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Emergency Railroad Transportation Act, 1933.

This Act was passed in United States of America in June last, its introduction having been announced by the President as part of the transportation section of a partnership between the Government and farming industry and transportation “to prevent cut-throat competition and encourage each industry to prevent overproduction.”

It was also announced by the President that “our broad problem is so to co-ordinate all agencies of transportation as to maintain adequate service,” he having previously indicated a belief that motor transportation should be regulated by the Federal Government (at present in United States the regulation is by Public Utility Commissions on behalf of the individual States); but the question of legislation on this broader issue was postponed for a later session of Congress.

The above Act aims principally at internal co-ordination of railway activities among the many private railway companies of the United States of America. For this purpose a “Co-ordinator” is appointed (with regional co-ordinating committees) to effect economies, to improve transportation and labour conditions, to prescribe general factors to be considered by the Interstate Commerce Commission in prescribing rates and otherwise to effect improvements in the rail position, as detailed in the Act.

The Co-ordinator’s announced programme is aimed chiefly at the elimination of unnecessary duplication of railway facilities (including schemes for pooling of services) and reduction generally in the unnecessary national expense involved by the competition among the various railway companies.

Report on Problem generally.

The following extracts from a report on the American Transportation Problem prepared for the National Transportation Committee, relating to transport policy in the United States of America, are of particular interest to New Zealand where practically the same broad problems exist:—

“Instead of being welded into a co-ordinated system our various transport agencies are working more or less at cross purposes. Instead of a unified program of regulation designed to promote a common objective, we have a series of unrelated and often antagonistic policies carried out by a variety of Government agencies. Regulation should be solely in the public interest; it should not seek to favour or retard one form of transportation as against another. It should have as its primary objective the establishment of rates which are not unnecessarily high and do not discriminate unfairly between persons, places, and commodities.

“Efficient co-ordination and the movement of traffic by the cheapest possible agency, or combination of agencies, cannot possibly be realized under an unco-ordinated regulatory system such as we now possess. Not until we establish a unified system of regulation which will place all transportation agencies upon a basis of economic parity will a unification of transportation that means anything from an economic standpoint be possible.

“Regulation to be comprehensive must be centralized; and this means control exercised, in so far as may be practicable, through a single governmental body. For various reasons the Interstate Commerce Commission would seem to be the logical agency for the purpose in hand.

“If the regulation of transportation is concentrated in a single agency, substantial economies in government regulation may be realized. If the Interstate Commerce Commission is reorganized in such a way as to permit the delegation of routine administrative tasks and to enable the Commissioners to plan constructively in national terms, the whole transportation system may be placed upon a new plane.”

11. APPENDIX.

TABLE No. 1.—MOTOR-VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS, 1925–1932.

TABLE SHOWING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VEHICLES REGISTERED UNDER THE MOTOR-VEHICLES ACT, 1924, AT 31ST DECEMBER IN THE YEARS 1925 TO 1932.

(N.B.—Dormant, but not Cancelled, Registrations are included in this Table.)

| 31st December, | Cars. | Trucks (classified according to Pay-load Capacity). | | | | | | | | Omnibuses. | Traction Engines. | Trailers. | | Tractors. | Others. | Motor-cycles. | Grand Total. |
|----------------|---------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|--------|------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------|
| | | Not more than 1-ton. | Over 1-ton and not more than 2-ton. | Over 2-ton and not more than 3-ton. | Over 3-ton and not more than 4-ton. | Over 4-ton and not more than 5-ton. | Over 5-ton and not more than 6-ton. | Over 6-ton. | Total. | | | Three or More Wheels. | Two Wheels. | | | | |
| 1925 .. | 81,662 | 9,671 | 2,077 | 879 | 713 | 268 | 48 | 17 | 13,673 | 1,285 | 386 | 198 | 291 | 193 | 369 | 25,339 | 123,396 |
| 1926 .. | 101,462 | 13,056 | 2,827 | 1,155 | 824 | 314 | 48 | 27 | 18,251 | 1,590 | 465 | 241 | 432 | 328 | 455 | 32,101 | 155,325 |
| 1927 .. | 111,641 | 15,601 | 3,643 | 1,322 | 850 | 340 | 41 | 18 | 21,815 | 1,143 | 477 | 314 | 535 | 345 | 422 | 34,593 | 171,285 |
| 1928 .. | 125,656 | 17,057 | 4,302 | 1,465 | 866 | 347 | 48 | 21 | 24,106 | 1,190 | 421 | 269 | 689 | 422 | 460 | 36,116 | 189,329 |
| 1929 .. | 143,814 | 18,792 | 6,453 | 1,668 | 852 | 349 | 51 | 24 | 28,189 | 1,271 | 372 | 262 | 945 | 449 | 501 | 37,349 | 213,152 |
| 1930 .. | 154,634 | 19,839 | 8,034 | 1,798 | 872 | 350 | 51 | 23 | 30,967 | 1,308 | 305 | 259 | 1,279 | 464 | 503 | 37,404 | 227,123 |
| 1931 .. | 153,265 | 23,283 | 8,542 | 1,757 | 829 | 321 | 44 | 21 | 34,797 | 1,234 | 282 | 271 | 1,886 | 657 | 468 | 35,413 | 228,273 |
| 1932 .. | 151,356 | 22,495 | 8,661 | 1,737 | 757 | 298 | 41 | 20 | 34,009 | 1,204 | 268 | 253 | 2,457 | 707 | 474 | 33,182 | 223,910 |