

enough to fulfil the requirements of the existing traffic, and also bearing in mind that we are speaking of colonial railways, where high rates of speed are not required or justified by the circumstances of the cases. If the more expensive class of line does not show justification for its extra cost by a corresponding saving in working expenses on this basis, then its extra cost is not justifiable, as every expenditure beyond what is revenue-producing or labour-saving is merely luxury and extravagance.

The gauge of the Victorian Railways is 5 feet 3 inches, of the New South Wales Railways 4 feet 8½ inches, of the Cape Colony Railways 3 feet 6 inches, and of the New Zealand Railways 3 feet 6 inches; but the item of gauge cannot affect the question at present under consideration in any way, unless it can be shown that a gauge of 3 feet 6 inches is insufficient for the requirements which have to be met.

The cost of maintenance per mile per annum of the various railway systems, as shown in Table A, is, in New Zealand, £141; in Victoria, £170; in New South Wales, £242; and in Cape Colony, £144. These, as in the former case, are the actual figures as given in Table A. They are based, as is customary, on the average mileage open during the year, which is shown in third column of Table A. Allowing, however, as before, that each mile of double line is equal to two miles of railway, they would become as follows: New Zealand, £141; Victoria, £150; New South Wales, £233; and Cape Colony, £143.

This is, however, again giving the railways of the other colonies the advantage, as the cost of maintenance of a double line for a given amount of traffic is little if anything greater than that of a single line.

On this basis the total cost of maintenance per annum in the several colonies, for a mileage equal to what we have in New Zealand, would be as follows:—

In New Zealand, 1,749 miles at £141 per mile	£246,340
In Victoria, 1,749 miles at £150 per mile	£262,350
In New South Wales, 1,749 miles at £233 per mile	£407,517
And in Cape Colony, 1,749 miles at £143 per mile	£250,107

Referring again to Table A, we find that the train mileages for the years under consideration were in the respective colonies as follows:—

New Zealand	2,944,786 train miles.
Victoria	7,991,378 „
New South Wales	6,479,265 „
Cape Colony	2,522,149 „

These are the total train mileages for the several railway systems, irrespective of the length of the several systems. Converting them, for the purpose of comparison, into “train miles per mile of railway,” they become as follows:—

New Zealand	1,684 train miles per mile of railway.
Victoria	3,942 „ „ „
New South Wales	3,491 „ „ „
Cape Colony	1,563 „ „ „

In this calculation the mileages taken, as before, have been the average mileages open during the year, with length of double line added.

From this data the following results are deducible by simple proportion:—

First, taking the case as between Victoria and New Zealand. If our railways had been constructed on the Victorian basis, with bridges and other structures of the more durable character obtaining there, our charge for maintenance last year, on the basis of the relative train-mileages, and the cost of maintenance in Victoria, would have been £134,266 less than it has been; but, as against this, we should have had to pay interest on £8,464,000 additional capital, which, at say 4 per cent., would have come to £338,560. It would appear, therefore, that we are better off by £204,294 per annum, than if we had built our railways on the Victorian plan.

Similarly, on the New South Wales basis, our charge for maintenance last year would have been £49,761 less than it has been; but, as against this, we should have had to pay interest (on additional capital of £8,367,000) to extent of