

REVISION OF INSTRUCTION-BOOKS.

With the growth in the extent and complexity of the Department's operations the various instruction-books have both increased in number by the inevitable addition of fresh books dealing with new phases of the Department's working, and have also been the subject of numerous amendments to the books already existing. Some of the older books have not been revised for a number of years, and the position was reached where a revision and consolidation of the various departmental instructions could not be longer postponed with due regard to the convenience of the staff and efficient and safe working. This work has accordingly been put in hand, and a definite staff has been allocated for the purpose, with the intention that the work shall now be pursued continuously until finality is reached and the various instruction-books are brought up to date and arranged in the best possible order. This is a work that I feel sure will be much appreciated by the staff, and will be of material assistance to them in the proper discharge of their various duties.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE AND TRAINING-SCHOOL.

The total number of students receiving tuition in the various phases of railway work numbered 615 at the end of March. Four hundred and sixteen members passed the various departmental examinations during the year. A great measure of success was secured at the examinations by those members who availed themselves of the facilities provided by the Correspondence School.

Ninety-seven cadets have undergone the course of training in the school during the year, and the results have been very satisfactory. Fifty per cent. of these cadets matriculated prior to appointment to the service, and a number are continuing their studies at the University and Technical College.

The Cadets' Hostel is still fulfilling its useful purpose, and parents have expressed appreciation at the manner in which the Department is attending to the welfare of cadets away from home. A tennis-court has been provided, and cricket and football clubs have been formed in order to provide recreation for the cadets.

SUGGESTIONS AND INVENTIONS.

The Department's Suggestions and Inventions Committee dealt with 1,491 suggestions during the year, as against 1,739 during the previous year. Of these, 122 were recommended for adoption either wholly or partially; 447 were referred to heads of branches for their consideration, or were already in operation, or related to matters of policy; 812 were rejected; and 110 were under trial or investigation at the 31st March.

Monetary awards totalling £168 were made in respect of thirty-five suggestions, and commendations were noted on the official records of eighty-one suggesters.

During the year wider publicity has been given to the existence of the Suggestions and Inventions Committee, a recent innovation being the erection at the principal stations of "Suggestions" boxes with appropriate cards provided for making suggestions. It is anticipated that this will further induce train travellers, as well as members of the service, to submit any ideas they may have for improvements to our railway system.

Many of the suggestions submitted during the year were not original, a large number having been previously brought under notice, or related to matters which were already engaging the attention of the Department. Nevertheless, suggestions of considerable value are frequently received, and it is felt that the benefit obtained from these fully compensates for the time spent in sifting out the useful ones.

SUPERANNUATION FUND.

The report of the Government Railways Superannuation Fund Board for the year ended 31st March, 1929, shows the position to be as follows:—

Annual liability, £258,632.							£
Members' contributions	..	..	..	..	..	..	166,439
Interest	..	..	..	..	..	..	65,537
Deficit to be drawn from subsidy	..	..	..	..	..	..	26,656
							<u>£258,632</u>
At the same date the liability to contributors in respect of amounts paid							£
in was	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,505,554
The total accumulated fund was	..	..	..	..	..	..	<u>1,238,674</u>
Leaving deficit of							<u>£266,880</u>

The annual liability, £258,632, is in respect of 1,478 members, 485 widows, and 452 children, making a total of 2,415 persons actually on the fund on the 31st March, 1929.

The amount standing in the Investment Account in the balance-sheet is represented by the following securities:—

							£
Mortgages	..	..	..	..	..	..	843,122
Local bodies' debentures	..	..	..	..	..	..	193,615
Government securities	..	..	..	..	..	..	135,000
In hand awaiting investment	..	..	..	..	..	..	4,824
							<u>£1,176,561</u>

The average rate of interest on securities held on the 31st March, 1929, was 5·823 per cent.
The average rate of interest earned on the mean funds was 5·761 per cent.