

A new type of bogie is being tried under one of the latest sleeping-cars, and if this proves a success future cars will be fitted with this type of bogie.

Rail-cars.—There were five rail-cars on the line on the 31st March, 1928.

Brake-vans.—On the 31st March, 1928, there were 492 brake-vans. Twenty-one bogie vans, built in the Government railway workshops, were added to the stock during the year, and five old vans and one van damaged in collision were written off.

Six hundred and eighty-nine vans were passed through the workshops, of which 350 received heavy repairs.

Wagons.—On the 31st March, 1928, there were 26,736 wagons in stock. The additions during the year were five bogie and 247 four-wheel wagons, built in the Government railway workshops. Eleven wagons were sold and nineteen were written off during the year. The carrying-capacity was increased by 1,824 tons.

During the year 23,785 wagons were passed through the workshops, of which 12,935 received heavy repairs.

There were on order at the end of the year fifteen bogie and 385 four-wheel wagons.

Tank-wagons.—During the year twenty rail tank-wagons were built for oil companies for the carriage of motor-spirit in bulk.

Tarpaulins.—The tarpaulin stock on the 31st March, 1928, was 22,375. Five hundred new tarpaulins were manufactured in the railway workshops during the year, and 5,650 tarpaulins were replaced with a similar number of new sheets; 37,288 sheets were repaired in the workshops.

Axles.—During the year 605 car, van, and wagon axles were replaced with modern steel axles.

Train-lighting.—On the 31st March, 1928, there were 345 cars fitted with electric light. It is estimated that 150 additional cars will be fitted during the current year.

Engine-headlights.—The total number of locomotives fitted with electric headlights on the 31st March, 1928, was 164. The work of fitting engines is being proceeded with.

General.—During the year a mail-exchanging device was designed for the purpose of picking up and dropping mails whilst a train is in motion. This device was fitted to a postal van, and similar device was erected at Levin Station, at which station mails are now being exchanged.

The Chief Mechanical Engineer represented New Zealand at the Australian and New Zealand Railways General (Officers') Conference, which was held at Melbourne on the 19th to 24th March, occupying the chair during this Conference.

REORGANIZATION OF WORKSHOPS.

Good progress has been made with the workshops-reorganization scheme, involving the building of new workshops at Otahuhu and Hutt Valley, and the remodelling of existing workshops at Addington and Hillside. The work of reorganizing the smaller shops and depots has also been commenced.

Although the programme for the larger shops is, generally speaking, about nine months late, due to the delay in supplying the structural steel from the contractors in England, the progress of the main buildings generally has been satisfactory.

All the necessary plans and specifications for the various items in connection with the undertaking have been completed. About two-thirds of the necessary material is on the site, and about the same amount of work has been completed. Commitments amounting to about 80 per cent. of the total undertaking have been made, while a little more than half of the authorized expenditure has been paid out.

The machinery as it has been ordered has proved satisfactory, and is at the present time being installed in the new workshops. The work of putting down floors and providing ways and means for the occupation of the new workshops is well in hand, and I anticipate that the whole undertaking should be in good working-order by the end of the present financial year.

All the arrangements in regard to the transfer of men are settled, and the housing scheme in connection with the same is generally satisfactory.

Otahuhu.—The main building contract for the car and wagon workshops at this location is nearly completed. All the yards are laid out, service connections made, and a commencement has been made with the installation of the necessary machinery and equipment, and, providing no undue delay occurs, it is anticipated that operations will be commenced here about the end of July, 1928.

The Administrative Block, including the Workshop Manager's office, dining-hall, social hall, ambulance and fire-brigade rooms, &c., is almost completed, and will be ready to function when the main shops are ready for occupation.

Hutt.—The progress of these workshops has not been quite so marked as those at Otahuhu, but, notwithstanding the many delays that have occurred in connection with the supply of the structural steel, all the buildings under the main contract will be erected by the end of May, 1928.

Several buildings, such as the power-house, blacksmiths' shop, and machine and loco-erecting shops are, however, nearly ready for occupation, and a commencement has been made with the erection of the necessary machinery and equipment in these buildings.

This is a much larger undertaking, in respect to equipment especially, than any of the other workshops, and I anticipate that, with the exception of the foundry, these workshops should be in working-order about the end of October, 1928.

Addington.—The reorganization here is interwoven with that of Hillside, and, although delays have occurred, steady progress has been made, and at the present time all the structural steel that can be erected so far as the existing layout will permit has been erected.