

tions; Rangitata—loading-bank; Timaru—show-ground platform and additions to coal-shed; Oamaru—protection of foreshore; Port Chalmers—improvements to wharves; Dunedin—office for goods agent; Kensington—siding; Milton—weighbridge and sidings; Gore—siding and weighbridge; Dipton—improvement station-buildings; Parrawa—siding improvements; Makarewa—siding accommodation; Oporo—ballast siding; Arahura River—protective works; Brightwater—windmill; fencing various places; four pieces of land purchased for alterations of line; improvements to booking-offices at various stations.

Six new houses have been built and 102 have been enlarged and improved.

Eight cattle-yards have been provided.

Expenditure.—The expenditure on maintenance of way and works during the year was £300,524 16s. 7d. This represents a rate of expenditure per mile of £149.14, the previous year's being £140.88 per mile. The increased expenditure was incurred partly on bridge renewals as above referred to. The cost of track renewals has also increased owing to the rise in price of steel rails. A larger amount has also been spent in ballasting.

The expenditure on railway buildings is considerably higher than in previous years, due to their increasing age.

Private Sidings.—Nine new rights were granted during the year in lieu of nine lapsed, leaving the total on the register 241, representing an annual rental of £4,032.

Leases.—New leases granted during the year were 305, and 138 leases expired. The number of leases in force on the 31st March was 1,308, with an annual rental of £12,652.

Staff.—The working staff employed during the year was 1,980, with an office staff of forty-eight.

I have with much regret to record the death of Mr. James Ibbs Lawson, late resident engineer at Wanganui, who was killed on the Pohangina Bridge.

The usual returns have been forwarded.

I have, &c.,

J. HENRY LOWE, Chief Engineer.

The General Manager, New Zealand Railways.

APPENDIX D.

SIR,—

Stores Manager's Office, Wellington, 11th August, 1897.

I have the honour to report that the value of stores on hand on the 31st March, 1897, at the various dépôts amounted to £81,828 16s. 2d., as against £86,498 13s. 8d. on the 31st March, 1896.

The stock is in good order, has been carefully and systematically inspected, and is value for the amount stated.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE FELTON,

Stores Manager.

The General Manager, New Zealand Railways.

APPENDIX E.

REPORT ON CONDITION OF THE MIDLAND RAILWAY.

Chief Engineer's Office (Working Railways Department),
Wellington, 12th August, 1897.

Reefton and Jackson Lines.

THE tracks throughout are in good running-order. Sleepers have been renewed as found necessary, a little over a thousand having been used. The sleepers are principally birch, and, being nearly ten years old, will require more extensive renewals very shortly. Some ballasting has been done, and more requires to be done, and will be carried out.

A heavy flood occurred on the 10th March, which caused considerable damage. Some temporary flood-openings have been left, and will be bridged as material is obtained. The earthwork, where damaged, has been repaired.

Very heavy work has been entailed in cleaning off rust from and painting the iron bridges. About half the required work was done last season, and the remainder will be done this year. Material has been ordered for the reconstruction of the Stillwater timber bridge.

Fences have been repaired to some extent, but are mainly in birch timber, and will soon require renewal. Cattle-stops are in process of renewal, birch rail-beams becoming past service being replaced with ironbark. Water-services, signals, and station appliances are in good order and condition. Buildings are in good order, and have been repaired and painted.

Springfield Line.

Some alterations have been made and protective works erected to secure this line from the previously recurring damage caused by floods, including some alterations of grades and culverts. The iron bridges have been painted. Sleeper renewals on this line will shortly be heavy.

J. HENRY LOWE, Chief Engineer.

The General Manager, New Zealand Railways, Wellington.