

The nursery operations of the Branch have met with considerable success during the year. At the Athenree Nursery the output during the planting season was 159,000 trees, while the tally of this season's crop, which is now ready for planting, amounts to 205,000 trees. The trees grown at Athenree are mostly of the eucalyptus species. At Woburn Nursery a great proportion of the trees raised were grown in pots to ensure striking. Some 26,416 trees of various species were distributed from this nursery during the year.

The other operations of the Branch during the year comprised the clearing of firebreaks in plantations, the control of the Pokaka bush operations, the clearing of heavy scrub land at Hutt and elsewhere, and maintenance duties of a general character.

WORKSHOPS.

The locomotives, rolling-stock, machinery, and tools have been maintained in good working-order during the year.

LOCOMOTIVES.

One electric locomotive which was imported from England was placed in service during the year. Nine electric locomotives were under construction in the workshops at the close of the year, and when completed 7 of these will be placed in service in the North Island and 2 in the South Island. Also under construction were 35 class KA and six class KB steam-locomotives. Forty J class locomotives are being constructed in England to the order of this Department. Four class WF locomotives were sold to the Tasmanian Government Railways during the year.

Three new boilers were built for replacement purposes, while 14 were under construction at the end of the year. Three hundred and ninety engines passed through the workshops during the year, and of these, 211 received a major overhaul. Twenty engines were fitted with electric headlights.

Six electric motor coaches and 6 trailer coaches were imported from England during the year and placed in service on the Wellington-Johnsonville suburban line.

At the 31st March, 1939, there were 572 locomotives in service—555 steam, 12 electric, and 5 electric-battery shunting-engines. Twenty-one petrol shunting-units were in use at the close of the year.

The tractive effort of the locomotives in service (other than electric-battery shunting-engines) at 31st March, compared with the two previous years, was as follows:—

	1939.	1938.	1937.
Number of locomotives in service ..	567	570	570
Total tractive power, in pounds ..	10,610,108	10,684,559	10,691,829
Average tractive power per locomotive, in pounds	18,713	18,745	18,758

CARRIAGES.

Thirty-nine carriages were built and placed in service during the year. Of this number, 4 were first class, 11 first-class combination day-sleeping, 2 first-class coupe, and 22 second-class.

Seven carriages were written off during the year, 12 were converted for departmental purposes, and 2 were converted for use as shelter sheds. The number of carriages in service at the close of the year was 1,489. One hundred and six carriages of varying types were under construction or on order at the close of the year.

Twenty carriages had their lavatories improved (water-sealed hoppers fitted), 15 had steam-heating apparatus installed, 3 had Westinghouse water-heating equipment fitted, and 4 had their bogies fitted with Isothermos axle-boxes. Nine carriages were equipped with guards' compartments, 1 had electric-lighting equipment installed in substitution for coal-gas lighting, 4 sleeping-cars were converted to second-class day cars, and 15 carriages had alterations made to their internal fittings. Thirty-nine new carriages and 5 existing carriages were equipped with roller-bearing bogies, making a total of 162 carriages so equipped in service. Seventeen carriages were fitted with air-conditioning equipment.

During the year 1,456 carriages passed through the workshops, and of these, 1,120 received heavy repairs.

BRAKE-VANS.

On the 31st March, 1939, there were 473 brake-vans in service with 81 building or on order. Two brake-vans were written off, and 2 were reclassified as service vehicles (1 travelling workshop—1 plough van).

Four hundred and sixty-two brake-vans passed through the workshops during the year, and of these, 323 received heavy repairs.

Eleven postal vans were in service at the end of the year, and 7 of these passed through the workshops during the year, 6 receiving a major overhaul.

RAIL CARS.

At the close of the year 15 rail cars were in service. Five Standard rail cars were built in workshops during the year, and 1 was building at the close of the year. Ten Standard rail cars are being imported from England.

WAGONS.

During the year 1,373 wagons were built in workshops and placed in service. Of these, 315 were sheep-wagons, 30 cattle-wagons, 19 chilled-beef wagons, 11 platform wagons, 12 frozen-meat wagons, 6 ventilated wagons, and 980 general-utility wagons of the LA type. In addition, 4 petrol-tank wagons were built for private companies.