

The main points disclosed by the above figures are an increase of forty-seven vehicles in 1930-31 as compared with 1929-30 ; an increase of 1,400,000, or 10 per cent., in the vehicle mileage ; a decrease of 400,000, or 2 per cent., in the number of passengers carried ; and an increase of £12,000, or 2 per cent., in the total receipts.

In the absence of information relating to the average length of passenger journeys, it is impossible to say whether the decrease in the number of passengers carried has been compensated by an increase in the length of journeys. Although the average mileage per vehicle remained at 25,000 miles in 1930-31, the number of passengers per vehicle and the receipts per annum declined by 4,000, or 9 per cent., and £100, or 8 per cent., respectively. The average receipts per passenger carried increased from 7d. to 7·2d., while the receipts per vehicle-mile receded from 12·7d. to 11·7d.

Omnibus and Railway Competition.

The expansion during 1930-31 in the omnibus services operating on routes that parallel railway routes affords evidence of the further displacement of the railway by the omnibus in the field of short-distance suburban passenger transportation. The number of vehicles employed on these routes increased from 220 to 283, while those on routes where there was no railway decreased from 342 to 326.

The following figures show the position with respect to the services that operated on routes which paralleled the railways, and those on other routes, for the years ended 31st March, 1930 and 1931 :—

				Year ended 31st March,		Percentage.	
				1930.	1931.	Increase.	Decrease.
(a) Omnibus Routes that substantially parallel Rail Routes.							
Vehicles	..	..	Number	220	283	29	..
Vehicle mileage	..	..	Miles	7,200,000	8,600,000	20	..
Passengers	..	..	Number	8,000,000	8,100,000	1	..
Receipts	..	..	£	380,000	413,000	9	..
(b) Omnibus Routes that do not parallel Rail Routes.							
Vehicles	..	..	Number	342	326	..	5
Vehicle mileage	..	..	Miles	6,700,000	6,700,000	..	..
Passengers	..	..	Number	17,200,000	16,700,000	..	2
Receipts	..	..	£	356,000	334,000	..	3

SERVICE-CARS.

The number of vehicles operating as service-cars increased from 501 in January, 1930, to 542 in January, 1931 ; the vehicle mileage increased from 15,000,000 to 17,300,000, or by 15 per cent. As these vehicles operate mainly over rural roads, and as the maintenance-cost of these roads is determined by, *inter alia*, the volume and speed of traffic thereon, this increase in the mileage is closely connected with the increasing maintenance-cost of rural roads.

The number of passengers carried increased from 1,220,000 in 1929-30 to 1,240,000 in 1930-31, while the total receipts gained from £507,000 to £539,000, or by 6 per cent.

The following table shows the principal information available relating to the operation of service-cars during the years ended 31st March, 1930 and 1931 :—

				Year ended 31st March,		Percentage.	
Item.				1930.	1931.	Increase.	Decrease.
Vehicles	..	..	Number	523	564	8	..
Vehicle mileage	..	..	Miles	15,000,000	17,300,000	15	..
Passengers	..	..	Number	1,220,000	1,240,000	2	..
Receipts	..	..	£	507,000	539,000	6	..
Average mileage per vehicle per annum	..	..	Miles	29,000	31,000	7	..
Average number of passengers per vehicle per annum	..	..	Number	2,300	2,200	..	4
Average receipts per annum per vehicle	..	..	£	969	956	..	1
Average receipts per passenger	..	..	d.	100	104	4	..
Average receipts per vehicle-mile	..	..	d.	8·1	7·5	..	7

The above figures show that the average service-car ran 2,000 more miles in 1930-31 than in 1929-30, and carried 100 less passengers for a drop of £13 in total receipts.

An examination of the fares charged on certain representative routes discloses an average of 2½d. per passenger-mile. Dividing this figure into the average revenue per passenger, it would appear that the average length of each passenger journey is approximately forty miles.