

Passenger traffic shows an increase of 276,961 passengers and 6,836 season tickets, the increased revenue derived therefrom being £20,926.

372,188 holiday-excursion passengers have travelled, yielding a revenue of £63,439. 50,603 scholars and teachers and 33,925 parents and friends travelled by school and factory excursions, yielding a revenue of £5,616 2s. 8d.

There has been an enormous increase in the goods and live-stock traffic of 285,184 tons. The revenue from goods and live-stock has increased by £78,843.

Cattle have decreased in number 2,708, calves 1,034, and pigs 1,019.

Sheep have increased in number 124,398. Taking into consideration the large increase of 319,791 last year, I consider this result satisfactory.

Chaff and lime traffic has increased by 7,282 tons; firewood, 1,210 tons; timber, 44,693 tons; grain, 49,189 tons; merchandise, 25,567 tons; minerals, 153,593 tons. Wool remains stationary.

New carriage and wagon stock is being built as quickly as possible so as to accommodate the increasing traffic and to meet the demands for quick despatch.

The expenditure on maintenance increases. A sum of £19,388 has been spent on the track over and above the amount spent last year. This item of expenditure must continue to increase for some years to come if the road is to be improved and maintained in a state of efficiency.

Appended to this report are the usual returns, together with the reports of the Locomotive Superintendent, Chief Engineer, and Stores Manager.

I have, &c.,

T. RONAYNE,

General Manager.

The Hon. the Minister for Railways.

## APPENDIX B.

### ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WORKING OF THE LOCOMOTIVE DEPARTMENT, 1896-97.

SIR,—

Locomotive Superintendent's Office, Wellington, 15th June, 1897.

I have the honour to report on the working of the Locomotive Department for the year ending 31st March, 1897:—

The locomotives, carriages, wagons, vans, cranes, tarpaulins, machinery, and general plant have been maintained in a thoroughly efficient condition, and at every opportunity various improvements have been effected to both locomotives and rolling-stock.

Two new Class Wa engines for the Napier-Taranaki Section, and one Class Fa engine for the Auckland Section, have been built and brought into service during the year.

The two Class U engines built last year have been running on the Dunedin Section for the past twelve months, and have done good work. Six more of this class of engine are in hand, two of which are approaching completion.

The rebuilt F and L engines are giving satisfaction, and nine more of these two classes are being rebuilt.

The locomotive power, and also the carriage and wagon accommodation, have been taxed to the utmost during the past year to meet the increasing business.

In my opinion, the number of powerful locomotives should be considerably increased at the earliest possible moment; also, provision should be made for the permanent-way and structures to permit using more powerful locomotives than hitherto in use on these railways.

At several of the workshops additions to plant and accommodation have been made of a beneficial character.

*Locomotive Repairs and Rebuilding.*—One hundred and ninety-eight locomotives have passed through shops. Of these, one Class Fa and two Class Wa have been erected new. Three new boilers have been made during the year, one being for a new Class Wa engine, and the other two for new Class U engines.

The following table gives particulars of repairs, &c., to locomotives for the year ending the 31st March, 1897:—

|                                           | Number. | Class of Engines.                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Number passed through shops ...           | 198     | 5 A, 4 C, 15 D, 3 E, 42 F, 14 Fa, 3 G, 2 H, 31 J, 3 K, 4 L, 2 La, 3 M, 4 N, 6 O, 12 P, 16 R, 3 S, 3 T, 4 U, 8 V, 2 W, 9 Wa. |
| Built new ...                             | 3       | 1 Fa, 2 Wa.                                                                                                                 |
| Rebuilt ...                               | ...     | ...                                                                                                                         |
| Converted ...                             | ...     | ...                                                                                                                         |
| Thoroughly overhauled ...                 | 26      | 1 A, 1 C, 1 D, 1 E, 7 F, 2 Fa, 1 G, 2 H, 5 J, 1 M, 4 R.                                                                     |
| Heavy repairs ...                         | 65      | 2 A, 5 D, 12 F, 1 Fa, 2 G, 12 J, 3 K, 1 M, 2 N, 3 O, 6 P, 5 R, 2 S, 2 T, 4 V, 3 Wa.                                         |
| Light repairs ...                         | 104     | 2 A, 3 C, 9 D, 2 E, 23 F, 10 Fa, 15 J, 4 L, 2 La, 2 N, 3 O, 6 P, 7 R, 1 S, 1 T, 4 U, 4 V, 2 W, 4 Wa.                        |
| Number fitted with standard draw-gear ... | 3       | 1 F, 1 R, 1 J.                                                                                                              |
| Wholly painted and varnished ...          | 48      | 3 A, 1 C, 5 D, 12 F, 3 Fa, 1 G, 2 H, 8 J, 1 K, 1 N, 1 P, 2 R, 1 S, 1 T, 1 U, 2 V, 3 Wa.                                     |
| Paint and varnish renewed ...             | 52      | 1 A, 4 D, 8 F, 2 Fa, 11 J, 1 K, 1 M, 1 N, 4 O, 5 P, 5 R, 1 S, 1 T, 2 U, 3 V, 2 Wa.                                          |