

The present system of lighting with Pintsch gas is adequate for comfort, and as there are many more urgent matters on the railway requiring attention when funds are available a radical alteration in the car-lighting system need not be anticipated in the near future.

Car-cleaning.

The facilities and methods adopted for car-cleaning are not up to date, nor are the results always satisfactory. The business of the Department has now attained dimensions that make it essential to adopt modern methods for performing car-cleaning. With this end in view it is proposed, as funds permit, to erect at the important centres properly equipped sheds fitted with vacuum and other appliances, and lighted so that cars can be efficiently cleaned day or night. Car-cleaning sheds of the above description are included in the plans for the new stations at Wellington, Auckland, and Christchurch. The fact that the Department is short of spare car-stock, and that the stock available is so constantly in traffic, adds greatly to the difficulty of systematic cleaning. This, however, emphasizes the necessity for the erection of suitably equipped and lighted car-sheds, in which the stock can be thoroughly cleaned during the night.

Wagons.

The number of wagons available is insufficient to meet the demand, the deficiency being particularly pronounced in the case of sheep-trucks. The shortage of wagons is, however, much aggravated by the deficiency in engine-power, which retards the movement of both loaded and empty vehicles. A considerable number of new wagons are in course of construction in the railway workshops, and an effort is being made to relieve the position by keeping the shops fully employed. The transport facilities have also been improved as far as practicable by better organization of goods services, and arrangements have been made for shortening the period during which wagons are diverted temporarily from goods to passenger purposes. The more strict control of wagon-distribution brought about by the reorganization and strengthening of the Traffic Managers' offices should tend to a better use of the wagon-stock. I do not think the position justifies going outside the Dominion for wagon-stock.

Westinghouse Brake.

I have arranged for the installation of this necessary adjunct to railway working being carried out on the smaller sections. The Gisborne line has been fully equipped; the Whangarei Section is in hand, and the work will be undertaken on the Westland Section next, and on the other sections in rotation. The condition of the Westinghouse brake appliances where they are in operation is satisfactory.

RAILWAY WORKSHOPS.

Railway workshops are established at Newmarket, East Town, Napier, Petone, Addington, Hillside, Invercargill, Greymouth, and Westport. The workshops have been well equipped in the first instance, but the requirements of increasing traffic will necessitate a considerable amount of extension and remodelling.

The East Town, Napier, Greymouth, and Westport shops are principally employed in carrying out repair-work and assembling rolling-stock transferred from time to time to those sections.

The present Newmarket Workshop undertakes the building of cars and wagons and any repairs required to rolling-stock running on the section north of Ohakune. The capacity of the shop is not equal to the demands made upon it, and it will be necessary to increase the accommodation of the blacksmiths', erecting, and machine shops. Locomotives for the North Island should also, in the interests of economy, be built at Newmarket, and provision is made for this in the scheme of new works submitted with this report. The work will cost £30,000, and take two years to complete.

The Petone Workshop, at which car and wagon building and general repairs are carried out for the Wellington-Napier-New Plymouth and Main Trunk line to Ohakune, requires remodelling and general extension, the accommodation and existing structures being inadequate to meet present demands. The tender-repair shop, foundry, and lifters' shed will be extended, and a tool-room should be provided. £30,000 has been included in the proposed loan for this work, which will take two years to complete.

The Addington and Hillside Workshops, which are equipped for carrying out work connected with the manufacture of locomotives, cars, and wagons and general repair-work, require extensions, which in the case of Hillside shop will be somewhat extensive in character.

In the matter of equipment it is necessary to provide for more power in each of the latter shops, and to install additional plant and machinery as soon as the extensions to the buildings have been completed. The alterations and improvements necessary will be undertaken and paid for out of "Additions-to-open-lines" vote and revenue respectively, in accordance with the usual practice.

The Invercargill Workshop requires the addition of a lifting-shed, with the necessary roads.

PASSENGER-TRAIN SERVICES.

Careful consideration has been given to the passenger-train-running, with the object of revising and improving the present time-table. The wholesale revision of a long-established time-table is not a simple matter, especially when practically the whole of the working is over single lines. The difficulty is increased by the distance between crossing-places and the congested condition of the lines in the suburban areas; this is particularly pronounced in the North Island.