

Notwithstanding the fact that prudence and the exigencies of the moment impel me to make a conservative estimate for the ensuing year, I desire to again emphasize the desirability of making adequate provision to enable the scheme of works outlined in the General Manager's special report of 1914 to be commenced as soon as it is practicable to obtain men and materials and pushed on vigorously until finished. Unless this is done it is obvious, from the development that has taken place in the railway traffic despite the four years of war conditions, that very serious congestion of business will inevitably occur as soon as normal conditions are again restored.

I desire to place on record my sincere appreciation of the loyal and valuable services rendered by the Railway staff during a year of exceptional difficulties.

SUPERANNUATION FUND.

The total amount standing to the credit of the Government Railways Superannuation Fund at the end of the financial year was £373,098, a decrease of £4,487 on the balance to the credit of the fund on the 31st March, 1917. The gross income for the year was £123,927 6s. 6d., and the outgoing amount £128,414. Of the latter sum £95,971 represented grants to 1,046 members of the service who have retired voluntarily or have been retired medically unfit, and 280 widows and 377 children who are dependants on deceased contributors to the fund who were members of the service at the time of their death. The income from the actual contributions of members totalled £81,250, or £17,074 less than the estimated annual liability.

The receipts are, however, augmented by the Government subsidy of £25,000, and amounts received by way of interest on funds invested and fines imposed under the regulations, and a donation: these amounted to £17,678.

STATEMENT SHOWING THE FINANCIAL RESULTS OF WORKING ON THE NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS FOR THE LAST FOUR YEARS.

Year.	Net Revenue.	Interest on Cost of Open Lines.	Percentage Working-expenses to Earnings.	Net Earnings per Train-mile in Pence.
	£	£ s. d.		
1914-15	1,185,002	3 10 7	71·14	30·21
1915-16	1,637,473	4 14 4	64·00	42·00
1916-17	1,873,946	5 5 11	60·97	49·12
1917-18	1,644,794	4 12 0	64·91	52·96

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT SHOWING THE FINANCIAL RESULTS OF WORKING ON THE AUSTRALASIAN RAILWAYS FOR THE LAST FOUR YEARS (TAKEN FROM THE LATEST OFFICIAL RECORDS).

Percentage of Net Earnings to Capital.

Year.	New Zealand.	Victoria.	New South Wales.	Queensland.	South Australia.	Western Australia.	Tasmania.
1914-15	3·53	2·00	3·60	4·03	1·81	3·30	2·10
1915-16	4·72	3·13	3·45	2·72	2·40	3·37	2·07
1916-17	5·30	3·86	3·50	2·17	3·06	2·46	1·04
1917-18	4·60	4·18	4·10	1·55	...	...	...

Percentage of Working-expenses to Earnings.

Year.	New Zealand.	Victoria.	New South Wales.	Queensland.	South Australia.	Western Australia.	Tasmania.
1914-15	71·14	72·76	69·73	62·67	82·99	72·77	69·90
1915-16	64·00	64·94	70·71	73·29	78·63	72·39	71·44
1916-17	60·97	63·83	70·59	78·14	75·89	77·15	84·92
1917-18	64·91	63·82	66·34	84·75	...	...	...