

SICK BENEFIT FUND.

The result of the year's operations of the New Zealand Government Railway Employees' Sick Benefit Fund was a surplus of £6,433, compared with a surplus of £6,549 last year.

The receipts and sick-benefit payments were as under :—

				1938.	1937.	Variation.	
				£	£	£	Per Cent.
Receipts	..	..	..	33,523	29,895	+3,628	12·14
Payments	..	..	..	27,090	23,346	+3,744	16·04
Surplus	..	..	..	<u>£6,433</u>	<u>£6,549</u>	<u>—£116</u>	<u>1·77</u>

Receipts include £8,000 annual subsidy from the Working Railways Account.

The total membership on 31st March, 1938, was 15,294, compared with 13,380 in 1937, an increase of 1,914, due to an increase in the number of staff employed.

The accumulated funds now stand at £47,392, of which £46,916 is represented by investments, the balance being cash in hand.

SUGGESTIONS AND INVENTIONS COMMITTEE.

During the year a total of 483 suggestions and inventions were dealt with, as compared with 558 during the previous year. Sixty suggestions and inventions were recommended for adoption in whole or in part, 90 referred to heads of branches were already in operation or related to matters of policy, 299 were not recommended for adoption, and 34 were under trial or investigation at the end of the financial year.

The suggestions recommended for adoption included 10 in connection with rolling-stock, 16 connected with workshop practice, 1 connected with way and works, 2 connected with signal and electrical work, 13 in connection with traffic working, and 18 with railway working generally.

During the year several suggestions and inventions were dealt with in accordance with the reciprocal agreement made between the Suggestions and Inventions Board and Committees of the various Australian State Railways and the Suggestions and Inventions Committee of the New Zealand Railways.

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	..	..	..	905,693	14	3
Through Trade Commissioner in Australia	..	..	..	92,854	3	5
Through High Commissioner in London	..	..	..	961,213	6	10
Material manufactured in railway workshops	..	..	..	405,084	0	8
Coal and coke	..	..	..	761,665	13	9
Manufactured and used material recovered from other branches, &c.	..	..	..	85,191	7	0
Timber from railway sawmill and stores used	..	..	..	59,444	19	8
				<u>£3,271,147</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>

The net increase in the year's expenditure compared with the previous year was £895,649 5s. 9d., the principal increases, omitting shillings and pence, being : To merchants, manufacturers, and others in New Zealand, £272,598 ; through High Commissioner in London, £309,986 ; material manufactured in railway workshops, £73,021 ; coal and coke, £232,628 ; and timber from railway sawmill and stores used, £29,531. There was a decrease of £17,289 under the head "Through Trade Commissioner in Australia."

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

For the year ended 31st March, 1938, the amount paid by the Department for exchange on purchases made through the High Commissioner, London, was £184,579 18s. 5d.

The total issues (including coal) to all branches for the year amounted to £2,809,282 9s. 8d., compared with £2,301,504 9s. 7d. for the previous year, an increase of £507,778 0s. 1d.

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.
				£	£	£	£	£
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
1937	..	..	..	1,971,314	1,719,414	874,800	107,653	982,453
1938	..	..	..	2,662,302	2,082,195	1,107,653	167,347	1,275,000