

Timber shows an increase of over 2,000,000 superficial feet. A fair proportion of this increase is no doubt due to the extension of the railway-line from Kanohi to Makarau, as in expectation of this extension being opened a large quantity of timber had been gathered together at Waitangi. Extended building operations have, however, been carried out all over the Auckland District during the past year, and this also accounts in a great measure for the increase shown.

Merchandise shows an increase of 1,100 tons, principally on goods sent from Auckland.

Coal and minerals show the creditable increase of 7,000 tons. A large quantity of bricks have been received at Auckland during the past few months, owing to several large warehouses having been erected in that town. The increase in the coal trade is also satisfactory, as it shows that the local coal is being used wherever possible.

When we remember the fact that the mining boom was at its best in 1896, and as a consequence the revenue on this section for the year ending the 31st March, 1897, showed an increase of about £8,000 over that for the previous year, it is especially pleasing to note that the revenue for the year ending the 31st March, 1898, is over £9,000 above that for the previous year, or £17,000 above that for the year ending the 31st March, 1896. Mining has been very quiet during almost the whole of the year ending the 31st March, 1898, and the increase mentioned above shows that, notwithstanding the chill that overtook the mining boom, there is an undercurrent of prosperity throughout the whole of the Auckland Province, and an increasing settlement in the country districts.

A new coal-mine, worked by the Ralph's Taupiri Coal-mines (Limited), will be opened during the month of May, 1898. The coal from this mine is said to be of very good quality, and the output from Huntly should therefore be greatly augmented during the coming year.

The line from Paeroa to Thames is expected to be open for traffic about Christmas next, and this should greatly increase the passenger and goods traffic on the section. Taking all the circumstances into account, I think I am quite justified in anticipating a greatly increased revenue for the year ending the 31st March, 1899.

The train-services throughout the year have been generally satisfactory. Complaints *re* delays have arisen, but on the whole I consider the year which has just closed has been a very successful one from every point of view.

The usual returns and reports have already been forwarded.

I have, &c.,

A. GRANT,

District Traffic Manager.

The General Manager, New Zealand Railways, Wellington.

SIR,—

District Traffic Manager's Office, Wanganui, 21st May, 1898.

I have the honour to report that the revenue from traffic forwarded from stations in this district for the year ending the 31st March, 1898, amounted to £125,803 7s. 9d., an increase as compared with the previous year of £11,071 0s. 4d.

The following table shows the increases under the various headings:—

Description.	Numbers.	Tons.	Value.
			£ s. d.
Passengers	29,739	...	1,618 0 7
Parcels, &c.	5,173	...	327 10 1
Live-stock	97,916	...	...
Chaff, &c.	...	3,543	8,066 17 10
Wool	...	1,088	
Firewood	...	389	
Grain	...	4,638	
Merchandise	...	3,730	
Coal	...	951	1,058 11 10
Miscellaneous revenue	...	...	

There were decreases of 3,652 tons of minerals (other than coal) and 698 tons of timber. The net increase of tonnage was 9,989 tons.

Mineral traffic in this district consists chiefly of road materials and bricks. There was an exceptional expansion in both these classes during the year 1896–97.

The apparent decline in timber traffic is due to the contraction of local supply. The volume of traffic has not decreased, but it originates outside this district to a greater extent than formerly.

The numbers of passengers, exclusive of season-ticket holders, booked at stations in this district were,—

	Numbers.	Value of Fares.
		£ s. d.
At ordinary fares	410,417	43,167 7 10
At holiday excursion fares	43,856	8,887 13 10
At school and factory excursion fares	10,233	666 5 9
Total	464,506	£52,721 7 5