

convinced that in many directions the passenger rates will have to be reduced to attract the traffic the railway ought to carry, and that such reductions, if judiciously made, will result in increased receipts.

With regard to the rise in the goods tariff, there is no doubt it has produced a large increase to the revenue. While this increase in the receipts has taken place, it is an undoubted fact that a great deal of the traffic has been diverted from the railways in some parts of the country, and that the carriers on the roads are competing successfully with the railways. I am sure honourable members will agree with me that this state of things should not occur.

Comparing the quantity of goods carried over the railways during the year 1883-84 with the year 1882-83, we find as follows:—

QUANTITY.		1882-83.	1883-84.
Live stock, number	....	478,003	686,287
Goods, tons	....	1,564,823	1,700,040

From this it will be seen that there was an increase during the year 1883-84, but I consider the increase would have been much larger had more determined efforts been made to attract traffic to the railways.

The remedy, as I have already informed the House, lies in a thorough revision, not only of the rates charged, but in the classification of the goods; and, while this revision is being made, every opportunity must be taken to make the rates press as lightly as possible on all local productions and on all articles the reduction on which will help either the settlers through the country or the local industries which are already established or are likely to succeed.

ROADS NORTH OF AUCKLAND.

The vote taken for these roads last year was £45,000, but, as there were liabilities existing at the end of the previous year amounting to £12,200, the sum available for distribution was £32,800.

This amount was distributed amongst the various counties as follows, namely,—

Waitemata	....	....	....	£5,700
Rodney	....	....	....	5,700
Hobson	....	....	....	5,000
Whangarei	....	....	....	5,400
Bay of Islands	....	....	....	4,300
Mongonui	....	....	....	4,300
Hokianga	....	....	....	2,400
Total				£32,800

Of this amount about £12,000 was for construction of the main North Road, about £3,000 for wharves and other special works, and the balance for ordinary county works.

ROADS AND BRIDGES GENERALLY, INCLUDING "MAIN ROADS" AND "MISCELLANEOUS ROADS AND BRIDGES."

NORTH ISLAND.—South of Auckland: The principal work executed in the North Island has been the completion of a road leading from Cambridge to Ohinemutu, in all 55 miles in length, but a large expenditure has also been incurred in keeping the main roads in repair.

MIDDLE ISLAND.—The only important roads in the Middle Island on which the Government is doing much work are from Blenheim to Nelson, Nelson to the West Coast, and Hokitika to Christchurch. The last link in the road from Blenheim to Nelson, *via* the Rai Valley, is now in progress; also a bridge over the Pelorus. Bridges have been built and other improvements effected on the Nelson-West Coast Road. In addition to the maintenance and general improvements, the bridging of the Taipo and smooth Wainihinihi, on the Hokitika-Christchurch Road, is in hand. Bridges have also been completed or are in progress over the Wairau, Clarence, Waiau, Rakaia, and Taieri Rivers.