

There have been no serious interruptions to traffic.

A new train has been put on from Palmerston to Waipukurau and back daily, and with this addition the train-services have proved adequate to carry the business in a satisfactory manner.

A regular export of white-pine timber from Hawke's Bay District to Sydney has been established, and it is increasing in a very marked manner, notwithstanding the local outcry that the rail-age rates on this kind of timber are too high.

The Fell service on the Rimutaka Incline has worked most satisfactorily.

The rolling-stock generally is in first-class condition for working; but the number of carriages and wagons is very much below what is required to effectively carry on the business, and the local workshops cannot keep pace with traffic requirements in this respect.

Additional engines of a heavier type than those in use are urgently required to satisfactorily cope with the traffic.

Heavy expenditure is necessary to provide proper facilities at stations for working and conveniences for passengers, particularly at Summit and Masterton. Nearly all the country platforms require to be lengthened, and a new station-building at Wellington is an imperative necessity.

The question of providing refreshment-cars on the mail-trains, or, as an alternative, erecting refreshment-rooms at Masterton, is continually being urged by passengers.

The conduct of members of the staff has been good, and they have worked well throughout the year.

I have, &c.,

T. E. DONNE,
District Traffic Manager.

The General Manager, New Zealand Railways, Wellington.

APPENDIX G.

SIR,—

District Traffic Manager's Office, Christchurch, 10th May, 1900.

I have the honour to report on the working of the Christchurch district of the New Zealand Government railways for the year ending the 31st March, 1900.

The traffic in the district has exceeded any previous year to a large extent, the year's operations producing a revenue of £408,373 6s. 3d., being an increase of £68,617 7s. 2d., or over 20 per cent., as compared with the previous year.

Although the passenger traffic for the year ending the 31st March, 1899, had produced an increase in revenue of £8,140 12s. 10d., a further substantial increase has to be recorded, the increased revenue from passenger business during the year amounting to £11,167 0s. 10d., both the holiday-excursion traffic and the ordinary business participating in the improvement.

The following statement shows separately the ordinary and excursion traffic compared with the previous year:—

—			1899-1900.			1898-99.			
			£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Excursion tickets	...	...	193,126	25,878	6 1	150,059	20,922	8 9	
Ordinary tickets...	...	...	527,739	91,372	13 10	486,259	85,161	10 4	
Totals	...	...	720,865	117,250	19 11	636,318	106,083	19 1	

The increase in the revenue from ordinary traffic is therefore £6,211 3s. 6d., and may be taken as an indication that the expansion of business is not due to the cheap fares alone, but that the traffic is rapidly growing apart from the stimulus of low fares.

The traffic to Hanmer Plains makes steady progress, there being a moderate increase compared with last year.

The number of parcels booked amounted to 145,608, an increase of 6,484, notwithstanding the increase of last year. This traffic has steadily developed since the introduction of the reduced scale of charges for parcels.

The system of checking passengers' luggage brought into operation in September last does not seem to commend itself to the travelling public, and has not been taken advantage of to any extent. Possibly as travellers become better acquainted with the system they may realise its advantages.

The revenue from goods traffic has increased by £50,471 10s. 8d. over the previous year, there being increases in cattle, pigs, wool, firewood, timber, grain, merchandise, and coal.

As forecast in my report for 1899, the grain traffic has been very heavy, the quantity carried being 409,882 tons, and exceeding that of any previous year by 108,050 tons.

It is anticipated that the grain traffic for the current year will also be exceedingly heavy, and it is probable that the amount of grain to be carried, taking into account the quantity held over from last year in addition to the new crop, will equal, if it does not exceed, that for the year under notice.

The slight decrease in the sheep traffic is chiefly due to the erection of the Fairfield Works, near Ashburton, which has induced large quantities of fat sheep from localities in the vicinity to be driven by road instead of being railed for the longer distance to Belfast, Islington, or Smithfield.

The reduced sheep business is, however, counterbalanced by the frozen-meat traffic from Fairfield to Lyttelton.