

1894.
NEW ZEALAND.

WORKING RAILWAYS

(FINAL REPORT OF THE LATE RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS, ON RETIREMENT, 20TH JANUARY, 1894).

Laid upon the Table by Leave of the House.

The RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS to the Hon. the MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,—

Government Buildings, Wellington, 20th January, 1894.

As the five years' term of office of the Railway Commissioners ends on the 22nd instant, we have the honour to submit a report upon the working railways which have been under our charge.

Since our report up to the 31st March, 1893, there have been opened for public traffic 4 miles of the North Island Trunk, 24 miles of the Rotorua line, 7 miles from Ngakawau to Mokihinui. 24 miles Greymouth to Hokitika, making the total length of Government railways now working 1,948 miles.

A further agreement has been entered into with the New Zealand Midland Railway Company, in pursuance of the terms of the Midland Railway Contract, for the conveyance of coals for export from the Blackball Mine. This agreement should, in terms of the statutes, be presented to Parliament next session.

The vote taken for the Working Railways, Class XI., for the year 1893–94 was £734,821. The state of this vote on the 31st December, 1893, is shown in Account No. 1 attached. From this it will be seen that the charges against the vote are within the estimate up to date.

An approximate account of the revenue and expenses up to the period ending on the 6th January last is attached (see Account No. 2). The net revenue up to the 6th January, 1894, is £315,999, as against £311,288 up to the end of the corresponding period on the 7th January, 1893. This must be regarded as satisfactory.

The revenue has been prejudicially affected by the rainy weather during various holidays, by the severe floods in Hawke's Bay, and by a certain dulness in trade consequent upon financial disturbances; but, as the three best months of the year have to come, and the expenses have been kept down, the net estimated results for 1893–94 are likely to be realised.

The Stores Report attached shows that during the Commissioners' term of office the value of the stock of stores in hand has been increased by £7,778.

The reports of the Locomotive Superintendent and the Chief Engineer for Working Railways, supported by the reports of the various district officers throughout the system, show the large improvement which has been made in the engine-power, rolling-stock, appliances, lines, and structures during the term of the control of the Commissioners from working-expenses, by means of which the capital value of the lines and the net profits have been increased.

The Napier line is being as rapidly restored after the late floods as circumstances permit, and by the end of the month it will be in fair order again. With this exception, due to circumstances beyond control, all the railways are now in exceptionally good order. The traffic officers report that the traffic staff is efficient.

The staff generally is in a state of excellent organization. Under the existing system of working and organization nearly fourteen years of careful training has prevailed.

The system introduced in 1880, of engaging lads only in different branches of the service and training and educating them for the various duties, and the system of classification of pay and promotion from the lower to the higher grades, have answered excellently. The service is now manned by officers and men for the most part trained to railway and telegraph work on the colonial railways under the regulations and scale of pay and promotion referred to.

The Commissioners are gratified at being able to bear testimony to the loyal and intelligent services rendered to the colony by the large staff of officers and men during their tenure of office.

We have, &c.,

JAMES MCKERROW,	} Railway Commissioners.
J. P. MAXWELL, M.Inst.C.E.,	
W. M. HANNAY,	

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works.