

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

SIR,—
New Zealand Government Railways,
Head Office, Wellington, 16th November, 1921.

I have the honour to report on the working of the railways for the financial year ended 31st March, 1921.

The Ranganui-Huarau Section, 6 miles 33 chains, and the Kioreroa-Portland Section, 5 miles 21 chains, were opened during the year, making the total mileage open for traffic on the 31st March 3,018 miles.

The capital invested in the lines open for traffic, including the steamers and plant on Lake Wakatipu, on the 31st March, 1921, was £37,235,254, as against £36,390,115 for the previous year, an increase of £845,139. This amount includes £360,746, construction charges on lines already taken over from the Public Works Department, £421,315 on new works charged against capital account under "Additions to open lines," and £63,078 expended under the Railway Improvement Authorization Act, 1914.

The gross receipts for the year amounted to £6,908,531, as against £5,752,487 for the previous year, an increase of £1,156,044.

The net revenue, £1,271,930, is equal to a return of 3·42 per cent. on the capital invested in the lines open for traffic, and 3·07 per cent. on the capital invested in the opened and unopened lines.

The train-mileage for the year, 9,303,392 miles, was 1,894,784 more than the previous year. This increased mileage represents services put on at the end of 1919 to restore the pre-war time-table.

The lines on which the additional mileage was run are—Whangarei, 1,799; Gisborne, 8,681; North Island Main Trunk, 1,082,414; South Island Main Trunk, 782,221; Westland, 18,968; Nelson, 2,409. Decreases totalling 1,708 miles were made on Kaihu, Westport, and Picton Sections.

The increase in train-mileage has been followed by a marked decrease in the receipts per train-mile, the North Island lines showing a falling-off of 3·50d. and the South Island lines of 22·50d., and all lines of 8·0d. per mile for the whole of the train-mileage run throughout the year.

Floods and slips caused serious disorganization of train services on several occasions during the year, and also the suspension of all trains north of Pohokura, on the Whangamomona line, from the 19th April to the 17th May; on the Picton line, between Mirza and Wharanui, from the 21st August to the 11th September, and again from the 23rd September until the 27th November; on the Outram Branch, from the 30th September to the 2nd October; on the Main Trunk line, South Island, between Morven and Glenavy, on the 29th September; and North Island, between Ohakune and Marton, on the 1st October, and Ohakune-Taihape on the 2nd October.

The following figures, which give the record of the late arrival of the principal trains during the year, indicate that, notwithstanding the difficulties experienced in connection with slips, floods, and other unforeseen circumstances, the trains have, as a whole, run well up to time:—

				Average Late Arrival.		
				Min.	Min.	
Long-distance passenger-trains	..	..	..	5·35	against	5·02 last year.
Suburban trains	..	..	..	1·16	"	0·80
Long-distance mixed trains	..	..	..	7·72	"	7·67

The number of ordinary passengers carried during the year was 15,315,640, an increase of 2,554,826, over the previous year.

Season tickets issued numbered 464,691, an increase of 64,070. Workers' twelve-trip tickets numbered 107,136, and workers' tickets issued on suburban lines 282,854, an increase over the preceding year of 23,771 twelve-trip and 34,783 workers' weekly tickets.

The year's total of ordinary passengers carried constitutes a record for the Dominion.

The increase in passenger traffic is accounted for by the heavy business resulting from the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the diversion to railway during the Auckland tramway strike on two occasions of a considerable portion of the suburban traffic usually catered for by tramways, the inclusion in the year's business of the greater portion of traffic for two Easter holiday seasons, the traffic resulting from the Davis Cup contest held in Auckland, and the increase in the number of school, factory, and friendly-society and holiday excursionists.