

of the States have passed laws inflicting heavy fines for baggage-smashing: but laws are of little use; travellers, as a rule, cannot stay to prosecute. The evil can only be stopped by the controlling officers; the present malpractices probably are the result of lax discipline and want of control. The extraordinary development of the railway system in the States must make it very difficult for the companies to obtain the services of well-trained careful hands, and they must consequently, in many instances, be obliged to put up with indifferent assistance.

In the neighbouring colonies of Victoria and New South Wales the check-system has been introduced; but I was told that it was not strictly enforced. By many persons it is considered too exacting, as compelling them to obtain their tickets and to check their luggage some time before the train time, and precluding them from hurriedly dropping their luggage in the van at the last moment, as is often done when this system is not in operation.

The luggage which a passenger may carry in America must be personal luggage, and not merchandise of any kind. The restriction in this respect is the same as we have in operation in New Zealand.

Passengers neglecting to book at the proper office, and demanding tickets in the trains, have to pay an excess rate, generally of 10 per cent. on the proper fare, with a minimum charge of 5d.

Goods Traffic.

Most of the traffic is carried in covered goods-trucks, essential in such a climate and where such long distances are traversed, and when it is absolutely necessary to securely lock up goods in transit to prevent pilferage. Covered goods-wagons have never been popular with us, probably because grain and other produce cannot be so readily handled in them. In the Eastern States grain is universally carried in bulk. Farmers cart their grain in bags to the railroad, where they may either empty them into trucks, if they can manage a full load, or, more generally, they deliver or sell to an agent owning a storage elevator at the station. Grain may then, for example, be shipped to Chicago, when it may be delivered to Lake steamers, carried *via* the Lakes to Buffalo, again elevated, and despatched either by rail or canal to New York; again elevated, and perhaps stored and delivered to ships direct, or into barges for transit to ships at other points in the harbour. The practice of grading, elevating, and storing and shipping in bulk is no doubt thoroughly known to our leading grain-merchants and shippers. We appear to be too far committed to carrying in bags for us to adopt the other practice now. All grain in the Pacific States, I was told, is carried and shipped in bags. The reason for this different practice was not explained. How large a business is transacted by the elevator companies may be imagined by the fact that the Buffalo elevators put through 87,000,000 bushels of grain during last year. The elevator charges are 2s. 6d. a ton for elevating and five days' storage, with 1s. 8d. a ton for each additional day's storage. Ordinary labour about this work is paid at the rate of 13 cents an hour, against our rate of 24 cents an hour for casual labour. In very busy seasons as much as 16 cents an hour is paid. The New York Central elevators put through as much as 36,000,000 bushels in a year. I had an opportunity of examining the establishments both at New York and Buffalo.

Live-stock is loaded, unloaded, and carried at the owner's risk. No receipt is given for stock until it is safely loaded and secured on the trucks. Some companies have double-floored sheep-trucks; other companies will not allow them on their lines at all; others permit consignors to put in temporary double-floors in cattle-trucks for sheep at their own risk and expense for each journey. Nowhere in country districts could I hear of the complete and ample provision for loading sheep and cattle which we have so largely provided on our railways. Such accommodation as I saw was of the most limited and cheapest character. I heard of special cars for feeding and watering cattle in on transit, but I saw none. All the cars I saw were about the dimensions and character of our double-bogie cattle-trucks, which we shall do well to adopt more extensively in future. Cattle in transit is, by law, in many States, forbidden to be carried more than twenty-four hours without being unloaded for food, water, and rest. This is done at the risk and expense of the owners.

Goods-shed accommodation is generally very limited, probably for two reasons: first, unloading can be done from covered cars; secondly, because private sidings are pretty largely in use, connecting with private stores in towns.

The proportion of dead-weight of goods-stock to capacity for carrying load is usually 2 to 3 and 1 to 2, the latter appearing to preponderate. In the largest (60,000lb. trucks) now being introduced the proportion is 1 to 3. Our practice has resulted in 2 to 3 and 1 to 2, but more frequently the former. We, unfortunately, cannot use the bogie-truck extensively; it is too large for our small business; we cannot get full loads for it.

American railways have generally a great advantage over ours in their getting large traffic in both directions. All our heavy traffic is in one direction. Grain, wool, timber, cattle, sheep, coals, and produce all travel towards the ports and large towns; and the back-loading is small. All goods are carried by dead-weight; they are either actually weighed or weights are computed. I made particular inquiries about round and sawn timber. The rule is to treat all alike, and to charge for the actual weight carried. This is the practice usual on all railways. The traffic officers told me that they would not entertain the proposal to carry round timber at lower rates than square, as the former was more troublesome and expensive to carry. The objection offered by the railway officers in New Zealand to the introduction of this form of discrimination has led to some dissatisfaction. It is well to know that the practice of the railway management here is that followed in other parts of the world.

Goods are taken delivery of by the consignees within twelve working-hours, and storage is otherwise charged thereon; demurrage is charged for wagons standing for unloading. Fresh vegetables and fruits sent by railway requiring protection from cold are attended to by consignors, who have to provide stoves and fuel to warm the trucks; fresh meat is carried in summer in tight trucks cooled by ice-boxes. The freezing of meat, as practised in New Zealand, is not done.