

The cost of maintenance of the line, bridges, buildings, and other structures has still further increased—viz., from £357,189 in 1898–99 to £394,619 in 1899–1900—an increase of £37,430. Of this increased amount £460 has been spent on the Whangarei Section, due to strengthening bridges and renewals of track; £8,706 on the Auckland Section, due to strengthening bridges and renewals of track; £15,671 on the Wellington–Napier–New Plymouth Section, due to renewals of track; £12,340 on the Hurunui–Bluff Section, due to renewals of track; £589 on the Grey–Hokitika Section, due to bridge repairs and renewals of track; and £840 on the Picton Section, due to renewals of rails and sleepers, and wharf-repairs.

The cost per mile of railway for maintenance has advanced from £172·92 in 1898–99 to £187·99 in 1899–1900, or £50 per mile per annum in excess of the amount spent in 1894–95.

A sum of £5,069 for additions and improvements to the lines and structures has been debited to the working-expenses for maintenance of way which might fairly be charged to capital.

The Head Office expenditure is only £647 over that of last year, and in relation to the revenue is actually less.

The departmental offices cost £2,752 more than last year, due to extra staff, scale increases, and retiring-allowances.

The Stores Branch purchased during the year stores to the value of £492,500, distributed as follows: General stores, £225,000; coal and coke, £70,000; timber, £53,000; sleepers, £76,000; permanent-way material, £60,000; stationery, £8,500. A staff of sixty-nine men were employed in the work of accounts and distribution.

4. EXPENDITURE FOR ADDITIONS TO OPEN LINES.

The sum of £218,357 has been charged to Capital Account on account of additions to the rolling-stock, and improvements to the permanent-way and structures.

Of this amount, £154,157 has been expended on additional rolling-stock, conversions of rolling-stock, car-lighting, and workshop machinery. This rolling-stock consists of 11 locomotives, 33 carriages, 11 brake-vans, 42 bogie wagons, 419 four-wheel wagons, 1 steam crane, 350 tarpaulins, all completed on the 31st March last; 5 locomotives, 66 carriages, 13 brake-vans, 46 bogie wagons, 473 four-wheel wagons, and 200 tarpaulins, incomplete, but in hand on the 31st March last.

Included in the amount charged to Capital Account is a sum of £64,200, expended on account of additions and improvements to sidings, bridges, telegraphs, interlocking apparatus, signals, workshops, station buildings, dwellings, loading-banks, stock-yards, and water-services. Many of our stations are being entirely rebuilt: Aramoho, Clinton, and Oamaru are cases in point.

The following gives the rolling-stock on 31st March, 1895, and 31st March, 1900:—

					31st March, 1895.	31st March, 1900.
Locomotives	...	...	...	...	269	304
Cars	...	...	...	...	498	577
Brake-vans	...	...	...	...	204	220
Wagons	...	...	...	...	8,264	10,075
Tarpaulins	...	...	...	...	5,477	7,460

and the following the tractive power of the engines and carrying capacity of cars and wagons:—

		Engines' Tractive Power in Pounds.	Wagons' Carrying Capacity in Tons.	Cars' Seating Accommodation: Seats.
31st March, 1895	...	1,835,489	50,861	17,455
31st March, 1900	...	2,407,279	63,778	22,090

The following is a summary of the work carried out in the New Zealand Government railway workshops during the past five years, and is additional to ordinary repairs to locomotives, carriages, and wagons:—