

I desire to point to the references made to the condition of the rolling-stock in each year's Railways Statement, and to state positively that I am not aware of anything to warrant the assumption that the rolling-stock has been neglected, and that neither directly nor indirectly has any instruction been given for the curtailment of expenditure on the upkeep of the rolling-stock. The constant aim of the Department is not only to maintain its rolling-stock in the highest standard of efficiency, but to improve the class of vehicle employed with a view to increasing the accommodation and conveniences afforded to the public.

The figures given below show (a) that more vehicles have been passed through the shops per annum during the last two years than during the previous eight years, and (b) that more money has been expended on repairs per vehicle during the latter period :—

AVERAGE NUMBER OF ENGINES, CARRIAGES, BRAKE-VANS, AND WAGONS PASSED THROUGH VARIOUS SHOPS PER ANNUM FOR REPAIRS DURING THE LAST TEN YEARS.

|                              | During Eight Years,<br>from 1907 to 1914. | During Two Years,<br>1915 and 1916<br>(ending 31st March). |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Locomotives ... ..           | 590                                       | 727                                                        |
| Carriages ... ..             | 1,850                                     | 2,126                                                      |
| Brake-vans and wagons ... .. | 17,093                                    | 21,170                                                     |

AVERAGE AMOUNT PER VEHICLE PER ANNUM SPENT ON REPAIRS.

|                              | During Eight Years,<br>from 1907 to 1914. | During Two Years,<br>1915 and 1916<br>(ending 31st March). |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
|                              | £                                         | £                                                          |
| Locomotives ... ..           | 195·50                                    | 220·71                                                     |
| Carriages ... ..             | 37·83                                     | 37·49                                                      |
| Brake-vans and wagons ... .. | 3·51                                      | 3·74                                                       |

The Department has no objection to the fullest investigation and inquiry being made into the condition of the rolling-stock at present running on the railway system.

E. H. HILEY,  
General Manager.

Wellington, 2nd August, 1916.

Chief Mechanical Engineer's Office, Wellington, 2nd August, 1916.

General Manager, New Zealand Railways.

*Condition of Rolling-stock.*

IN accordance with your above-quoted instruction, I now forward herewith for your information reports from the various officers of the Locomotive Branch who are immediately responsible for the efficient upkeep of the rolling-stock of the New Zealand railways.

As you will observe, these reports absolutely deny the suggestions made that the rolling-stock is not in thoroughly efficient working-order, that there is any scarcity of spare parts, or that the regulations *re* keeping stock in good repair have been in any way relaxed.

I now desire, as head of the Locomotive Branch, to thoroughly endorse these reports, and to say that I consider the suggestions made were absolutely without any foundation in fact.

From my own personal knowledge I can state emphatically that the rolling-stock of the New Zealand railways has never been in better condition than it is at the present time.

H. H. JACKSON,  
Chief Mechanical Engineer.

Locomotive Engineer's Office, Addington, 21st July, 1916.

Chief Mechanical Engineer, Wellington.

*Condition of Rolling-stock.*

IN reply to your above-quoted memo. calling attention to a statement in the House that the repairs to rolling-stock have not been kept up during recent years, and that there is a shortage of spares, I beg to state that there is no foundation for such an assertion so far as the South Island main line and branches are concerned, nor any other portion of the railway system of which I have knowledge.

The repairs are thoroughly well attended to, and the instructions regarding the upkeep of the condition of rolling-stock as a matter of safety have not been amended or relaxed during the last three years, but, on the other hand, have been strictly enforced, and the closest attention directed to this very important matter, which is recognized by Railway officers as the first and most important duty; also, improvements have progressed during the last three years.