

The accumulated balance to the credit of the Government Railways Superannuation Fund at the 31st March amounted to £264,455, an increase of £30,998 on the previous year. The total income for the year was £102,951, and the amount outgoing was £71,953. Of the latter the sum of £61,783 represented the charge involved in payments to 1,261 beneficiaries, comprising 807 members of the service who have either voluntarily resigned or who have been retired on account of being medically unfit, 179 widows and 275 children dependents of deceased members of the service who had not retired on superannuation at the time of their death.

As indicated in His Excellency the Governor's speech, Mr. E. H. Hiley was selected out of 104 applicants to fill the post of General Manager. Mr. Hiley will shortly arrive in the Dominion and will take up his duties. The thanks of the Dominion are due to the retiring General Manager for his long and faithful services.

As promised in last year's Statement a long and exhaustive investigation has been made into the question of shunting. Some valuable information has been received, which is now being gone into by the General Manager and the principal departmental officers. I hope shortly to lay a report on the subject before honourable members and to be able to take such steps as will minimize the danger to which shunters are subject.

The visit of the Battleship "New Zealand," though not falling altogether into last year's operations, caused great activity on the railways, and I think that the way in which the vast crowds travelling by rail were handled without a hitch reflects the greatest credit on the railway staff, both officers and men, and the thanks of the Dominion are due to them. I have personally to thank all the staff for their efforts on this occasion and also for their efforts on the occasion of the floods in the South Island.

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, 1895.	31st March, 1913.	Increase.	Per Cent of Increase.
Passengers (number) ...	3,905,578	13,123,879	9,218,301	236
Season tickets " ...	28,623	265,259	236,636	826
Parcels " ...	444,981	1,320,873	875,892	197
Horses " ...	11,185	21,971	10,786	96
Carriages " ...	750	2,904	2,154	287
Dogs " ...	23,517	57,388	33,871	144
Drays " ...	705	3,189	2,484	352
Cattle " ...	40,890	221,595	180,705	442
Sheep " ...	1,519,921	5,388,805	3,868,884	255
Pigs " ...	43,292	136,130	92,838	214
Chaff, lime (tons) ...	36,972	213,322	176,350	497
Wool " ...	103,328	147,735	44,407	43
Firewood " ...	85,102	112,072	26,970	32
Timber " ...	198,578	695,060	496,482	250
Grain " ...	388,556	1,181,899	793,343	204
Merchandise " ...	377,938	845,934	467,996	124
Minerals " ...	857,917	2,760,983	1,903,066	222
Total tonnage ...	2,048,391	5,957,005	3,908,614	191
Total revenue ...	£1,150,851	£3,971,002	£2,820,151	245
Locomotives (number) ...	269	513	244	91
" tractive power (lb.) ...	1,756,178	6,317,810	4,561,632	259
Passenger-cars (number) ...	498	1,282	784	158
Passenger-cars, seating - accommodation ...	17,455	53,819	36,364	208
Brake-vans (number) ...	204	385	181	88
Sheep-wagons " ...	390	1,443	1,053	270
Total wagons, all classes (number) ...	8,264	19,130	10,866	131
Wagon carrying-capacity (tons) ...	50,861	158,447	107,586	212
Train-mileage run... ..	3,221,620	9,016,224	5,794,604	180

Having given careful consideration to the general circumstances of the Dominion as reflected by the railway traffic, I feel confident of continued prosperity during the next financial year, and estimate the revenue for the year ending 31st March, 1914, at £4,200,000, and the expenditure at £2,931,250.