

Parcels, luggage, and mails have all shown increases for the year, the total increase being £15,598, or 3·79 per cent.

On the goods side, new records were set this year both in tonnage and revenue. Compared with last year the revenue increased by £254,586 (3·08 per cent.), while the tonnage increased from 8,954,239 to 9,210,466—*i.e.*, by 256,227 tons, or 2·86 per cent. The average haul remained the same at 91 miles, and the net ton miles set a new record of 842,541,507.

The commodities showing the greatest increases were live-stock, manures, grain, wool, and coal. During the early part of the year military freights continued to account for a considerable proportion of the traffic, but this has gradually been replaced by a flow of peacetime goods, and, particularly towards the end of the year, heavy railings of export produce were made consequent upon increased availability of shipping.

EXPENDITURE

Details of operating expenditure divided into maintenance, transportation, &c., are also set out in Statement No. 3.

The following table sets out a division of the total expenditure, with comparisons with the figures for 1944–45 :—

— — —					1946.	1945.	Variation.	
					£	£	£	Per Cent.
Wages	..	..	..	..	8,758,744	8,298,820	+459,924	5·54
Coal	..	..	..	..	945,116	872,178	+72,938	8·36
Stores and material	..	..	..	..	2,045,718	1,909,600	+136,118	7·13
Depreciation	..	..	..	..	1,409,032	1,119,533	+289,499	25·86
Miscellaneous	..	..	..	..	1,226,234	1,060,146	+166,088	15·67
Totals	..	..	..	..	14,384,844	13,260,277	+1,124,567	8·48

Under the headings of “ Depreciation ” and “ Miscellaneous ” are included the increased contributions to the Track Renewals Fund and provision for deferred maintenance, already referred to.

Under the heading of “ Wages ” it is of interest to note that the man-hours increased by 917,770, or 1·87 per cent., while the average rate per hour of wages charged to working-expenses increased by 1·46d. per hour, or 3·59 per cent. On the basis of this hourly increase, the additional cost of higher rates of pay and improved conditions amounts to approximately £304,500, and the additional cost of man-hours to handle the increased traffic amounts to approximately £155,424.

The average rates per hour for all salaries and wages—*i.e.*, including capital works—over the past eight years are as follows :—

Year.	d.	Year.	d.
1938–39	31·21	1942–43	35·73
1939–40	31·36	1943–44	36·92
1940–41	32·18	1944–45	40·56
1941–42	32·74	1945–46	42·04

The expenditure on coal increased by 8·36 per cent, and the tonnage consumed increased by 5·75 per cent. The average cost per ton of all coal consumed rose from £1 10s. 3d. to £1 10s. 11d., despite the fact that the ratio of soft and unscreened coal consumed increased from 64·37 per cent. to 65·59 per cent.