

for the coastal route the necessity for maintaining the Ngatapa Branch disappeared. Practically the whole of the traffic from this branch was metal from the Repongaere quarry and this traffic was quite insufficient to support a railway.

Additional economies on the Gisborne Section included the curtailment of the main line services between Gisborne and Motuhora, permitting of a reduction in staff and in working-expenses. A second review was recently made, owing to another sharp decline in the traffic, and further curtailments in the trains have been introduced.

Nelson Section.—A curtailment in the train services and a reduction in the personnel of the staff was found necessary during the year to meet the conditions arising from the falling off in business.

Picton Section.—A curtailment of services was effected on this section permitting of a substantial saving in staff and in working-costs.

Cape Foulwind Line.—This line, between Westport and Omau, was closed down in pursuance of our review of services as from 14th July last, and negotiations are in hand for the Marine Department to take the line over. The operation of this line is justified only through the fact that the Marine Department requires it for the purpose of obtaining stone from the Cape Foulwind stone-quarries for harbour-works at Westport. Negotiations are in hand with the local bodies and the Highways Board regarding the maintenance of the Buller combined road and rail bridge which forms a portion of this line.

* SUNDAY SUBURBAN SERVICES.

For many years the Department has maintained Sunday suburban services in the following areas :—

- Between Auckland—Swanson and Helensville ;
- Between Auckland and Papakura ;
- Between Thorndon and Paekakariki ;
- Between Lambton and Upper Hutt ;
- Between Christchurch and Lyttelton ;
- Between Dunedin and Mosgiel ;
- Between Dunedin and Port Chalmers ; and
- Between Invercargill and Bluff.

In past years the patronage afforded these trains had made their running reasonably profitable. In more recent years, however, owing to the inroads into our suburban traffic due to the general use of private motor-cars and the operation of opposition road services, our Sunday suburban traffic has fallen much below payable quantity, and it became necessary to review the whole position in connection with these services. After a close investigation into the circumstances in the individual areas affected, it was decided to discontinue the running of all Sunday suburban trains as from 28th September, 1930, with the exception of those services in the Christchurch—Lyttelton and Invercargill—Bluff areas.

As distinct from the regular Sunday suburban services the Department has in recent years catered for a very substantial Sunday excursion traffic between main-line centres by providing a low fare and obtaining the traffic in substantial train loads. Experience has shown that there is a very substantial public demand for services of this nature, and the trains are very well patronized.

GENERAL.

Auckland—Westfield Deviation.—The Auckland—Westfield deviation was brought into operation for goods traffic only on the 11th May, 1930. With the opening of the Auckland new station on the 16th November, 1930, passenger traffic was also worked over the Auckland—Westfield deviation and a service commensurate with the needs of this area was introduced.

Steam-heating of Trains.—Steam-heating of the more important passenger trains was further extended during the year.

Train-control.—The train-control system was further extended during the year to include the Addington—Culverden section of line.

Middleton Shunting-yard.—Owing to the heavy falling-off of traffic due to the depression, it was possible to close down the Middleton shunting-yard as from September last, and to concentrate the shunting-work at Christchurch, thereby permitting of saving in the shunting-costs in this area.

Electric-power Shortage—Lake Coleridge.—Owing to a shortage of electric power from the Lake Coleridge Hydro-electric Works in September it was necessary to discontinue electric traction on the Lyttelton electrified line (except through the Lyttelton tunnel) and to revert to steam working. Normal supplies of power were not available until the beginning of November. This shortage of power involved considerable increase in our working-expenses on the Port line.

Observation Cars.—Observation cars were introduced on the Auckland—Rotorua express service and maintained throughout the summer months. There was, however, no general demand for this type of car, and the patronage afforded it was very disappointing. Owing to lack of support, the cars were withdrawn again at the close of the summer tourist traffic.

Crichton Bank-grade Easement.—The Crichton bank-grade easement* between Lovells Flat and Milton was completed and brought into operation early in January last. This grade-easement will permit of a substantial increase in the train-loading in the Balclutha—Dunedin area with consequent substantial economies in train-working.

Papatoetoe—Papakura Duplication.—The Papatoetoe—Papakura duplication was completed on the 29th March thereby* providing for double-line* working right through from Auckland to Papakura. With the opening of the duplication an accelerated suburban time-table was possible, and this was introduced.