

PART III.—ROAD TRANSPORTATION*

In this Part of the Chapter, highways and motor vehicles are treated as related features of transportation. Following an introductory section which summarizes provincial regulations regarding motor vehicles and motor traffic, the entire subject of road transportation is dealt with under the headings of roads and highways and motor vehicles.

Section 1.—Provincial Motor Vehicle and Traffic Regulations†

NOTE.—It is obviously impossible to include here the great mass of detailed regulations in force in each province and territory; only the more important general information is given. The sources of information for detailed regulations for specific provinces and territories are given at pp. 809-810.

General.—The registration of motor vehicles and the regulation of motor vehicle traffic lies within the legislative jurisdiction of the provincial and territorial governments. Regulations that are common to all provinces and territories are summarized under the following headings:—

Operators' Licences.—The operator of a motor vehicle must be over a specified age, usually 16 years (17 in Newfoundland and Quebec), and must carry a licence, obtainable in most provinces only after prescribed qualification tests and renewable annually. Special licences are required for chauffeurs in all provinces except Newfoundland and in some jurisdictions special licences are also granted to those who have not reached the specified age.

Motor Vehicle Regulations.—In general all motor vehicles and trailers must be registered annually, with the payment of specified fees, and must carry two registration plates, one in the front and one on the back of the vehicle (one only for the back in the case of trailers). In most provinces in event of sale the registration plates stay with the car but in Manitoba the plates are retained by the owner. A change of ownership of the vehicle must be recorded with the registration authority. However exception from registration is granted for a specified period (usually at least 90 days) in any year to visitors' private vehicles registered in another Province or a State that grants reciprocal treatment. Further regulations require a safe standard of efficiency in the mechanism of the vehicle and of its brakes and stipulate that equipment include non-glare headlights, a proper rear light, a satisfactory locking device, a muffler, a windshield wiper, and a rear-vision mirror.

Traffic Regulations.—In all provinces and territories, vehicles keep to the right hand side of the road. Everywhere motorists are required to observe traffic signs, lights, etc., placed at strategic points on highways and roads. Speed limits, usually of 50 miles an hour (60 in Quebec and Alberta; in Manitoba 60 in daytime and 50 at night), are in effect; slower speeds are always required in cities, towns and villages, in passing schools and public playgrounds, at road intersections, railway crossings, or at other places or times where the view of the highway for a safe distance ahead is in any way obscured. Motor vehicles must not pass a tram that has stopped to take on or discharge passengers, except where safety zones are provided. Accidents resulting in personal injury or property damage must be reported to a provincial or municipal police officer and a driver involved must not leave the scene of an accident until he has rendered all possible aid and disclosed his name to the injured party.

Penalties.—Penalties ascend in scale from small fines for minor infractions of any of the regulations to suspension of the operator's driving permit, impounding of the car, or imprisonment for serious infractions, recklessness, driving without an operator's licence, and especially for attempting to operate a motor vehicle while intoxicated.

Safety Responsibility Legislation.—Each province of Canada has enacted legislation under this heading (sometimes referred to as Financial Responsibility Legislation). In general these laws provide for the automatic suspension of the driver's licence and motor vehicle permit of a person convicted of an offence arising out of a motor vehicle accident,

* Except as otherwise indicated, the material in this Part has been revised in the Public Finance and Transportation Division, Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

† The information in this Section has been revised from material provided by the officials in charge of the administration of motor vehicle and traffic Acts and Regulations in the individual provinces and territories.