

During the current year steps must be taken to provide additional locomotives, cars, and wagons. The gas-lamps for the remainder of the cars on the Southern Section should be provided for, as well as gas plants and lamps for Auckland, Wellington, and Napier-Taranaki districts.

The work of improving the lines and bridges, adding to the accommodation at stations, and the provision of safety appliances should be proceeded with as rapidly as possible. The work of enlarging and improving the dwellings occupied by members of the staff should continue. All these works cannot possibly be paid for out of working expenses, which during the current year will be seriously taxed on account of the extraordinary expenditure which has been and must be incurred to repair the flood-damages experienced in the Wanganui and Napier districts. Parliament will therefore be asked to vote a sum of £200,000 to be expended on capital account for the before-mentioned purposes.

Some provision will have to be made to exclude the public from the principal stations, so that the crowding of the platforms to the annoyance of passengers will be avoided. This will entail a large expenditure, and legislation will be required.

In the interest of the travelling public it seems desirable that some improvement should be made in the method of leasing refreshment-rooms. The present practice does not give the best results, and the public will eventually demand that preference be given to those lessees who give the most acceptable service.

It is intended to provide at an early date an improved passenger service between Dunedin and Invercargill; the expanding business in this district fully justifies such an addition to the train services.

The Department also recognises that the time is not far distant when the present bi-weekly express train services between Wellington and New Plymouth may have to be made tri-weekly. This will, of course, depend upon the continued progress of the Taranaki District, and suitable steamer connections with Auckland.

Considerable works in connection with additional accommodation at stations, and extra locomotives and rolling-stock, must be at once provided in anticipation of the opening of the Government Railway to Woodville in January next.

I commend to your attention the statistics, reports, and returns attached to this Statement, which deal very fully with the affairs of the Government Railways and also of the Midland Railway.

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