

South Island Main Line and Branches.—Revenue, £2,612,906 ; decrease, £307,402. The principal items of traffic were : Passengers, 3,314,021 ; decrease, 447,320. Season tickets, 162,950 ; decreased 14,025. Parcels, luggage, and mails revenue, £119,577 ; decrease, £8,782. Live-stock, 4,941,258 ; decrease, 56,478. Timber, 176,324 tons ; decrease, 101,884. All other goods, 2,732,966 tons ; decrease, 332,415 tons. The revenue per mile of railway decreased from £1,795 to £1,606, and decreased from 154·23d. per train-mile to 147·87d.

The variations of traffic in the individual districts in the South Island were approximately as follow :—

Northern District.—Revenue, £1,156,801 ; decrease, £140,015. Passengers decreased 210,986, and season tickets 3,646. Parcels, luggage, &c., decreased £3,318. Cattle decreased 6,220, and sheep 95,964. Timber decreased 79,015 tons, and all other goods 153,845 tons.

Middle District.—Revenue, £902,174 ; decrease, £92,139. Passengers decreased 175,922, and season tickets 9,931. Parcels, luggage, &c., decreased £3,720. Cattle decreased 5,704, and sheep 2,902. Timber decreased 4,203 tons. All other goods decreased 104,184 tons.

Southern District.—Revenue, £553,931 ; decrease, £75,248. Passengers decreased 60,412, and season tickets 448. Parcels, luggage, &c., decreased £1,744. Cattle decreased 11,065, but sheep increased 63,377. Timber decreased 18,666 tons, and all other goods 74,386 tons.

Lake Wakatipu.—Revenue, £9,166 ; decrease, £2,281. Passengers decreased 6,641. Sheep decreased 4,613. Timber decreased 120 tons. All other goods decreased 1,807 tons.

TRAIN SERVICES.

The following table shows the average late arrivals of the express, mixed, and suburban trains for the year :—

AVERAGE LATE ARRIVAL OF TRAINS, YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1931.

Year ended		Period ended													Average for Year in Minutes
		April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Jan.	Feb.	March	
<i>Express and Mail Trains.</i>															
1931 ..	..	8·07	4·90	6·06	5·19	4·17	5·86	1·77	2·08	2·25	5·93	4·41	7·70	4·07	4·80
1930 ..	..	8·19	7·17	11·48	7·49	3·23	4·57	2·41	2·13	2·23	7·86	7·67	4·01	4·66	5·62
<i>Long-distance Mixed Trains.</i>															
1931 ..	..	8·94	8·84	7·72	7·40	6·96	6·70	4·35	4·50	3·99	5·38	4·67	10·37	6·49	6·64
1930 ..	..	12·32	10·47	9·13	8·22	5·58	6·34	4·42	6·67	4·91	7·28	6·32	9·25	10·08	7·77
<i>Suburban Trains.</i>															
1931 ..	..	0·77	0·72	0·81	0·56	0·73	0·38	0·31	0·42	0·49	0·55	0·65	0·63	0·43	0·57
1930 ..	..	1·00	1·04	1·20	0·86	0·55	0·55	0·46	0·41	0·44	0·47	0·61	0·52	0·70	0·68

These figures include delays arising from all causes, including slips, floods, washouts, earthquakes, engine and other mechanical failures, and traffic delays at stations.

It will be seen from the foregoing tabulation that the punctuality of the train services improved very substantially during the year, notwithstanding the earthquake in the Hawke's Bay District which, as already mentioned in this report, caused much late running of trains which was in the circumstances unavoidable.

WAY AND WORKS BRANCH.

The following are the principal features connected with the operations of the Way and Works Branch during the year :—

<i>Permanent-way.</i> —The relaying done during the year was as follows :—	Miles.
Main line and branches 53 lb., 55 lb., 56 lb., 65 lb., and 70 lb. relaid with 70 lb. material	52½
Main line and branches 40 lb., 53 lb., 55 lb., and 56 lb. relaid with 55 lb. material	6
Main line and branches relaid with second-hand 53 lb., 55 lb., 56 lb., and 70 lb. material recovered from main line	4½
	63

Sleepers.—The number of new sleepers placed in track during the year was 240,096.

Ballasting.—There were placed on the track 207,279 cubic yards of ballast.

Slips, Floods, &c.—Slips on the East Coast Main Trunk line at 20 m. 17 ch. (near Athenree), 34½ m. (near Aongatete), 40 m. (near Pahoia), and between 43½ m. and 43¾ m. (near Te Puna) on 21st June, 1930, caused delay to traffic. On the same date a washout between 43½ m. and 43¾ m. (near Te Puna) caused train delays. Slips which occurred on the same line at 34 m. 20 ch. (near Aongatete), 38 m. 40 ch. and 39 m. 75 ch. (near Pahoia) on 7th July, 1930, also caused delay to traffic. A rock slip occurred at 131 m. 60 ch., Main Trunk line (near Puketutu) on 28th June, 1930, and was run into by the Wellington–Auckland express, resulting in the engine, two cars, and postal van being damaged.

A heavy fall of snow occurred in the Ohakune district on 28th July, 1930. Traffic was not seriously affected by it, however, until the morning of the 29th, when a high wind across the Waimarino Plains caused the snow to drift and fill some of the cuttings between National Park and Erua. A train stalled in one of the drifts and was not freed for several hours. Various trains between Raurimu and Mataroa were delayed due to difficulty in shunting in the snow and in operating points, but only one train was actually held up by the snow.