

(iii) During certain months viz., from December to May inclusive—a further additional half-ton is permitted under each class in the case of two-axled vehicles carrying live-stock. This amendment is to enable economic loads to be carried where a considerable amount of extra weight is taken up by the live-stock crates. This concession is restricted to the months when the roads would not normally be saturated with moisture and when they would consequently have a greater bearing-capacity than during the wet winter months.

The limits under these conditions are—

- Class Three : 7½ tons gross weight ; 6 tons axle load.
- Class Four : 5½ tons gross weight ; 4½ tons axle load.
- Class Five : 4 tons gross weight ; 3¼ tons axle load.

(iv) The restrictions upon the gross weight of multi-axled heavy motor-vehicles have been removed and the following maximum axle-loads are now the only restrictions as regards loading :—

- Class Three : 4½ tons on any axle.
- Class Four : 3 tons on any axle.
- Class Five : 2 tons on any axle.

Experience has shown that the gross load restrictions imposed by the regulations have to a certain extent discouraged the use of modern types of multi-axled vehicles. At the same time the road surfaces may be given all the protection required by limiting the axle loads.

(v) In practice it has been found that speed-limits must be as simple and uniform as possible. With this end in view the speed-limits for heavy motor-vehicles have now been reduced to two, viz.—

Goods vehicles	..	..	..	..	..	25 m.p.h.
Passenger vehicles	..	..	..	..	..	35 m.p.h.

The following table sets out the load-limits as they now apply :—

Classification of Roads.				Two-axled Heavy Motor-vehicles.		Multi-axled Heavy Motor-vehicles Axle-load.
				Gross Weight.	Axle Load.	
Class Three	..	..	..	7 tons	5½ tons	4½ tons.
Class Four	..	..	..	5 tons	4 tons	3 tons.
Class Five	..	..	..	3½ tons	2¾ tons	2 tons.

Further to the alteration in weight-limits on classified roads, certain provisions of the Public Works Act, 1928, were amended by statute during last session. Formerly the use of any vehicle, other than a “six-wheeled motor-lorry,” was prohibited if the weight of its load exceeded 6 tons or if its gross weight exceeded 10 tons. The former provision has been revoked, and on an unclassified road the only weight restriction is the limitation of the gross load to 10 tons. “Six-wheeled motor-lorries,” now termed “multi-axled heavy motor-vehicles,” and now including vehicles of an approved type with more than three axles, were formerly restricted to 9 tons pay-load and 15 tons gross load. There was also a provision regarding the distribution of the load when the pay-load exceeded 6 tons. The law now requires only that the load transmitted by any axle shall not exceed 6 tons, the other provisions being revoked. The new provisions may be waived in any particular instance subject to the discretion of the Minister.

These amendments are the result of an endeavour to bring the control of the use of heavy vehicles into line with present-day road conditions and modern vehicle design and equipment. It appears likely that the method of regulating the use of these vehicles will in future undergo considerable changes from the existing system. The whole question of damage to the roads as viewed in the light of the conditions of only a few years ago must in future be reconsidered owing to the present rapid trend towards universal low-pressure-tire equipment and other developments in vehicle design.

B. THE PRESENT POSITION AS TO LIMITATION OF LOADS ON ROADS.

The following tables show the mileages of roads classified in the rural areas. In regard to urban roads, some of the smaller boroughs have classified their lighter surfaced roads, but in general no restriction is imposed upon loading in an urban area beyond the statutory limits which are universally applicable.