

The following table shows the numbers of motor vehicles registered in each continent at 1st January, 1947 :—

**MOTOR VEHICLES : WORLD REGISTRATIONS AT 1st JANUARY, 1947.**

Continent, etc.	Total Automobiles.	Motor Cars.(a)	Motor Trucks and Buses.(a)
Africa .. .. .	608,900	432,454	163,767
America (exclusive of United States of America).. .. .	2,792,710	1,918,936	817,742
United States of America .. .. .	33,233,975	27,496,096	5,737,879
Asia .. .. .	421,938	201,665	191,898
Europe .. .. .	6,580,951	3,711,482	2,815,879
Oceania .. .. .	1,248,584	800,943	445,619
Total .. .. .	44,887,058	34,561,576	10,172,784

(a) Not complete for all territories.

The next table gives particulars of the numbers of motor vehicles registered in various countries, together with their approximate populations for the purposes of comparison :—

**COMPARATIVE MOTOR VEHICLE STATISTICS, 1st JANUARY, 1947.**

Country.	Approximate Population in Millions.	Motor Cars, Trucks and Buses.
Australia .. .. .	8	901,102
Argentina .. .. .	16	285,610
Canada .. .. .	12	1,587,795
France .. .. .	40	1,300,000
Germany .. .. .	66	142,527
Great Britain .. .. .	48	2,448,065
India .. .. .	311	170,000
Italy .. .. .	46	205,000
Japanese Empire .. .. .	75	47,000
New Zealand .. .. .	2	287,398
Union of South Africa .. .. .	2	354,740
United States of America .. .. .	141	33,233,975

The foregoing figures are in some cases approximations based on estimates furnished by Trade Commissioners or representative motor trade organizations in the several countries, and in other cases are incomplete.

8. **Petrol Rationing.**—Petrol rationing was first enforced in Australia in October, 1940, a little more than twelve months after the commencement of the 1939–45 War. No very drastic cuts in consumption were made for some time, but, commencing in April, 1941, when the replenishment of stocks from overseas supply sources was becoming increasingly difficult and uncertain, progressive reductions in the monthly allowances to civilian users were made, the basic ration being finally reduced to the equivalent of only 800 miles of running per annum. The period of severest rationing lasted from late in 1941 until towards the end of 1944, non-military consumption during these three years or thereabouts being at a rate not very much in excess of one-third of the estimated pre-war rate of 30 million gallons per month.

With the improvement in the war situation in 1944, it was found possible, without making any specific amendment of the rationing schedules, to do something in the direction of granting claims for additional allowances of petrol in individual cases where circumstances appeared to justify this course and to relax to some extent the very heavy pressure which had been applied during the critical years of the war to enforce the use of producer gas units.

The first general increase in the ration scale was made in September, 1945, following the Japanese surrender, the allowances to private motorists and primary producers being increased by 25 per cent. A further all-round increase of 25 per cent. to all classes of users was made a month later, bringing the private motorist's allowance to 120 miles of running per month.

As essential users of motor spirit were already receiving practically their full requirements, such further liberalizing of the monthly allowances as became possible in the post-war period was mainly for the benefit of private motorists. By successive stages the monthly allowance for this class increased from 120 miles of running per month as at the end of 1945, to 270 miles as from December, 1946. An increase from 120 miles to 180 miles per month had been brought into effect as from February, 1946, with a further increase to 240 miles as from July, 1946. At the same time the rations of holders of private-plus-business licences and others of a like character were increased to an extent sufficient to avoid any anomaly as between such classes and the purely private motorist.

There was, perhaps, a good deal of justification for the popular expectation, following the cessation of hostilities in August, 1945, that, once the inevitable settling-down period had passed, and the supply lines had been restored to something approaching the pre-war normal, the end of petrol rationing would be in sight. Many factors, some of them unforeseen at the time and others entirely beyond Australian control or capacity to influence, conspired to postpone the date when war-time controls affecting petrol could be entirely removed; Government action in this matter was accordingly directed to the further easing of restrictions and removal of anomalies and to ensuring that the supplies made available from overseas were distributed equitably and to the best advantage. Amongst other things, it was possible, with the ending of the war in Europe, to cease to enforce the use of producer gas units, with the result that, by the end of 1946, producer gas, which had played so valuable a part in reducing the civilian demand on imported motor spirit in the more difficult days, had practically ceased to be used as a substitute for liquid fuels.

Viewed on a world basis, i.e., sterling and dollar sources, the supply of petroleum products was, in general, sufficient in relation to world demands to have enabled petrol rationing to be lifted at the end of 1945, had this been the only consideration to be taken into account. The sterling-area production of motor spirit and the availability of sterling tankers were, however, not sufficient at that time to meet the unrationed demands of the sterling area, and imports into that area of large supplies of dollar-area oil in dollar tankers would have been necessary to enable restrictions on consumption to be completely removed.

The whole question of petrol rationing and supplies was reviewed by the Government from time to time between the end of 1945 and May, 1947. Partly because of industrial troubles which seriously affected railway and tramway services in some of the States in the latter part of 1946 and in the earlier months of 1947 (necessitating at times the transport by road of great quantities of goods normally carried by the railways and the authorization of special issues of petrol to a large number of road users), the monthly consumption of motor spirit rose to between 31 million gallons and 34 million gallons on several occasions between September, 1946, and March, 1947. This led to a decision by the Commonwealth Government, in March, 1947, after reviewing the supply position with the Government of the United Kingdom, to continue petrol rationing for an indefinite period and to administer the rationing plan somewhat more rigidly than had been the case for some time past. In reaching this decision, the Government was influenced, as on earlier occasions when the question had been under consideration, by the fact that, although Australia was still receiving almost the whole of its petrol supplies from the sterling area around the Persian Gulf, because the shortest tanker haul was

thereby involved, production in that region was not sufficient to meet the demands of the whole sterling area, the effect of which was that the United Kingdom was under the necessity to draw its supplies largely from dollar sources—on the tanker short-haul principle. Larger allocations to Australia from the Persian Gulf to meet the steadily increasing consumption in Australia would necessarily have compelled Great Britain herself to draw more heavily on dollar supplies of petrol, thus aggravating the seriously deteriorating dollar-funds position. In the light of these facts and of the desire of the Government of the United Kingdom to have Australia's continued co-operation in this respect, the Commonwealth Government had no alternative but to maintain and tighten up the rationing system for the time being, especially in view of the need that still existed to charter a large number of American tankers each month (requiring payment of freight in dollars) for the carriage of sterling petrol. A further factor taken into account was that world prices of petrol were increasing, thus adding to the drain on the dollar funds needed to pay for that portion of the Empire's petrol requirements which had to be drawn from the dollar area. The need to conserve dollars became more acute during the latter part of 1947, with the result that an average overall reduction of approximately ten per cent. in the petrol consumption of all users operated from 1st October, 1947, followed by a further reduction of ten per cent. from 1st January, 1948. The current position is that essential transport is now, generally speaking, receiving most of its requirements of petrol, although the private motorist is still receiving less than his pre-war usage.

A more detailed account of the operation of petrol rationing up to February, 1946, appears in Official Year Book No. 36, pp. 160-3.

9. **Control of Tyres, Spare Parts and Mechanical Services.**—The war-time control of tyres, spare parts and mechanical services which was referred to in Official Year Book No. 36, page 163, has now been abolished.

### G. TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS.

1. **General.**—The practice of reporting accidents occurring in public thoroughfares is not uniform throughout Australia. In some States the reporting of minor accidents has not been enforced, while other States require that all accidents be reported. Hence the figures for each State are not entirely comparable with regard to the number of accidents, and to a lesser extent with regard to the number of persons injured.

2. **Total Accidents Registered.**—(i) *Year 1945-46.* The following table gives particulars of the number of persons killed and injured in accidents (known to the police) which occurred in public thoroughfares during 1945-46:—

#### ACCIDENTS (KNOWN TO THE POLICE) WHICH OCCURRED IN PUBLIC THOROUGHFARES: PERSONS KILLED AND INJURED, 1945-46.

State or Territory.	Accidents.	Persons Killed.			Persons Injured.		
		Number.	Per 1,000 of Mean Population.	Per 100 Motor Vehicles Registered.	Number.	Per 1,000 of Mean Population.	Per 100 Motor Vehicles Registered.
New South Wales	10,565	483	0.16	0.16	7,342	2.50	2.36
Victoria ..	11,171	336	0.17	0.12	6,202	3.08	2.28
Queensland ..	7,233	169	0.16	0.12	3,656	3.37	2.55
South Australia ..	7,181	97	0.15	0.10	2,333	3.70	2.31
Western Australia	4,310	127	0.26	0.19	756	1.54	1.13
Tasmania ..	3,067	58	0.23	0.20	799	3.19	2.81
Aus. Cap. Territory	83	..	..	..	26	1.68	1.06
<b>Total ..</b>	<b>43,610</b>	<b>1,270</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>21,114</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>2.27</b>