

rather than high prices. Detroit became the centre of the automobile industry of the United States and the Canadian side of the Detroit river became the headquarters of the Canadian industry. As a consequence the population of such border towns as Windsor, Walkerville, and Sandwich has greatly increased in the past decade, while Ford City, which had no existence in 1911, had 5,870 inhabitants in 1921. Problems of regional location have resulted during more recent years in a gradual shifting of the centre of gravity of the industry, and the Toronto district now rivals in importance the longer established centre on the Detroit river.

Like many other inventions, the motor car commenced as a toy, then as the luxury of the rich, while now it ranks as a comfort of those in moderate circumstances and it may even become a necessity of life to the masses. Of late years it has been increasingly used for economic purposes; to-day the great majority of cars effect substantial economies in time or in money for their owners, partly or wholly offsetting their cost of upkeep. In the past few years, the motor truck—the freight automobile—has assumed considerable economic importance, and this year it is separately classified in Table 34 of this section. There seems to be but little doubt that in Canada, as was the case in England and the New England states, only the lack of adequate road systems is postponing a great increase in motor bus traffic for both passenger and fast freight service.

In a recent government report the statement is made that “the automotive transport industry is just beginning to be a factor in the transportation of passengers and freight in this country. Railways have found that the handling of less than car-load lots of freight is often unprofitable business; it follows that commercial trucks are being used in greater numbers to carry lighter shipments of property between some of the larger centres served by adequately surfaced highways.” While the increased passenger and freight rates are probably the main cause of the comparatively slow increase in recent years in railway traffic (see Table 6 of this section), there can be no doubt that motor vehicles are now serving much of the short haul traffic formerly served by steam and electric railways. In addition, a certain amount of traffic formerly carried over water routes has been diverted to these more modern carriers.

Registration.—The increase of the use of motor vehicles in Canada has been very rapid. In 1904 the number of motor vehicles registered in Ontario was only 535. In 1907, 2,130 motor vehicles were registered in six provinces, and in 1908, 3,033 in eight provinces, the motor car being at that time prohibited in Prince Edward Island. From these small beginnings Table 33 shows an increase to 513,821 motor vehicles in 1922, an increase over 1921 of 48,443, or almost the total number of motor vehicles registered in 1913. In Table 34 are given the numbers registered by provinces in 1921, classified as passenger cars, commercial cars or trucks, and motor cycles.

By far the greatest increase during the past year has been in Ontario, where the number of cars registered in 1922 is shown as 240,933 in comparison with 206,521 in the previous year. The percentage increase in this province is thus 14·3 as compared with a figure of 9·4 for the whole of Canada, the actual number, 34,412, constituting the greater part of the total increase for the Dominion, which amounted to 48,443.

According to statistics collected for 1922 by the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce of the United States, Canada in that year ranked next to the United States among the countries of the world in the number of its registered motor vehicles. The total shown (513,821) is some 15,500 greater than that of the United Kingdom,