

(ii) *Classification of Main Highways.*

	Main Highways.	Class II.	Class III.	Class IV.	Class V.	Total Classification.
	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.
North Island	6,447	199	2,618	2,894	412	6,123
South Island	5,202	559	3,428	152	32	4,171
Totals	11,649	758	6,046	3,046	444	10,294

While a little over 50 per cent. of the total rural mileage of formed roads is classified, there is now 88 per cent. of the main highway system, which carries the greatest part of the traffic, classified in one or other of the four classes, and nearly 82 per cent. in Class III or lower. As the classification of a main highway or other key road has the effect of limiting loads also on the adjacent feeder roads, the load-limitations virtually cover a much greater proportion than 50 per cent. of the total rural mileage actually classified.

In order to provide a reasonable degree of flexibility for road transport it is most desirable that there should be a uniform classification over a large area of country, unbroken by variations at county boundaries.

Since its inception the Department has advocated and encouraged the general adoption of Class III as the maximum limit for all rural highways, except where such highways are surfaced with the higher types of pavement, or where special circumstances justify heavier loads, and this policy has been adopted by a steadily increasing number of local authorities. In certain areas Class IV has been generally adopted as a maximum, as, for example, in the North Auckland District, where road surfaces are comparatively weak, and also in the pumice areas of the North Island, where surfacing materials are costly. However, in several districts, and notably in Canterbury, there is as yet no uniform system of classification.

The following table indicates to some extent this lack of uniformity of classification of main highways in certain of the highways districts, and also sets out the relation between the classification of the roads and the use of the respective classes by heavy-motor traffic :—

Highways District.	Classification of Main Highways.			Classification of Heavy Motor-vehicle Traffic.		
	Proportions of Total Mileage.			Proportions conforming to the following Road-classification :—		
	(a) Unclassified or in Class II.	(b) Classified in Class III.	(c) Classified in Classes IV or V.	(a) Unclassified or in Class II.	(b) Classified in Class III.	(c) Classified in Classes IV or V.
	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.
Auckland North	..	0·4	99·6	0·7	20·0	79·3
Auckland South	3·2	26·7	70·1	4·4	43·0	52·6
Tauranga	5·5	10·0	84·5	4·8	31·2	64·0
Gisborne	1·6	87·5	10·9	3·8	45·8	50·4
Napier	12·4	81·3	6·3	9·4	41·2	49·4
King-country	6·4	..	93·6	0·5	33·2	66·3
Taranaki	10·9	65·0	24·1	8·7	47·4	43·9
Wanganui	9·5	70·1	20·4	9·8	40·5	49·7
Wellington West	32·0	57·1	10·9	13·2	48·1	38·7
Wellington East	12·9	86·9	0·2	7·5	36·6	55·9
North Island	8·1	40·6	51·3	6·0	38·6	55·4
Nelson	12·6	78·1	9·3	12·5	31·2	56·3
West Coast	11·7	79·3	9·0	7·5	43·5	49·0
Canterbury North	43·6	49·7	6·7	14·0	34·2	51·8
Canterbury Central	79·6	18·9	1·5	12·5	40·2	47·3
Canterbury South	39·8	60·2	..	6·2	45·3	48·5
Otago Central	33·2	61·4	5·4	3·8	38·5	57·7
Otago South	28·6	71·4	..	4·4	42·1	53·5
Southland	0·9	99·1	..	6·9	53·1	40·0
South Island	30·6	65·9	3·5	8·3	42·1	49·6
New Zealand	18·1	51·9	30·0	6·8	39·8	53·4

The proportions which require a higher classification than Class III are seen to be relatively small in most districts, and there seems no reason why this class should not be adopted generally as the maximum in rural areas. In the course of time as the heavier vehicles now on the roads complete their useful life they may be replaced with the multi-axled type which on a Class III road has a maximum allowable gross load of 10 tons.