

In general, owing to indifferent enforcement of the licensing regulations, the public are not getting the standard of service they are entitled to, nor does the State or the licensing authority obtain as much in fees from the omnibus business as would be paid to them were such traffic controlled properly.

The majority of the licensed omnibuses now operating in this Dominion have chassis that were built for the carriage of goods (with a relatively light body), and it is not surprising that they have proved unsuitable for the more exacting passenger-carrying business.

One good reason for the preponderance of American-built chassis in New Zealand omnibus service is that small vehicles of eighteen to twenty-five seats were initially required, a type which England was not then offering overseas. However, the experience of the past has proved the commercial chassis a misfit, while the natural growth in passenger traffic has created a demand for larger chassis of the genuine omnibus type, with the result that the new buses meet with approval from all quarters, and will bring to the proprietor the good will of the bus-travelling public.

Motor-vehicles Act, 1924.

Early this year a conference of all interested parties was called by the Minister for the purpose of reviewing the regulations relating to general motor traffic and to motor-drivers' licenses. The conference very carefully reviewed these regulations, and as a result they have been redrafted with many amendments, and are being circulated for criticism before being finally reissued.

Some months later, owing to the serious situation indicated by the numerous motor accidents of recent times, the Minister decided to call a further conference of all interests likely to be able to help in consideration of methods of reducing these accidents. The conference has made some very important recommendations to the Government for this purpose, and these recommendations are at present either being given effect to or are under full investigation with a view to decision. One important result of the conference is that by co-operation with the insurance interests statistics covering a wide field of traffic accidents will be supplied free of cost to the Government.

The Minister of Transport has power to approve of mechanical direction-indicators, anti-dazzle devices, and other appliances for fitting to motor-vehicles, and for his guidance a committee of experts, first appointed under Public Works administration, reports on the various appliances submitted. The committee is representative of traffic authorities, police, motor interests, and the Transport Department, and its services, provided at no little sacrifice by the members, are much appreciated.

Public Works Act, 1928 (Sections dealing with Traffic).

Recently the Department has been successful in obtaining the services of a civil engineer, who was immediately called upon to review the road-classification of various local authorities, commencing with those near Auckland. As a result many of the classifications have been altered with the concurrence of the local bodies concerned, and, as revised, they are generally accepted by both local authorities and heavy-vehicle owners as being reasonable.

The rigid-framed three-axled motor-vehicle is one of the latest developments of commercial transport, and it is claimed that this vehicle goes some distance towards solving the problem of the carriage of heavy loads without undue wear on the road. The Government has recently issued regulations with a view to this type of vehicle receiving concessions in connection with maximum weight and road classifications, but these concessions do no more than make recognition of its road-saving qualities as compared with the corresponding type of two-axled vehicle. The same regulations increased by $\frac{1}{2}$ ton the legal carrying-capacity of fourth-class and third-class roads to overcome an anomaly whereby certain more robust types of motor-lorry (principally of British manufacture) were unduly penalized as compared with the lighter lorry of the same class.

Motor-vehicles Insurance (Third-party Risks) Act, 1928.

What might be regarded as an anomaly in this Act has been brought to notice, in that if a motorist fails to stop after his negligence has caused an accident an injured party (or his dependants if death results) has no redress from the insurance cover provided by the Act, unless the motorist can be located. A conference of the insurance interests and the Department was held at the request of the Minister to see if some method could be devised to meet such cases without recourse being had to legislation. As a result a scheme has been evolved, and an agreement is at present being circulated to the insurance interests which, if accepted and signed by all, will result in a satisfactory solution of this difficulty.

The regulations originally issued, fixing the premiums payable and relative details, were revised and reissued recently with a view to clearing up several points which had caused difficulty. The Act has not been in force for sufficient time to enable the scale of premiums to be reviewed, but this will be done as soon as ample actuarial data exist.

Motor-spirits Taxation Act, 1927.

Apart from the general question of motor-taxation the principal work involved by the administration of this Act is the refund of the tax to applicants who have used the motor-spirit in a manner entitling them to the refund. This work is done by the Post Office, and, although complaints are received from time to time, it is considered that, in view of the volume of applications and the care necessary to minimize possibility of fraud, the work is done as efficiently and with as little inconvenience to the public as can be expected.

Tramways Act, 1908.

The Department has been charged by the Government with the administration of this Act, but arrangements have been made meantime for the engineering aspects of the administration (inspection of trams, tracks, &c.) to be attended to by the Public Works Department, while the Transport Department investigates proposals under the Act from the transport point of view.