

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

New Zealand Government Railways,

SIR,—

Head Office, Wellington, 30th September, 1915.

I have the honour to report on the working of the New Zealand Railways for the financial year ending 31st March, 1915.

The mileage of line open for traffic at the close of the year was 2,955 miles, an increase of 92 miles, which represents extensions opened for traffic during the year. These were,—

	M.	ch.
Otiria-Kaikohe	16	36
Kaihu-Tarawhati	2	26
Pohokura-Whangamomona	6	15
Cass-Arthur's Pass	14	66
Cronadun-Inangahua	13	07
Kaiwaka-Otamatea	2	47
Otoko-Matawai	12	58
Big Hill-Beaumont	5	36
Houipapa-Tahakopa	17	54
	91	25

The capital invested in the lines open for traffic, including the plant and steamers on Lake Wakatipu, was £34,133,825, an increase of £1,778,738 on the figures for the previous year.

The gross earnings were £4,105,457, against £4,043,328 for the year 1914. The net revenue amounted to £1,185,002, equal to 3.53 per cent. on the capital invested in the railways open for traffic, and 3.28 per cent. on the total capital (£36,133,155) invested in the opened and unopened lines.

The continuation all the year round of the second Auckland-Wellington express trains, the opening of railway-extensions on the North Auckland, Whangarei, Kaihu, and Stratford-Whangamomona lines, and the additions made to the Auckland and Wellington suburban services, resulted in an increase of 56,595 train-miles in the North Island, while the train-mileage in the South Island advanced by 7,557 miles, consequent on the opening of extensions of the West Coast, Catlin's River, and Beaumont Railways, and the running of additional trains on the Waipara and Orepuki lines for a portion of the year.

The total train-mileage was 9,383,420, against 9,319,268 for 1914, an increase of 64,152 miles.

Traffic in the Gisborne district was completely disorganized from the 18th to the 26th May as a result of floods, which seriously damaged the permanent-way.

The train services on the Stratford-Whangamomona lines were suspended between Pohokura and Whangamomona from the 14th to the 19th December, as the result of slips at both ends of the Whangamomona Tunnel. Coaches ran between the two ends of the interrupted line, enabling passengers to complete their journeys.

The lines in the Westland district suffered from floods in December and February. The flood on the 14th December resulted in suspension of traffic on the Blackball line on the 14th and 15th of that month. A washout on the Reefton line caused considerable delay to train services, and necessitated the transhipment of passengers. The Otira and State Collieries lines were also damaged. On the 21st December the Blackball line was interrupted a second time, but traffic was resumed on the following day. On the 23rd February traffic on the Otira and State Collieries line was interrupted for some hours, and passengers on the Reefton line had to be transhipped on the 24th February.

Slips on the Wairarapa line caused minor interruptions, with consequent delays to trains on the 14th December.

Traffic on the Westport line was delayed by slips which occurred on the 27th February.

The following figures, which show the record of late arrival of the principal trains during the year, indicate that, despite the difficulties experienced from floods, slips, and other unforeseen circumstances, the trains have, as a whole, run well up to time.

	Average Late Arrival.	
	Min.	Min.
For long-distance passenger-trains	1.40	against 1.40 last year.
Suburban trains	0.36	" 0.48 "
Long-distance mixed trains	2.09	" 2.28 "

The number of ordinary passengers carried during the year was 13,565,772, an increase of 209,879 on the previous year's business.

Season tickets issued number 302,912, an increase of 15,875.

Workmen's twelve-trip tickets numbered 63,954; workers' suburban weekly tickets 172,656; an increase of 5,587 twelve-trip and 9,357 workers' weekly suburban over the preceding year.

Holiday excursion tickets totalled 926,615, an increase of 111,348 on the previous year's traffic.

Schools, factories, and friendly societies' excursions decreased by 84,970, the total issue for 1915 being 104,017, against 188,987 for the year 1914. The decrease under this head is mainly due to the visit of the battleship H.M.S. "New Zealand" in 1913, and the Auckland Exhibition, in connection with both of which events special school-excursion trips were arranged. A number of the schools, moreover, decided to forego their excursions this year and donate the funds to the Belgium Relief Fund.

The total traffic under the head of "Coaching," which includes parcels, horses, carriages, and dogs, was 1,485,977, an increase of 14,247 on the total for last year.