

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER OF THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT
RAILWAYS.

New Zealand Government Railways,

Head Office, Wellington, 31st August, 1922.

SIR,—

I have the honour to report on the working of the New Zealand railways for the financial year ended 31st March, 1922.

The Clyde-Cromwell Section of the Otago Central Railway, 12 miles 27 chains, was opened during the year, making the total mileage open for traffic on the 31st March 3,030 miles.

The capital invested in the lines open for traffic, including the steamers and plant on Lake Wakatipu, at the end of the financial year was £39,309,097, as against £37,235,254 for the previous year; an increase of £2,073,843. This amount includes £152,979, construction charges on lines taken over from the Public Works Department; £1,856,380 for new rolling-stock and new works charged against Capital Account under "Additions to open lines," and £141,860 expended under the Railway Improvement Authorization Act, 1914, less £77,376 in connection with the Greymouth Harbour Board Adjustment Account.

The gross revenue for the year amounted to £6,643,591, as against £6,908,531 for the preceding year, a decrease of £264,940.

The train-mileage for the year, 8,717,265 miles, was 586,127 miles less than the previous year. A reduction of 253,184 miles was made on the North Island main line and branches, and 306,609 on the South Island main line and branches.

The bridge over the Whenuakura River, between Patea and Waverley, was washed out by flood on the 12th January, and through traffic was suspended until the 30th January, when repairs were completed. Between the dates named passengers were conveyed by train to and from stations north and south of the break, connection between the trains being made per medium of road vehicles laid on for the purpose.

The following figures, which give the record of the late arrival of the principal trains during the year, indicate that, notwithstanding the unforeseen difficulties caused through slips, floods, and other circumstances, the trains have, as a whole, run well up to time :—

	Average Late Arrival.	
	Min.	Min.
Long-distance passenger-trains	3.14	5.35
Suburban trains	0.80	1.16
Long-distance mixed trains	5.00	7.72

against 5.35 last year.

The number of ordinary passengers carried during the year was 14,262,440, a decrease of 1,053,200 when compared with the previous year.

Season tickets issued numbered 472,865, an increase of 8,274. Workers' twelve-trip tickets issued numbered 121,121, and weekly workmen's tickets issued on suburban lines 274,685.

The goods and live-stock tonnage was 6,321,351 tons, a decrease of 165,928 tons. The decreases were as follows :—

Cattle	96,841	head.
Timber	9,489	tons.
Minerals	34,416	„
Other goods	110,343	„

Sheep increased by 456,153 head, and pigs by 50,140 head.

The decrease in passenger traffic is largely accounted for by the fact of last year's figures including the holiday traffic for two Easters and the heavy business arising out of the visit of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales; also the cessation of issue of tickets to returned soldiers.

The falling-off in goods traffic is due to trade depression. There has been a decline in shipping traffic at ports, and also in merchandise, timber, coal and other minerals inland. The traffic from Auckland decreased 21,000 tons, Wellington 47,000, Lyttelton 22,000, Christchurch 1,500, Port Chalmers 6,000, Invercargill 8,000, Bluff 1,500. These figures indicate that the depression is widespread, and is having a far-reaching effect on the Railway revenue.

The average number of men employed for the year was 15,662, against 14,252 for the previous year. Fifty members of the Second Division were promoted to the First Division, 310 members resigned, 116 retired on superannuation, 46 died, 184 were dismissed, and 1,238 engaged.

The sum of £26,292 was paid under the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act during the year to members who sustained injuries while in the execution of their duties.

Thirty new engines, Class AB simple superheated tender, were added to the stock; three of these were built in the railway workshops and twenty-seven by the North British Locomotive Company (Limited) of Glasgow.

Five new bogie cars, ten bogie brake-vans, fifty-five bogie and 178 four-wheeled wagons were built in the Department's workshops during the year. Four-wheeled wagons numbering 613, built by Messrs. Cammell, Laird, and Co. (Limited), of Sheffield, were erected in the shops and placed in service.