

Water Services.—These have been maintained in good order.

Wharves.—The wharves belonging to the Department have been maintained in good order.

Arrangements have been made to carry out dredging-work at the Nelson wharves, which have now been handed over to the Nelson Harbour Board.

A new wharf is being built at Half-way Bay, Lake Wakatipu.

Buildings.—Extensive renewals and repairs have been effected. Two dwellinghouses, one engine-shed, one goods-shed, and one station building (partly) destroyed by fire have been reinstated. Seven dwellinghouses, one station building, and one goods-shed which were past repair were replaced by new buildings.

Station-yards.—Additional accommodation has been provided at a number of stations, and some stations rearranged.

Railway Improvements.—Auckland-Mercer grade easements: Further portions of this work have been completed, and a new station combining Drury and Runciman has been opened during the year.

The total expenditure under Railway Improvement Account during the year was £79,375.

Additions to Open Lines.—The expenditure under this heading during the year was £29,271, the principal works being—Signalling and interlocking, block-working, telegraph and telephone facilities, &c., rearrangements, Johnsonville (part), Ashburton (part), Christchurch (part), Ohakune (part), Kakariki (completion), Bennett's Junction (completion), new locomotive depot, Picton (completion), provision of public station at 5½ m., Huntly-Awaroa (part); additional refreshment-room accommodation, &c., at Frankton (completion), Marton (completion), Palmerston North (completion), Mercer, Kaitoke; improved drainage, Christchurch engine-depot and Invercargill; engine-pits, &c., Hawera, Thorndon, Lambton, and Cross Creek; loading-banks, Waipukurau, Otorohanga; engine-depot additions, Taihape; accommodation for Transport Staff, Christchurch; additions to locomotive offices, Newmarket and Petone; 30 cwt. crane, Waitara; goods-shed additions, &c., Hawera and Lambton; improvements to stockyards, Feilding and Waipawa; locomotive workshop additions, Gisborne; additional platform accommodation, Taumarunui and Greymouth; additions and alterations to station buildings, Morrinsville, Auckland, Christchurch, Invercargill; siding alterations and extensions, Wanganui, Okoia, Feilding, Napier, Motuhora, Otaio, Ngongotaha, Lyttelton, Pleasant Point, and Greymouth; watering facilities, Windsor; electric lighting, Huntly, Ohakune, Burke's, Heathcote (completion), Kaiapoi (completion), Ashburton (completion); house for Stationmaster, Mamaku; purchase of land, Wiri, Kakahi; house and land, Mercer, Taumarunui, and Port Chalmers.

Miscellaneous Works.—Additions and improvements amounting to £7,168, and charged to working-expenses, were carried out. The works include—Rearrangement of signalling and interlocking, Paekakariki; additions and improvements to station buildings, sidings, yards, &c., Thorndon, Bunnythorpe, Addington, Invercargill, Mount Somers, Melling; improvements to refreshment services, Hawera; improved lighting (electric) station buildings, cottages, &c., at Kaiapoi, Belfast, and Sawyer's Bay; provision of stockyards, Te Kinga, Paerata, Hatuma, and Taumarunui; workshop additions, Hillside; installation of electric power, Addington Workshops; water-service improvements, Frankton Junction and Invercargill; provision of bath, &c., Invercargill locomotive depot; loading-bank, Kiwitahi; hot-water services installed in forty-five houses; improvements and additions to forty-two houses; provision of pathway to stopping-place at 6 m. 55 ch., Raetihi Branch.

Expenditure.—The expenditure for the year was as follows:—

	£
Maintenance (charged to working-expenses)	752,558
New works (charged to capital)	108,646
Other Government Departments, public bodies, and private parties... ..	33,348
Total expenditure	£894,552

The maintenance expenditure charged to working-expenses amounted to £252 per mile, compared with £240 in 1917-18, £243 in 1916-17, £251 in 1915-16, and £254 in 1914-15.

The increase in expenditure notwithstanding the curtailment of work carried out is due to the increase in wages and in the cost of materials.

Mileage.—The mileage open for traffic on the 31st March, 1919, was 2,992 miles 67 chains. During the year no additional lines were opened for traffic.

Lands and Leases.—Number of leases registered during the year, 451; aggregate rental, £4,019 13s. 2d. Leases current at 31st March, 1919, 5,417; aggregate rental, £34,964 7s. 7d. Private-siding agreements registered during the year, 66; aggregate rental, £2,338. Private-siding agreements current at 31st March, 1919, 458; aggregate rental, £12,958. Proclamations taking or giving up land, 27. Total amount of compensation paid during the year for land, £29,225 3s. 7d. Miscellaneous agreements entered into, 19.

Staff.—Maintenance Branch: Working staff, 3,346; office staff, 152: total, 3,498.

SIGNAL AND ELECTRICAL.

Fixed Signals at Officered Stations.

During the year three stations have been equipped with home and distant signals—viz., Ngatira, Kakariki, and Warrington; and the following eight stations have been equipped with distant signals in addition to existing home signals: Tirau, Putaruru, Arahiwi, Mamaku, Tarukenga, Wangaehu, Bonny Glen, and Ashburton.

The provision of additional distant signals on the Wanganui district and on the Thames Branch is now in hand.