

The main features which appear from a study of the statistics given in Table 14 are :—

- (i) The total number of accidents show an increase of twelve over the previous year, this increase being made up largely of collisions between motor-vehicles. A slight decrease has occurred in respect of accidents involving pedestrians and bicyclists.
- (ii) Over half the accidents occurred at night or during dusk, indicating that lack of adequate seeing ability is a vital factor, as during this period of the twenty-four hours there is only about one-fifth of the volume of traffic which is carried during daylight hours.
- (iii) There were eleven railway-crossing smashes where some one was killed, the highest annual total yet recorded.
- (iv) 59 per cent. of the fatal accidents occurred on country roads and 41 per cent. in the urban areas.
- (v) Although the actual number of pedestrians killed has not increased, they still represent over one-quarter of the fatalities caused through motor-vehicle accidents.
- (vi) Motor-cycles, although representing only $9\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the vehicles on the road, constituted $19\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the vehicles involved in fatal accidents.
- (vii) The most common breaches of the law leading to fatal accidents were—
 - (a) Driver's intoxication, either mild or severe ;
 - (b) On incorrect side of road ;
 - (c) Failure to comply with the offside rule ;
 - (d) Excessive speed under the circumstances ;
 - (e) Various vehicular defects such as glaring or ineffective lights and faulty brakes.
- (viii) Pedestrians were at fault in a considerable number of instances.

As a result of the recommendations made by the New Zealand Road Safety Council, arrangements were finalized towards the end of the year under review whereby far more comprehensive data is now obtained regarding road accidents. Formerly all particulars obtained have been in respect of fatal accidents only, but by arrangement with the Police Department a report is now received concerning each accident where there is injury to person. All such accidents are required by law to be reported by the motorist at the nearest police-station. A police officer investigates the circumstances and in the course of these duties prepares a report on a standard form designed for these statistical purposes. From these reports, covering at present some three hundred accidents each month, the Department compiles a number of very useful analyses which are being utilized as the prime basis for determining the preventive measures to be taken, and gauging the efficacy of these various measures.

While the statistics do not cover the whole field of motor accidents, they relate to a definite class of accident and may thus be used as a basis for comparison.

Some of the main immediate purposes to which these statistics are put are :—

- (i) A basis for publicity, in conjunction with periodical statements regarding the toll of the road and the remedial measures being taken.
- (ii) The main breaches of the law which commonly lead to accidents are revealed and the Government traffic staff and local traffic authorities are advised accordingly.
- (iii) Accident spot maps are prepared showing localities where accidents are frequent.
- (iv) Instances are investigated where it seems evident or possible that some faulty road condition contributed to the accident, and where considered necessary the condition is brought to the notice of the road-controlling authority.

B.—NEW ZEALAND ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL.

During August, 1936, the Government's concern at the rising toll of the road led the Minister of Transport to call a conference of all interested sections of the public.

The two major results of the conference were the endorsement of a proposal for traffic control to be taken over by the Government for all districts save in boroughs of over 6,000 population, and the recommendation that a Road Safety Council be set up to advise the Minister of Transport on matters relating to road-safety measures.

The conference suggested that the Minister of Transport select the personnel of the Road Safety Council. After consultation with the interested bodies, the Council was appointed by the Minister as follows :—

- Hon. R. Semple, Minister of Transport (Chairman).
- Mr. G. L. Laurenson, Commissioner of Transport (Deputy Chairman).
- Dr. G. F. V. Anson, British Medical Association.
- Mr. G. R. Ashbridge, New Zealand Educational Institute.
- Mr. J. F. Cousins, New Zealand Motor Traders' Federation.
- Mr. D. J. Cummings, Commissioner of Police.
- Mr. J. S. Hawke, South Island Motor Union.
- Mr. J. H. Jerram, State Fire and Accident Office.
- Mr. M. F. Luckie, Municipalities.
- Dr. J. W. McIlraith, Education Department.
- Mr. W. A. O'Callaghan, North Island Motor Union.
- Mr. F. C. Spratt, New Zealand Alliance.
- Mr. C. J. Talbot, Counties Association.
- Mr. J. Wood, Main Highways Board.