

the rear of the train, the result might have been different. That, however, is for the inquiry to bring out. At present we are only concerned with the danger attending these incidents, which may at any time lead to the most woful consequences, and to urge that more strenuous measures should be adopted to insure the inspection in the most careful manner possible of the under-gear of all vehicles.

Chief Traffic Manager's Office, Wellington, 23rd July, 1902.

*In re* the attached extract from *Otago Daily Times*, dated the 9th July, 1902.

*Railway Accidents.*

THE figures quoted in the *Otago Daily Times* are not a fair comparison so far as this colony is concerned.

During the ten years ended the 31st March, 1899, passengers were killed and injured as below:—

	Killed.	Injured.
From causes beyond their own control ...	8	68
From their own misconduct or want of care ...	31	102

The General Manager, Railways, Wellington.

W. H. GAW,  
Chief Traffic Manager.

Chief Engineer's Office, Wellington, 22nd July, 1902.

*Re* your minute of 15th instant on attached paper.

*Train Accidents, South Island.*

As before remarked in special report of the whole series of accidents referred to, each was due to separate and distinct cause. In no case has it been shown that the permanent-way was too weak or defective.

The speed of the express trains is limited to thirty miles an hour between Oamaru and Merton, and twenty-five miles an hour between Merton and Purakanui, with a still further reduction to ten miles an hour over a short distance around the Blueskin cliffs.

I consider these speeds may be run with safety.

General Manager.

JOHN COOM,  
Chief Engineer.

[Extract from *Otago Daily Times*, 8th July, 1902.]

OUR RAILWAYS.

(To the Editor.)

SIR,—

In connection with the recent epidemic of accidents, will you kindly allow me space to point out one or two matters affecting the public welfare. Until a comparatively recent date the New Zealand railways enjoyed a remarkable immunity from accident. Why? Was the rolling-stock kept in better order and the permanent-way maintained in a state of efficiency, or can we attribute the change wholly to the use of a heavier type of engine and wagon on a line too weak to bear the strain? No doubt this will be carefully inquired into, and if the latter solution is found correct the Department will be forced by public opinion to revert to the old order of things until such time as a permanent-way is made that will carry with safety the heavier vehicles.

In my opinion, in place of accelerating the speed of the express trains it should be much reduced. The north express has for some time been travelling quite fast enough for safety, and on some portions of the journey much too fast. Regular travellers of an observant turn know this well. I refer to the portion of the journey south of Oamaru. Another thing the Department should remedy, and at once, is the speed over level crossings. The rate at which the express and, in fact, all the main-line trains cross Thames Street, Oamaru, is simply ridiculous, and it is only a matter of time ere a frightful accident will occur if the present speed is maintained.

I am, &c.,  
OBSERVER.

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