF DEPARTMENT.

The enactments administered by the Transport Department comprise the whole of the New Zealand legislation (other than local Acts) dealing with road transport and the classification and protection of roads. It will be seen, therefore, that the functions of the Transport Department are:—

- (1) Co-ordination of the available means of transport :
- (2) The examination of the economic position with regard to roads and road transport :
- (3) Investigation of the incidence of taxation on all forms of motor transport, based upon value to community, and costs of road construction and maintenance, value of production, &c. :
- (4) Protection of roads by means of classification according to weights and speeds :
- (5) The fixing of standards in vehicle-design for the more economical use of roads and safety to passengers :
- (6) Registration and licensing of motor-vehicles in general, and measures for the safe regulation of road traffic :
- (7) The framing of legislative proposals and regulations for the administration of the Department's functions.

## 3. ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING.

The organization of the Department to carry out these functions has been arranged as follows:—

1 Commissioner of Transport as the administrative head of the Department.

2. *Road Engineering* : Applications were invited for the position of Civil Engineer to the Department, and this position was filled by the appointment of Mr. G. L. Laurensen, A.M.Inst.C.E., A.M.N.Z. Soc.C.E., chartered civil engineer, formerly of the Public Works Department, who will carry out all work in connection with the protection of roads by means of classification according to the transport requirements of the areas to be served, and any other action considered necessary, such as speed-restriction, &c. This officer will also be responsible for all the technical investigation work to enable information to be ascertained as to cost of construction and maintenance of roads of the various standards, with the object of arriving at an approximate index figure representing cost per ton-mile, and also as a basis for ascertaining data upon which to fix motor-taxation. Of course, other economic factors are also necessary to arrive at a reasonable basis of taxation. Generally speaking, the work of the Road Engineer includes all aspects of road construction and maintenance and the use of roads by motor-vehicles for the protection of the roads and safety of the traffic thereon.

3. *Mechanical Engineering* : The duties and responsibilities of the Mechanical Engineer embrace—

- (a) All matters relating to the design, construction, maintenance, and proper operation of motor-vehicles ;
- (b) Essentials in tires, fuels, accessories, and equipment ;
- (c) The distribution of loads and the cost of operation of motor-vehicles in general :
- (d) The requirements in road signs and warning-devices :
- (e) The examination of motor-vehicle and other plans and specifications as a preliminary to the gazetting of approved types :
- (f) The control of district officers in the enforcement of constructional regulations and in the issue of certificates of fitness for omnibuses that are operating in the motor-omnibus districts :
- (g) The control of the associated correspondence :
- (h) His advice upon motor transportation if sought by other Departments ; and
- (i) He is the Department's Engineer representative on the Motor-vehicle Mechanical Appliances Committee.

In the fast-developing field of motor transportation it is an imperative duty of the Mechanical Engineer to attempt to keep abreast of the times by the study of technical publications and papers, also through the perusal of the selected invaluable periodicals which are received regularly from overseas.