

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND FORECAST.

Considerable progress has been made with the various duplication works in hand at the close of the last financial year. The Auckland–Penrose line has been completed and brought into use, and alterations to Auckland passenger-yard and station, necessitated by the opening of the double line, have been carried out.

The duplicated section of the Hutt Railway between Ngahauranga and Kaiwarra has been opened, and two tracks are now regularly used daily by trains running between Lower Hutt and Kaiwarra. The construction of the new main road is well in hand, and it is anticipated that the whole works—railway and road—will be practically completed during the coming financial year.

The Addington–Rolleston duplication has been completed and opened for traffic.

The Caversham Tunnel has been completed, and the new track between Dunedin and Cattle-yards has been opened for single-line working. The Chain Hill Tunnel has been commenced, and the work generally in connection with the duplication of the line between Dunedin and Mosgiel is being pushed on as fast as circumstances will permit.

Messrs. A. and G. Price (Limited), of the Thames, have now completed their contract to build and deliver 20 Class “A” four-cylinder balanced compound tender engines. The whole of the engines built by the firm under their various contracts have been up to standard and specification, and given highly satisfactory results in practical every-day work. The same firm were successful tenderers in respect of a further contract to build 10 Class “A” four-cylinder balanced compound locomotives, and it is anticipated that some of these locomotives will be delivered during the financial year 1910–11.

The Railway Workshops are engaged in building 2 Class “X,” 10 Class “B,” and 20 Class “Wg” locomotives, which, added to those to be manufactured by Messrs. Price, makes a total of 42 locomotives now under order. Sixty-two bogie-cars, 18 bogie brake-vans, 47 bogie and 1,212 four-wheeled wagons, are also under construction in the Railway Workshops.

Considerable attention has recently been devoted in America to the question of engine failures, and many of the American Railroad Companies are now keeping records of the mileage run for each locomotive breakdown. There is, however, great dissimilarity in the basis adopted by the roads concerned; some take cognisance of failures involving a delay of two minutes or over in case of a passenger train, and five minutes or over in respect of a goods train; others deal only with failures involving delays of 5 minutes or more to a passenger train and twenty minutes or more to a goods train. There is equally as great a divergence of opinion in regard to what constitutes good locomotive service; some Roads consider 5,000 miles per failure is satisfactory, others require a standard of 16,000 miles for goods-train and 20,000 miles for passenger services. The subject being of importance, the following particulars of the results achieved on our own railways during the past two years will be of interest: For the year 1908–9, 24,462 engine miles were run for each failure on the Auckland Section, 46,897 engine miles for each failure on the Wellington–Napier–New Plymouth line, and 69,594 engine miles for each failure on the Hurunui–Bluff Section. During the year 1909–10 there were no failures on the Kaihu Section, 26,766 miles were run for each failure on Kawakawa Section, 15,362 miles for each failure on Whangarei Section, 27,274 miles for each failure on Gisborne Section, 35,344 miles for each failure on North Island Main Trunk line, 127,272 miles for each failure on South Island Main Trunk line and branches, 18,168 miles for each failure on Picton Section, 38,673 miles for each failure on Nelson Section, 209,882 miles for each failure on Westport Section, and 26,545 miles for each failure on the Westland Section. Taking the whole railway system, 48,990 miles were run for every engine-failure that occurred. Judged on the basis adopted by American Roads it must be conceded that New Zealand results, which include every failure occurring to engines employed in running-train services, irrespective of the period of train-delay, constitute a very good record.

The arrangements made for booking passengers through between stations in North and South Islands have been found to be a convenience and to give satisfaction, as does also the through checking of luggage, in connection with which a contract has been let for the carting of checked luggage between the ferry-boat and the Wellington Railway-station. The total charge made is 2d. per package of checked luggage, and is in strong contrast with the rate ordinarily levied by carters for a like service between the railway-stations and wharves. I have no doubt that as the advantage of the system becomes more generally known, it will be availed of to a much greater extent than at present.