

The variations in ordinary passenger traffic were distributed between first class and second class as follow :—

			First Class.		Second Class.		Total.	
			Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.
Journeys	..	..	—31,328	6.91	+186,117	2.53	+154,789	1.98
Revenue	..	..	£ + 3,858	1.59	£ + 88,829	9.34	£ + 92,687	7.77

It is pleasing to note that the year's operations in passenger traffic resulted in an increase under all heads, the total increase for the year being 704,057 passenger journeys and £97,929 revenue.

The improvement in passenger traffic can be ascribed in a large measure to the attractive fares now in force for ordinary travel and to the higher standard of service which is given in such matters as improved passenger-accommodation and faster train services. No opportunity has been lost not only to meet the anticipated public demand for passenger transport in connection with special events, but also to provide services and fares calculated to create a public demand. Special attention has been devoted to the organization of day and week-end excursions from the more populous areas to popular resorts and from city to city, and it is pleasing to record that these "outings" are being regarded with increased favour by rail-users. In this connection it is of interest to know that the revenue from this special excursion traffic during 1935-36 is over four times that received during 1925-26.

Standard-fare revenue showed a small but well maintained improvement throughout the year. The average standard fare for the whole year was 73.17d., showing an increase of 4.86d., or 7.14 per cent. over 1934-35. This indicates that the Department is still losing short-distance passengers, but is gaining passengers in the longer-distance field.

Suburban traffic kept up during the year, the returns showing a slight improvement over those for the previous year.

Reference has already been made to the popularity of the day and week-end excursions arranged by the Department. Revenue from this source along with that from other reduced fares showed an increase of £19,774, or 10.43 per cent. The actual revenue from day and special excursions exceeded that of last year by £10,264, or 22.21 per cent.

The revenue from season tickets this year was £180,558, compared with £175,316 for the previous year, an increase of £5,242. The principal increases were workers' weekly tickets, £2,827; apprentice tickets, £1,211; and weekly twelve-trip tickets, £1,058. The increase in revenue in respect of workers' weekly, weekly twelve-trip, and apprentice tickets is no doubt a reflection of the improvement in economic conditions consequent upon the easing of the unemployment position.

PARCELS, LUGGAGE, AND MAILS.

The revenue from this source amounted to £299,964, an increase of £7,868 (2.69 per cent.). An analysis of the revenue is as follows :—

					1936.	1935.	Variation.	
					£	£	£	Per Cent.
Parcels	..	..	..	..	167,194	166,500	+ 694	0.42
Excess luggage	..	..	..	..	7,369	7,610	— 241	3.17
Left luggage, luggage-checks, bicycles, dogs, newspapers, &c.	..	..	..	..	43,369	38,554	+ 4,815	12.49
Mails	..	..	..	..	82,032	79,432	+ 2,600	3.27
Total	..	..	..	..	£299,964	£292,096	+£7,868	2.69

The fluctuations in parcels traffic during the year have been very slight. Revenue was adversely affected by a falling off in milk and cream traffic on account of a comparatively late season, and by competition from road services.

The major portion of the increase of £4,815 shown in the miscellaneous-luggage group was received from newspaper traffic, which increased to the extent of 16.69 per cent. during the year.

The following table shows the variations under the heading of "Mails":—

					1936.	1935.	Variation.	
					£	£	£	Per Cent.
Mails in guards' vans at half parcels rates	..	..	..	..	48,382	45,355	+2,973	6.55
Railway travelling post-office service	..	..	..	..	27,596	27,596	..	..
Mails carried in wagons	..	..	..	..	6,108	6,481	— 373	5.76
Total	..	..	..	..	82,032	79,432	+2,600	3.27

The travelling post-office service is paid for on a mileage basis.