that there was a decline in the proportion enrolled under Edward II; but the decline may have begun earlier. In the 1330s a fair proportion seems still to be enrolled but in the 1350s the proportion seems to be very small.

While it is not possible to say how many special Assize Commissions were issued before 1377, it is probable that under Edward III more were issued in the earlier than in the later decades. Under Richard II the average was about six a year, with fourteen years in which between five and twelve issued. Under Henry IV there was a notable increase, the average being about twenty-five a year, with a peak of sixty-nine in 1406, and eight years in which fifteen or more were issued. Like routine assizes, the special assize declined steadily after the complete break in the ordinary circuit sessions between 1417 and 1421, caused by the French war. Under Henry V, up to the break, the average number of special Assize Commissions issued was about fifteen a year; but only five Commissions were issued between 1418 and 1422. A few probably issued in most years of Henry VI, and there were probably isolated issues later in the 16th century; the latest of the surviving Special Assize records is of proceedings under a Commission issued on 10 Feb. 1458.

The tracing of the history of the diplomatic of Assize Commissions and subsidiary instruments is conditioned by the way in which the Patent Roll clerks recorded them, by the extent to which the assize commissioners' clerks entered copies in their rolls, and by the extent to which assize files have survived.

In the Patent Rolls there are a few complete or almost complete transcripts of special Assize Commissions, nearly all from the early 1220s. Thenceforward they were abbreviated to an increasing extent, abbreviation being at its height from the 1250s until the enrolment of particular Commissions died out towards the end of Edward III's reign. From about that point the special Commissions were entered at rather greater length. The early development of the enrolment practice can be seen in the transcripts in Patent Rolls 1216-1225 and Patent Rolls 1225-1232; and in Close Rolls 1247-1251, Close Rolls 1251-1253 and Close Rolls 1253-1254, because in the years 1249-1252 and 1254 the dorses of a few membranes of the Close Rolls were used for the overflow of these Commissions from the Patent Rolls. After 1254 supplementary membranes were added to the Patent Rolls, to give more space for matter traditionally entered on the dorses. During the period of the major development of the Circuit Assize Commissions, between 1273 and 1293, there do not seem to be any full transcripts in the Patent Rolls of these Commissions and the entries are irregular in giving the complete wording of the main clause. In the 14th century it soon became customary to give the main clause in full; and as the number of particular Commissions to be enrolled declined, so the fullness with which Circuit Assize Commissions and Letters of Association were enrolled increased. Under Richard II only the minor clauses were usually abbreviated.