

PARCELS, LUGGAGE, AND MAILS.

	Revenue.			Variation	
		1940. £	1939. £	£	Per Cent.
Parcels	161,883	162,302	— 419	0·26
Excess luggage	5,865	7,240	— 1,375	18·99
Left luggage, luggage checks, bicycles, dogs, newspapers, &c.	61,440	59,400	+ 2,040	3·43
Mails	100,836	105,228	— 4,392	4·17
Total	<u>£330,024</u>	<u>£334,170</u>	<u>—£4,146</u>	<u>1·24</u>

Revenue from parcels traffic declined during the year, notwithstanding that rates have been higher by 10 per cent. throughout. The falling-away of parcels traffic has been due primarily to conditions arising from the war and to general trading conditions, both these factors having had an adverse effect on parcels traffic generally and on the carriage of travellers' samples in particular, as is indicated by the figures shown above under the heading "Excess luggage." Some diversion of parcels traffic to goods sheds has also resulted in various areas due to the introduction of the new revised railway tariff in July, 1939. Whilst general parcels traffic has substantially declined at Wellington Station, this has been more than offset by the greatly increased quantities of milk now being railed from Otaki and Levin to Wellington in connection with the milk-in-schools movement.

The increased numbers of passengers carried this year is reflected in the higher receipts from checked and left luggage, and the carriage of bicycles, &c., the revenue from these sources being £61,440, or £2,040 higher than last year.

The following table shows the variation in revenue under the heading of "Mails":—

			Variation	
	1940. £	1939. £	£	Per Cent.
Railway travelling post-office service	31,180	28,676	+ 2,504	8·73
Mails in guards' vans at half parcel rates	56,269	58,782	— 2,513	4·28
Mails carried in wagons	13,387	17,770	— 4,383	24·67
Total	<u>£100,836</u>	<u>£105,228</u>	<u>—£4,392</u>	<u>4·17</u>

GOODS AND LIVE-STOCK.

The revenue and tonnage of goods and live-stock for 1940 compare with the previous year as follow:—

	1940.	1939.	Increase.	Per Cent.
Revenue	£6,109,293	£5,694,936	£414,357	7·28
Tonnage	7,673,950	7,539,012	134,938	1·79

The receipts from the conveyance of goods and live-stock were the highest ever recorded in the history of the system, the increase for the year being £414,357, or 7·28 per cent. The upward trend in respect of the tonnage of goods carried, which has been so notable a feature of the Department's operations in recent years, has also been well maintained in the twelve months under review, an increase of 134,938 tons (1·79 per cent.) having been recorded compared with the preceding year. The tonnage of goods carried was, however, 1·48 per cent. below the peak year of 1930, although in this connection it is interesting to note that the net-ton mile figure for 1939-40 was 13·47 per cent. higher than that for 1930. The average haul for the year was 75·68 miles, which is 0·52 miles below the figure for the previous year, but is higher by 9·97 miles when a comparison is made with 1930.

The year's operations in respect of goods traffic may be regarded as satisfactory, traffic having been uniformly buoyant throughout the greater portion of the year. Some loss of traffic was brought about as a result of conditions arising from the war and also by the disruption, and in some cases complete suspension, of train services in various parts of the system due to floods and extensive snowstorms making large sections of the track unworkable. On the other hand, additional traffic has accrued to the rail as a result of the restrictions placed on road-users in the matter of the use of petrol. In respect of goods revenue the influence of the 10-per-cent. increase in rates (operative from December, 1938) is indicated by the figures giving the percentage increases in traffic shown above.

A detailed analysis of the fluctuations in traffic under the main headings for the year as compared with 1938-39 is as under:—

	Tons.	Per Cent.	Revenue. £	Per Cent.
Live-stock	— 25,103	4·04	— 9,114	1·34
Timber	+ 17,296	3·48	+ 49,083	9·70
Coal	— 8,804	0·50	+ 66,255	7·45
Other goods	+ 151,549	3·26	+ 308,133	8·51
Total	<u>+ 134,938</u>	<u>1·79</u>	<u>+£414,357</u>	<u>7·28</u>

The variation in the numbers of cattle and calves carried does not call for detailed comment. In respect of cattle, the opening of the through line to Wairoa has tapped new traffic and has brought about a small increase in the number of head forwarded, but this, however, has been more than offset by reduced traffic in other parts of the system due to the stoppage of the chilled-beef industry as a war measure.