

SICK BENEFIT FUND.

The New Zealand Government Railways Employees' Sick Benefit Fund shows a surplus of £5,440, compared with £2,451 for the previous year, an increase of £2,989.

The receipts totalled £27,439, which includes the departmental subsidy of £8,000, as compared with £26,221 for the previous year, an increase of £1,218 (4·65 per cent.), while the expenditure decreased from £23,770 to £21,999, a decline of £1,771 (7·45 per cent.).

On account of a severe epidemic of influenza throughout the winter and spring of 1934 the payments during the year ended 31st March, 1935, were much heavier than those made during the current year.

The accumulated funds now stand at £34,410, of which £34,090 is represented by investments.

SUGGESTIONS AND INVENTIONS COMMITTEE.

During the year a total of 514 suggestions and inventions were dealt with by the Suggestions and Inventions Committee, compared with 563 for the previous year. Fifty-six suggestions and inventions were recommended for adoption in whole or in part, 152 were referred to heads of branches, were already in operation or related to matters of policy, 258 were not recommended for adoption, while 48 were under trial or investigation at the end of the financial year.

The suggestions recommended for adoption included 9 in connection with rolling-stock, 8 connected with workshop practice, 6 connected with way and works, 7 connected with signal and electrical work, 11 connected with traffic working, and 15 connected with railway working generally.

STORES BRANCH.

An analysis of the amount expended in connection with the purchases of stores during the year is as under :—

	£	s.	d.
To merchants, manufacturers, and others in New Zealand ..	461,288	15	1
Through Trade Commissioner in Australia	116,156	5	9
Through High Commissioner in London	446,055	1	5
Material manufactured in Railway Workshops	214,806	8	9
Coal and coke	471,779	6	11
Manufactured and used material recovered from other branches, &c. ..	86,687	6	3
Timber from railway sawmill and stores used	10,817	3	6
	£1,807,590	7	8

The net increase in this year's expenditure compared with the previous year was £161,082 2s. 5d. The principal increases were—To merchants, manufacturers, and others in New Zealand, £36,478 1s. ; through Trade Commissioner in Australia, £15,269 12s. 8d. ; through High Commissioner in London, £93,011 18s. 9d. ; and material manufactured in railway workshops, £30,032 6s. 8d. There was a decrease of £19,965 11s. 2d. under the head "Timber from railway sawmill and stores used."

The increases enumerated above are chiefly due to the purchase of materials for building programmes and extra stocks of native and hardwood timber and imported material.

The total issues of stores to all branches for the year amounted to £1,900,970 2s. 9d., compared with £1,615,488 11s. 4d. for the previous year, an increase of £285,481 11s. 5d.

A summary for six years showing the value of purchases and issues of stores (exclusive of coal), together with the value of stocks on hand (stores and coal), at the close of each year, is as under :—

Year.	Purchases.	Issues.	Stocks on Hand.		
			Stores.	Coal.	Total.
	£	£	£	£	£
1931	1,716,452	1,743,416	647,627	110,602	758,229
1932	852,044	1,018,616	481,056	181,073	662,129
1933	755,100	875,285	360,871	165,576	526,447
1934	1,059,879	969,067	451,683	157,637	609,320
1935	1,269,171	1,136,243	584,611	160,177	744,788
1936	1,436,696	1,400,858	622,899	144,888	767,787