

31,978 cattle, 892,270 sheep, 7,767 pigs, 1,291,296 tons of goods traffic of various classes, £576,385 in revenue, and 2,836 in the number of men employed.

The actual profit, year ending 31st March, 1901: £599,389, as against £571,533 for previous year.

Capital cost of railways open for traffic, £17,207,328.

Profit on working gives £3 9s. 8d., as compared with £3 8s. 5d. for last year.

Taking into consideration the large reductions in passenger and other rates, the increased cost of materials, coal, iron, &c., and the increased wages, this result is eminently satisfactory, and the figures are, I venture to think, an eloquent testimony of the success of State administration of our railways.

Notwithstanding the fact that the increased traffic during the past six years has been of such a phenomenal character, there is every indication that the business for the present financial year will be fully equal to that of the preceding year.

RAILWAY CONCESSIONS.

In connection with results of working the railways for last financial year the large concessions in rates granted by the Government since resuming control of the lines should not be lost sight of, as they have a very material effect on the results for the year. The total reductions made since the Government took over the railways amounted, up to last year, to no less than £369,439, and to 31st March, 1901, to £420,239.

The following are principal concessions granted and the estimated value of the reductions for one year:—

Reduction—	£
Live-stock rates	25,000
Firewood, chaff, and lime...	8,000
Free carriage of lime, butter, eggs, and fish empties	1,500
Abolition of extra charge of	
One penny per ton on branch lines...	3,000
Agricultural produce	45,000
Butter and cheese	5,000
Artificial manures	1,000
Bricks, clay, coal, &c.	3,000
General reduction of ordinary passenger and season-ticket rates ...	68,000
Cheap tickets for workers on Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin suburban lines	1,600
Concessions to race-horses, polo-ponies, hunters and hounds, returning from races, polo meetings, and hunts	2,800
Carriage of goods from centres to ports for shipment, dead-weight instead of measurement	1,100
Total of	<u>£165,000</u>

In addition to the items enumerated, reductions have from time to time been made on a very large number of articles of every day use carried over the railways. The regulations have been made of a more liberal character than heretofore, train services improved, speeds increased, and additional trains involving an expenditure of many tens of thousands per annum have been provided; and to further meet the convenience of the public, goods and passenger traffic have been separated wherever the volume of business has warranted such a step.

NORTH ISLAND MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY.

The central route having been finally determined upon for the North Island Main Trunk Railway, immediate steps were taken to put further work in hand. The formation is now well advanced between Kawakawa and Taumararui, while bushfelling, &c., is in hand south of the Wanganui River. From the south end the works extend nearly to Turangarere, all the important works on this section being fully manned. The erection of the Makohine Viaduct is progressing satisfactorily, notwithstanding that the work has been retarded by continued bad weather. The viaduct will be completed during the coming summer, and simultaneously the railway will be opened to Mangaweka.

The amount voted last session was sufficient to cover the requirements for the year, but an increased amount will be necessary for the coming year.