

will fully justify my recommendation, and the convenience of the public will be greatly increased.

With a view of securing a more uniform system of working the railway traffic throughout the various sections in the Dominion, I invited a conference of District Traffic Managers to be held in Wellington with the Chief Traffic Manager, when many important matters were discussed. The results of this conference will, I think, be of benefit not only to the officers themselves, but to the public with whom they have to deal. It is my intention to hold such conferences with the General Manager and the chief officers of the different Departments from time to time.

The following statement shows a brief comparison of the traffic and the rolling-stock for dealing therewith when the Government resumed control of the railways in 1895 with that at 31st March of the present year:—

|                                           | 31st March,<br>1895. | 31st March,<br>1910. | Increase.  | Per Cent of<br>Increase. |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| Passengers (number) ...                   | 3,905,578            | 11,141,142           | 7,235,564  | 185                      |
| Season tickets " ...                      | 28,623               | 199,371              | 170,748    | 597                      |
| Parcels " ...                             | 444,981              | 1,047,806            | 602,825    | 135                      |
| Horses " ...                              | 11,185               | 20,571               | 9,386      | 84                       |
| Carriages " ...                           | 750                  | 2,532                | 1,782      | 238                      |
| Dogs " ...                                | 23,517               | 51,235               | 27,718     | 118                      |
| Drays " ...                               | 705                  | 2,490                | 1,785      | 253                      |
| Cattle " ...                              | 40,890               | 176,412              | 135,522    | 331                      |
| Sheep " ...                               | 1,519,921            | 5,126,762            | 3,606,841  | 237                      |
| Pigs " ...                                | 43,292               | 126,930              | 83,638     | 193                      |
| Chaff, lime (tons) ...                    | 36,972               | 179,902              | 142,930    | 387                      |
| Wool " ...                                | 103,328              | 151,051              | 47,723     | 46                       |
| Firewood " ...                            | 85,102               | 98,360               | 13,258     | 16                       |
| Timber " ...                              | 198,578              | 523,845              | 325,267    | 164                      |
| Grain " ...                               | 388,556              | 1,044,468            | 655,912    | 169                      |
| Merchandise " ...                         | 377,938*             | 739,667              | 361,729    | 96                       |
| Minerals " ...                            | 857,917              | 2,486,121            | 1,628,204  | 190                      |
| Total tonnage ...                         | 2,048,391            | 5,223,414            | 3,175,023  | 155                      |
| Total revenue ...                         | £1,150,851           | £3,249,790           | £2,098,939 | 182                      |
| Locomotives (number) ...                  | 269                  | 465                  | 196        | 73                       |
| " tractive power (lb.) ...                | 1,756,178            | 5,459,621            | 3,703,443  | 211                      |
| Passenger-cars (number) ...               | 498                  | 1,140                | 642        | 129                      |
| Passenger-cars, seating accommodation ... | 17,455               | 47,842               | 30,387     | 174                      |
| Brake-vans (number) ...                   | 204                  | 367                  | 163        | 80                       |
| Sheep-wagons " ...                        | 390                  | 1,139                | 749        | 192                      |
| Total wagons, all classes (number) ...    | 8,264                | 16,853               | 8,589      | 104                      |
| Wagon carrying-capacity (tons) ...        | 50,861               | 135,088              | 84,227     | 166                      |
| Tran-mileage run... ...                   | 3,221,620            | 7,889,166            | 4,667,546  | 145                      |

I am fully satisfied that the prosperity manifested by the results of last year's working of our lines will continue during the current year, and, notwithstanding the fact that no Easter holiday traffic will be included in the returns of the year now entered upon, I estimate the revenue at £3,250,000, and the expenditure at £2,223,275.

In conclusion, I may remark that with the proposed reduction of grades, the increased hauling-power of our engines, and the additional rolling-stock that will shortly be available, I hope that the Department will be able to continue paying its own interest, and I am confident that the policy proposed will enable further facilities to be granted to the people of the Dominion, either in the direction of improved services, the acceleration of the speed of trains, or by making reductions in rates, thereby enabling the railways to carry out to the fullest extent their function in assisting the further opening up and development of our country.