

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.

The automobile manufacturing industry in Canada has made very rapid growth since its beginning about the year 1905, two of its chief tendencies during the period having been a consolidation of smaller firms into large units and the adoption of large-scale methods of production, similar in many ways to those of the American industry. A brief statement of its history, with statistics of production, etc., is to be found on pages 432 to 436 of this volume.

Registration.—The increase in 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 31 shows an increase to 586,764 motor vehicles in 1923, an increase over 1922 of 72,943, or more than the total number of motor vehicles registered in 1914. In Table 32 are given the numbers registered by provinces in 1923, 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 1923 is shown as 280,996, in comparison with 240,933 in the previous year. The percentage increase in this province is thus 16.6, as compared with a figure of 14.4 for the whole of Canada, the actual number, 40,063, constituting the greater part of the total increase for the Dominion.

According to statistics collected for 1923 by the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce of the United States, Canada in that year ranked third among the countries of the world in the number of its registered motor vehicles. The total shown (642,571), which, however, is not closely in accord with provincial totals of registrations collected by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, is 282 less than that of the United Kingdom, where total registration for 1923 is set at 642,853. Registrations in United States during the past year were 15,092,177; in France, the fourth largest user of motor vehicles, 444,812; in Germany, 152,068; in Australia, 118,091; in Argentina, 85,850; and in Italy, 75,000.

In 1923, there was, in Canada, one motor vehicle for every 15.6 of its population, or one for every 3.39 families. In respect to motor vehicles per population, when compared with the more important foreign countries, Canada ranks second to the United States, where, in 1923, there was a motor vehicle registered for every 7.3 of the population of the country. A comparison of the various provinces in the same respect shows, in 1923, one motor vehicle to every 35.8 persons in Prince Edward Island, to every 29.0 in Nova Scotia, 23.6 in New Brunswick, 33.7 in Quebec, 10.8 in Ontario, 15.2 in Manitoba, 12.1 in Saskatchewan, 14.1 in Alberta, 13.5 in British Columbia and 40.8 in the Yukon Territory.