

Having regard to the heavy decrease in traffic, it is pleasing to note that the revenue per train-mile was not materially reduced, thus indicating that the volume of traffic in relation to train-mileage was carefully watched to avoid unnecessary running. The factor is further borne out by the minor decrease in the gross and net train-load.

<i>Per 1,000 Gross Ton-miles—</i>	1931.	1930.	Variation.	Per Cent.
Revenue .. .. .	£2,997	£2,979	+£0.018	0.60
Net ton-miles .. .. .	312	311	+1	0.35

The slight increase in the revenue per 1,000 gross ton-miles is due to the fact that revenue has not declined in the same ratio as the tonnage.

<i>Wagon User :—</i>	1931.	1930.	Variation.	Per Cent.
Revenue per ordinary goods vehicle	£161	£183	—£22	12.02
Revenue per live-stock vehicle .. .. .	£161	£176	—£15	8.52
Average wagon-load .. .. .	3.88	3.83	+0.05	1.31
Average miles per wagon per day .. .. .	21.13	24.02	—2.89	12.03
Average net ton-miles per wagon per annum (ordinary goods) .. .. .	17,525	20,874	—3,349	16.04
Average net ton-miles per wagon per annum (live-stock) .. .. .	11,462	11,836	—374	3.16

The decreases shown under these headings are a reflex of the trade depression.

#### THROUGH BOOKING OF PARCELS AND GOODS BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH ISLANDS.

The volume of traffic conveyed by the Department's through-booking system continues to increase, and during the past year 16,542 tons were dealt with, an increase of 2,093 tons on the tonnage for the previous year. This service was instituted in May, 1925, and the tonnage conveyed for the year ended 31st March, 1926, was 5,183 tons.

It is satisfactory to note that, despite the reduction in goods and parcels traffic during the past year, the volume of traffic carried by the inter-Island through-booking system has increased.

#### ADVERTISING SERVICE.

	1931.	1930.	Variation.	Per Cent.
Revenue .. .. .	49,941	53,532	—3,591	6.71
Expenditure .. .. .	48,692	53,151	—4,459	8.39
Net profit .. .. .	£1,249	£381	+£868	227.82

An analysis of the revenue for the year under review is as under :—

	1931.	1930.	Variation.
Outdoor advertising .. .. .	44,781	44,497	+284
Publications .. .. .	2,514	2,823	—309
Printing .. .. .	1,442	3,641	—2,199
Miscellaneous .. .. .	1,053	2,352	—1,299
Buses .. .. .	151	219	—68
Total .. .. .	£49,941	£53,532	—£3,591

New business written up during the last four years is as under :

	1931.	1930.	1929	1928
	£	£	£	£
Outdoor advertising .. .. .	47,948	63,706	72,230	44,454
Publications .. .. .	3,338	4,595	4,597	2,079
Printing .. .. .	1,442	3,641	2,633	2,802
Miscellaneous .. .. .	904	2,351	1,534	1,063
Buses .. .. .	151	219	1,019	874
Total .. .. .	£53,783	£74,512	£82,013	£51,272

Owing to the depressed state of trade in the Dominion during the past year there has naturally been a disinclination on the part of firms to develop poster advertising, and the new business under this heading declined by £15,758 during the past year.

The reduced revenue is a reflection of the decline in business during the past two years, and also of the fact that in a number of cases contracts have been cancelled.

The reduction in expenditure is due to the results obtained from an overhaul of this Branch of the Department's activities, to which I referred in my report last year, and the results obtained must be considered satisfactory having regard to the decrease in revenue.

The expenditure figures include the amount debited to this Branch for rent for land and buildings, right to display advertisements on railway premises, commission on cash collected by other Branches, and interest on capital employed in the business—which totals £15,210, and represents earnings of the Advertising Branch. The total financial benefit which accrued to the Department from the operations of this Branch during the year was therefore £16,459.