

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER OF NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS.

New Zealand Government Railways, Head Office,
Wellington, 30th June, 1910.

SIR,—

I have the honour to report upon the working of the open railways for the financial year ended the 31st March, 1910.

The capital cost has increased from £27,762,592 to £28,513,476. The revenue was £3,249,790, as against £2,929,526 last year. The expenditure for the year under review has been £2,169,474 against £2,114,815, an increase of £54,659. The rate of interest on capital was £3 16s., as compared with £3 2s. 7d. last year. The revenue per train-mile was 8s. 2½d. and the expenditure 5s. 6d., as compared with 7s. 10d. and 5s. 8d. respectively last year.

The following extensions were opened during the year :—

	M.	Ch.
Wayby-Wellsford	3	18
Waikohu Extension	0	42
Ruatapu-Ross	7	19
Riversdale-Switzers	13	67
Waihoaka-Tuatapere	8	7
Catlin's-Houipapa	2	30
	35	23

The total mileage added to the system was thus 35 miles 23 chains, making the total mileage open for traffic on the 31st March, 1910, 2,717 miles, as against 2,682 at the close of the previous year.

During the year 11,141,142 ordinary passengers were carried, yielding a revenue of £1,070,790, and 199,371 season tickets were issued, the revenue derived therefrom being £100,249. There was thus an increase of 683,998 ordinary passengers and £149,380 revenue, and of 6,824 season tickets and £10,001 revenue, over the traffic carried under these heads during the previous year. 61,728 children and teachers and 53,677 adults travelled by school and factory excursions during the year, the revenue derived therefrom being £7,965. 863,838 passengers travelled at holiday excursion fares, yielding a revenue of £211,133, an increase of 73,659 excursionists and £44,662 revenue as compared with the previous year.

The coaching and goods traffic has been well maintained during the year, and shows increases under all heads with the exception of carriages, sheep, chaff, lime &c., firewood and timber.

Increases.

Coaching.—Parcels, 86,513; horses, 1,447; dogs, 437. Revenue, £5,545.

Goods.—Drays, 63; cattle, 16,528 head; pigs, 9,304 head; wool, 13,135 tons; grain, 250,675 tons; merchandise, 9,696 tons; minerals, 144,073 tons. Revenue, £155,338. Total increase in goods and live-stock tonnage, 354,610 tons.

Decreases.

Coaching.—Carriages, 18.

Goods.—Sheep, 84,727 head; chaff, lime, &c., 2,764 tons; firewood, 4,260 tons; timber, 59,014 tons.

In December last a second express train each way was put on between Wellington and Auckland, but, with the exception of the duration of the Christmas holiday period, the traffic did not prove sufficient to warrant its retention, and it was discontinued early in January. Since the 6th December last the Wellington-Napier mail trains have been run *via* Palmerston North.

The Invercargill-Christchurch express trains have been further accelerated, and, in conjunction with the fast ferry-boat "Maori," provide a through connection between Invercargill and Auckland on three days a week.

The acquisition of the Wellington and Manawatu Railway has had satisfactory results, and enables traffic from the East and West Coast and Main Trunk lines, which formerly had to be conveyed at a great expense by way of the Wairarapa and over the Rimutaka Incline when consigned "*via* Government line," to be diverted to the shorter and more economical route *via* Longburn. Since the line was taken over very considerable additions have been made in the train-services and accommodation at stations and sidings.

Heavy floods experienced on the Gisborne Section and Auckland District during March disorganized the train-services on the Te Aroha - Thames - Waihi and Gisborne lines, necessitating suspension of train-running operations for some days. On the Kingston-Invercargill line a straying bullock was struck by the engine of a south-bound mixed train, which was badly derailed, and the engine-driver was slightly injured. No one else was, however, hurt.

Good progress continues to be made in the work of equipping the lines with electric tablet interlocking, telegraphs and telephones, automatic tablet-exchangers, and semaphores. The lock-and-block system for double lines has also been brought into operation where suitable circumstances and conditions obtained. Altogether the tablet system is now in operation on 1,261 miles of railway, and the lock-and-block on 13 miles of track.