

New Lines—	
Auckland via Hobson Bay ..	375,000
Signalling and interlocking ..	250,000
Level-crossing alarms .. ..	20,000
Bridge-strengthening .. ..	50,000
Locomotives—	
Ten Garrett Engines .. ..	50,000
	£3,250,000

Under the heading "Education of Staff," Mr. Hiley says "the problems dealt with in each branch of the Railway Service are complex in character, and the men on whom the ultimate administration of any branch of the service will fall, should unquestionably be trained in a manner that will fit them for their responsibilities later in life." A regular course is suggested to bring about this very desirable result, and we look for greater efficiency all round as soon as the system has had time to develop.

With regard to engines, Mr. Hiley suggests that 72 of them should be "scrapped" as being obsolete. He suggests that twenty Garrett engines should be imported from America at once, as local engine builders cannot cope with the amount of work offering. This matter has been taken up locally, and an effort is being made to get the engines in N.Z. instead of sending work away. Mr. Hiley says regarding this:—

"The engines now on order in the railway workshops are more than sufficient to keep the shops at Addington and Hillside going at full pressure for the next two years, and the contracts already let to the outside engineering firm will similarly keep their establishment employed for the same period. There is no reason to doubt that engine building at the shops within the Dominion will not be continued at high pressure for a considerably longer period."

The passenger accommodation is inadequate for present requirements, and Mr. Hiley proposes additional cars, similar to the ones at present in use with slight modification. He is an advocate for the petrol-electric car, but wants engines that will develop greater hauling power than the ones the Government have in use at present. Electricity is to be installed in the main through trains after various systems have been tried out.

In November we are to have a little better service to Auckland. The time table which comes into force on November 1st will save one hour twenty-five minutes between Wellington and Auckland. On the Napier route sixty-four minutes will be saved, and on New Plymouth route thirty minutes. This is a move in the right direction, and one badly wanted. Several of the present stops are to be cut out of the express trains' timetable.

An idea for town ticket offices where passengers can obtain tickets without the necessity of going to the station early to make sure of a ticket, will commend itself to the busy man, and the experiment will be watched with interest. It is to be tried in the four main centres.

New stations are provided for in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Palmerston North, Hastings,

Lyttelton and Timaru. We illustrate the plans of the three first mentioned on the following pages.

Numerous bridges are to be strengthened, and wooden ones replaced with steel structures. This will enable heavier engines to be run on the lines.

The much discussed level crossing difficulty has been provided for, material for 300 crossings having been ordered similar to the one which has been on trial at Levin, which has proved satisfactory.

Regarding railway construction, Mr. Hiley gives us some sound business-like sense. We quote his remarks:—"The arrangements under which new railways are authorized and built in the Dominion are, I would respectfully suggest, capable of considerable improvement. At the present time a new line is undertaken without any consultation with the Railway Department, and in consequence the only official estimate available before the country is committed to additional expenditure is the Public Works Engineer's estimate of the cost of construction. The Department which will ultimately take over and work the new railway is not consulted as to the route, grades, and alignment, nor are the plans submitted to it before the new line is commenced. No estimate is obtained from the Railway Department as to the cost of building the additional rolling-stock required. No estimate is made of the annual cost in the shape of working expenses, and no figures are prepared by the Railway Department as to the probable revenue from the proposed line, therefore no reliable calculation can be made as to whether the net revenue will represent a profit or loss.

I believe I am correct in stating that there are over twenty new railways in course of construction at the present time, and I submit that this is not an economical method of procedure. It must be obvious that if the work of construction was concentrated upon, say, five of these railways, the cost of supervision would be lower and the speed at which the railways would be finished and become traffic-bearing and revenue-earning would be at least four times as rapid. Over twenty uncompleted and unremunerative railways are a serious handicap to a comparatively small undertaking. The Working Railways Department is vitally interested in economical construction, because the expenditure ultimately becomes a portion of the capital upon which interest has to be earned."

He then gives details of a form to be filled in for a proposed new railway.

A large sum of money is earmarked for reducing grades especially on the North Island Main Trunk, and also duplication works, the object being to use bigger engines which can haul greater tonnage.

#### WELLINGTON STATION

The Wellington business is at present carried on at two separate stations (not counting Te Aro), neither of which is laid out in a manner conducive to economical or expeditious handling, having been added to and patched as increasing traffic has necessitated. The present method of working is inconvenient to the public, whilst it is impossible for the Department to deal with the traffic satisfactorily.

It is estimated that the traffic to be handled in Wellington will, at the present rate of progress,