

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER OF NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS.

N.Z. Government Railways, Head Office,

Wellington, 17th June, 1899.

SIR,—

I have the honour to report upon the working of the open railways for the financial year ended 31st March, 1899.

The capital cost has increased from £15,993,903 to £16,404,076.

The revenue has been £1,469,665, against 1,376,008 last year, an increase of £93,657.

The net revenue has been £539,928, against £518,817 last year, an increase of £21,111.

The expenditure has been £929,738, against £857,191, an increase of £72,547.

The expenditure per cent. of revenue £63·26, as compared with £62·30 last year.

The rate of interest earned on capital cost—£3 5s. 10d., as compared with £3 4s. 10d. last year.

The revenue per train-mile, 7s. 5d., and the cost per train-mile, 4s. 8d., as against 7s. 6d. and 4s. 8d. respectively last year.

The following extensions have been opened during the year:—

						M.	ch.
Whakapara to Waiotu	...	...	...	...	...	3	26
Paeroa to Thames	...	...	...	...	...	19	20
Kokonga to Ranfurly	...	...	...	...	...	11	13
Total	...	...	...	...	...	33	59

Return No. 16 gives a comparative statement of the traffic and expenditure from 1881–82 to date.

The passenger-traffic shows an increase of 283,289 passengers and 6,367 season tickets, the increased revenue derived therefrom being £42,123. 482,278 holiday excursionists have travelled, yielding a revenue of £84,795.

51,940 scholars and teachers, and 39,955 parents and friends, travelled by school and factory excursions, yielding a revenue of £6,216.

There has again been a large increase in the goods and live-stock traffic—viz., 105,692 tons. The revenue from goods and live-stock has increased by £44,487.

Cattle have increased in number 11,407; and sheep, 161,638. Pigs have decreased 8,272, and calves 464 head. Chaff and lime traffic has increased by 5,858 tons; firewood, 3,382 tons; merchandise, 13,810 tons; minerals, 98,485 tons. Wool has decreased 5,659 tons; timber, 2,807 tons; and grain, 7,377 tons.

Twenty-two locomotives have been imported from America during the year, and are giving every satisfaction. Ten are expected shortly from Sharp, Stewart, and Co., of Glasgow.

The building of new carriage and wagon stock is keeping all the railway workshops very busy.

The maintenance expenditure is still increasing, and, until the lines are practically relaid throughout with new standard 56 lb. steel rails, and bridges strengthened so as to carry all classes of locomotives, is not likely to decrease.

The work of interlocking proceeds slowly. Consequent upon the rapidly increasing business the extension of the block system and provision of automatic continuous brakes should be provided for.

The railways are rapidly developing a business for which the light pioneer lines originally designed for New Zealand are inadequate, and the work of maintenance has now become largely one of reconstruction.

It is with great regret that I have to report a serious rear collision at Rakaia on the 11th March, by which four passengers lost their lives, and a large number were injured. As this accident is to be the subject of an inquiry by Royal Commission, I must at the present time refrain from any comment.

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

I have, &c.,

T. RONAYNE,

General Manager.

To the Hon. the Minister for Railways.