

APPENDIX E.

SIR,—

Chief Traffic Manager's Office, Wellington, 15th June, 1903.

I have the honour to report on the working of the Traffic Branch of the New Zealand Railways for the year ending 31st March, 1903.

Hurunui-Bluff Section.

The number of passengers carried during the year has fallen short of last year's traffic by 68,700 passengers, the Invercargill, Dunedin, and Christchurch Districts participating in the decrease.

In goods traffic there were large increases in all classes, excepting grain, in which there was a large deficiency, the yield being considerably under the average, thus reducing the total increase in goods traffic to 11,914 tons, as against an increase of 45,220 tons last year.

The sheep traffic was very heavy, 544,170 sheep being carried in excess of the traffic for last year.

In the Christchurch District there are increases in all classes of traffic excepting grain, the increase in sheep being 316,048.

The traffic in frozen meat has increased by 2,660 tons, 38,010 tons having been carried to Lyttelton and Timaru as against 35,350 tons last year.

In the Dunedin District the traffic in practically all classes excepting grain shows a considerable increase.

There is a large increase in sheep traffic, 147,304 more sheep having been carried than in the previous year.

There is also a considerable increase in frozen meat, 202,416 carcasses having been shipped at Oamaru and Port Chalmers, as against 163,189 carcasses for last year.

The quantity of cream carried to dairy factories amounted to 578,160 gallons, being an increase of 218,848 gallons. This class of traffic has made considerable strides during the past few years, having increased from 37,425 gallons in 1899-1900 to 578,160 gallons in the year under review.

During the year creameries have been established at Kurow, Windsor, Totara, Maheno, Hyde, Balclutha, and Romahapa.

The recently discovered phosphate-rock deposits in the vicinity of Clarendon Station have been worked during the year, the output forwarded from that station being 2,494 tons. This industry should in time become of considerable importance.

In the Invercargill District there are increases in chaff, wool, timber, merchandise, coal and other minerals, there being a decrease in grain and firewood. There is also a large increase in sheep traffic.

The Christchurch-Dunedin express trains have been accelerated, forty-five minutes having been taken off the journey-time, the trains arriving at destination at 8.15 p.m. instead of 9 p.m. as formerly; and arrangements have been made which enable the express train being run alongside the Wellington ferry steamer at Lyttelton, and also for a train for Christchurch to start from the wharf immediately on arrival of the ferry boat from Wellington.

The journey-time of the morning train from Palmerston to Oamaru has been reduced, to give a better connection with the Oamaru markets.

In the Invercargill District the journey-times of several mixed trains have been reduced, notably those between Invercargill and Clinton, Lumsden and Gore, Invercargill-Orepuki, Invercargill-Bluff, and Riverton-Nightcaps.

An extra passenger-train has been provided from Winton to Invercargill and back on Saturdays. The Riverton-Nightcaps time-table has been improved by the running of the 10.5 a.m. Riverton to Nightcaps and the 2 p.m. Nightcaps to Riverton on Mondays in addition to Wednesdays and Fridays.

Various other minor alterations have been made all over the Hurunui-Bluff Section.

Increased mileage per annum: Passengers and mixed, 21,730; goods, 58,136: total, 79,866.

Various alterations and improvements of branch services are contemplated.

Picton Section.

The passenger traffic has increased largely, there being an increase of 14,104 passengers, and in revenue, including season tickets, of £808 2s. 1d.

The principal increases in goods traffic are in chaff, wool, grain, and merchandise.

There is also a large increase in sheep traffic, 71,782 sheep having been carried, as against 38,149 last year.

The total revenue for the section was increased by £2,371 14s. 10d., or over 21 per cent.

Westland Section.

The passenger business has fallen off slightly in this district, there being a decrease in passengers of 5,934; season tickets, 72; and in revenue of £68 9s. 3d.

There has been a moderate increase in goods traffic, the principal increases being in chaff, firewood, and timber.

The Greymouth-Hokitika time-table has been revised and improved.

Increased mileage per annum, 7,488 miles.

Westport Section.

In passenger business there has been a moderate increase on this section.

The goods traffic, however, has increased largely, the principal increase being in coal, close upon 88,000 tons more being carried than the previous year.